The Cambodian Curse:
A field study on the role of journalists in modern Cambodia

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Abstract
The title enlightens the difficulties of democratic transition that Cambodia experiences post Khmer Rouge. Media in transitional democracies is often described as a forced compromise between what is ideal and what is actually possible. This thesis aims to understand how political agency and technological advances have affected journalistic agency in a transitional democracy. Three research questions were decided upon: How do journalists in Cambodia perceive their role in a democratic transition? What restrictions and limitations do journalistic practices face in Cambodia? And how do journalists in Cambodia perceive the impact of social media on democratic development?
A field study was conducted in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. For ten weeks, eight editors and journalists currently active in Cambodia were interviewed and observed in their working environment. Normative media theory and developmental democracy theory have been used to analyze and understand the material that was generated through a combination of unstructured observations and semi-structured qualitative research interviews. Important findings were that the complicated structures of transitional democracies make journalists take on different roles, from very collaborative to extremely radical. Their different stand on journalistic practices is a mixture of their own choice and the force of historical, political and social constraints. Political power players treat them differently, which further separates them and has led to a segregated journalistic community. Even though they seem to share the same fundamental ideal of what journalism should be journalists are therefore unlikely to cooperate.
Social media has been a catalyst for change in democratic development in Cambodia. By offering a place for uncensored conversations it has given the opposition access to media. Social media has brought along many new dilemmas though and is probably more beneficial to journalistic development than to democratic development. There is a lack of tolerance of diversity in Cambodia due to the fragile state of democratic transition. Therefor the immediate and unrestricted ways of expression in social media partially works against creating the social capital necessary for consolidation – fully completed democratization.

Keywords: Cambodia, field study, transitional democracy, normative media theory, role of journalists, social media, semi structured qualitative research interviews, observation methods.
Preface
Growing up as the niece of a war journalist included blood-dripping, yet fascinating, bedtime stories of inhuman brutalities in far away corners of our world. Among these places to mention a few were the dry deserts of Ethiopia, the steep mountains of Iraq, the massive swamps of Somalia and the wild jungles of Burma. But one story caught my interest in particular as a kid, that of an army crueler than most - an army that slaughtered anyone who showed any sign of resistance towards the dictating regime. My uncle trailed this army through the mine filled vegetation on the boarders of Thailand in the end of an era that today is referred to as one of the largest genocides known to man. The reckless killing of men, women and children was executed in the name of communism and the army operated under the lead of dictator Pol Pot. They were called Khmer Rouge, French for the Red Khmer.

When I was in my early teens the first free elections were held in Cambodia, a state then heavily suffering the aftermaths of decades of war, poverty and dictatorship. My uncle seemed to question whether the people would ever rise from the dark stories of the past. In 2008 my uncle past away, leaving behind his unfinished book manuscript. Going through his war stories on Cambodia and Khmer Rouge, I started to wonder the same.

In the fall of 2013 I was granted a scholarship from The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to go to Cambodia and perform a field study on the role of journalists in Cambodia today. Between the 14th of January and the 25th of March I met with journalists and editors currently active there, trying to figure out what role they have in Cambodia today and whether they can be helpful in building a genuinely free and democratic society in the future.

For this eye-opening opportunity I am truly grateful, and I would like to express my gratitude towards Sida as well as to the Department of Media Studies at Stockholm University for making this field study at all possible.

Thank you,

Therese Bengtner
Introduction
Media in transitional democracies (states undergoing the process of democratization) can be viewed as a forced compromise between what is ideal and what is actually possible.¹ It’s a glitch that caught my interest since democratic theories following a liberal democratic model as well as the primary principles of journalism - such as objectivity, diversity and balance - have received criticism for being utopian and problematic in their normativity.

Media is often more difficult to reform than creating entirely new institutions and democratic structures such as electoral systems. This is due to the fact that media often has specific conventions and traditions defining it already whereas the political system in undemocratic states often is nonexistent. This is applicable on Cambodia because ten years of - what at least can be referred to as democratic - elections have passed and yet Cambodia lack the proper environment for free, unrestricted media providing neutral, transparent and uninfluenced news to the people.

The parallel development of free, liberal media and a free, politically open society has always included complicated structures but the complexity is even greater today than it was before. The technological advances of the 21st century have changed the dynamics of democratic transitions.² “The availability of ever more sophisticated communication technologies has expanded the repertoire of strategic choices for both democracy activists as well as the ruling elites who are trying to preserve their grip on power.”³ In Cambodia where politics still carry the legacy of older and undemocratic rule social media is therefor due to change the political scenery a lot.

Further more social media does not only affect political agency, it also challenges and changes journalistic agency. The interactive and immediate components of Web 2.0 make for journalistic content to spread faster than ever and in a much wider range than what was previously the case. The awareness that social media has become a significant tool in the process of developing democracies is nowadays known to be a fact but whether it determines failure or success is not said since media effects are so hard to measure.⁴

¹ Voltmer, Katrin, The media in Transitional Democracies, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.126
² Voltmer, Katrin, The media in Transitional Democracies, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.2
³ Voltmer, Katrin, The media in Transitional Democracies, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.3
⁴ Voltmer, Katrin, The media in Transitional Democracies, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.2
To look closer at how political agency in transitional democracies and advances of modern technology affect journalistic agency in Cambodia is an attempt to address some of the dilemmas that awaits journalists in developing democracies of modern time.

**Background**

Transitional democracies are complex to describe and characterize as they all differ from each other due to the social, economical and historical contexts that have bound them from being democratic in the first place.\(^5\) Cambodia is no exception and hundreds of years of political overstep, greed and terror has put its mark on the population. The genocide during the communistic Khmer Rouge regime led by Pol Pot, that killed about one fourth of the population, is probably the chapter of Cambodian history most known to the outer world.\(^6\) With the Cambodian people it’s still fresh in mind as the horrifying era only officially ended in the early eighties - and unofficially as late as in 1998.\(^7\)

The first elections considered free and democratic were held in 1993 after the Vietnamese occupation that followed Khmer Rouge. Just before those elections the new Cambodian Constitution was enacted and at the same time Cambodia engaged to follow a liberal democratic model, which included subscribing to article 41 – the freedom of expression and press.\(^8\) Responsible for organizing these first free elections were the United Nations Transitional Authorities (UNTAC) in collaboration with the Supreme National Council (the authorities that were set up to represent Cambodia). As democracy and press are closely entwined UNTAC were also in charge of creating some kind of mediums to cover the elections. Since most intellectuals, including almost all journalists, were killed during the Khmer Rouge genocide this was quite a challenge.\(^9\) Not that there wasn’t a large interest in free reporting at the time but because time margins made journalistic training poor. Even though the quality of what was mediated at the time can be questioned, the media sector grew rapidly in the presence of UNTAC and foreign funders stepped in optimistically expecting the media infrastructure to continue to improve over time. But in 1996 when 90 percent of those registered as eligible to vote participated in the elections UNTAC considered their

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\(^5\) Voltmer, Katrin, *The media in Transitional Democracies*, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.77
\(^6\) [http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/history/cambodian-history/khmer-rouge-history/](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/history/cambodian-history/khmer-rouge-history/)
\(^7\) [http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/history/cambodian-history/khmer-rouge-history/](http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/history/cambodian-history/khmer-rouge-history/)
\(^8\) McCarthy, Casey *Media Development in Transitional democratic Cambodia*, Malmö University: 2012 p.9
democracy-building mission accomplished and began withdrawing from Cambodia. Without UNTAC presence the government led by Prime Minister Hun Sen (still in the same political position) regained formal and informal control over the Cambodian media landscape.

Today most radio channels in Cambodia are state controlled, exceptions being the foreign channels Radio Free Asia (RFA) and Voice of America (VOA) broadcasting in English. As far as printed press goes there are only a few examples that can be regarded as independent by international standards, these being the foreign owned English language newspapers The Cambodia Daily and The Phnom Penh Post, as well as the Khmer language versions of the previously mentioned (publishing material similar to the English editions, described further in the analysis). There are mediums in Cambodia that aren’t even superficially independent though - TV is under complete state control as there are no free and politically independent TV-channels in the country yet.

The political climate in Cambodia, in the first half of 2014, can be described as a political deadlock since the ruling party the CPP (Cambodia People’s Party) led by Hun Sen and the oppositional party the CNRP (Cambodia National Rescue Party) led by opposition leader Sam Rainsy cannot cooperate or come to an agreement. The deadlock is based on distrust towards CPP regarding the most recent elections, in July 2013. The CNRP demands reelections, which the CPP wont agree to, and until that happens they refuse to take their seats in the National Assembly.

2014 brought Cambodia out of the shadows of oblivion and back into the limelight of the observing outer world. Armed government crackdowns on garment workers striking for higher wages turned into government shootings in January, which made Cambodia global news again. The CPP government has since been accused of restraining freedom of expression and been heavily criticized for violating human rights. Acts that led to such accusations were, apart from the armed crackdowns on protestors and the arrest of such, repeated bans on demonstrations and petition deliveries throughout the first quarter of this year. However eyes and ears of global media turned elsewhere shortly after the initial
shootings took place and even though the situation has remained as unstable - if not deteriorated since - journalists in Cambodia have pretty much been reporting on such consequences of democratic transition alone.\textsuperscript{15}

**The aim of the study**

The aim of the study is to deepen the understanding of how journalists in Cambodia today perceive their role in a transitional democracy, how they look at political and journalistic agency in such an environment and whether they perceive social media to be a potential tool for journalists in democratic transitions.

The term journalist in the thesis is defined as follows: “They belong to a set of institutions that publicizes periodically (usually daily) information and commentary on contemporary affairs, normally presented as true and sincere, to a dispersed and anonymous audience so as to publicly include the audience in a discourse taken to be publicly important”.\textsuperscript{16}

The field study specifically aims to answer the following research questions:

- How do journalists in Cambodia perceive their role in a democratic transition?
- What restrictions and limitations do journalistic practices face in Cambodia?
- How do journalists in Cambodia perceive the impact of social media on democratic development?

How journalists in Cambodia perceive working in a transitional democracy can hopefully shed some more light on the relationship between democratic development and the establishment of free and independent media in a post-communist state. Perhaps it can tell us something about the power relations between politics and journalism in a time of new dilemmas. Journalists in Cambodia have experience not only from working in a transitional democracy but also from doing so during the Web 2.0-era. Characterizing the influence of social media through journalists in transitional democracies, interpreting what significance it may have and analyzing whether it can be beneficial to journalistic practices in transitional democracies in the future, is therefore a valuable part of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{15} http://www.ruom.net/portfolio-item/cambodia-look-change/#sthash.vsi1g78XQ.dpbo 140930

Previous research and Theoretical framework

Previous Research
In the search for previous research I came across a master thesis called *Media development in transitional democratic Cambodia* (2012) in which the author Casey McCarthy discovers a lack of consensus between the media and the democratic model in Cambodia today.\(^\text{17}\) This makes it impossible for Cambodian mediums to work as objective watchdogs and agenda setters, he claims. Further he finds that there is not enough parallel development in the five areas he proclaims as equally important for the press to be able to act like watchdogs:

1. Freedom of expression
2. Professionalism
3. Pluralism
4. Business management
5. Supporting institutions

The slow development is much due to little support from politicians, short-term involvement from institutions and donors, lack of plurality and last but not least to some extent lack of support from editors and publishers in helping Cambodian journalists become more professional. The glitch between the communist model and the neoliberal model works against change and is further problematized by the journalistic corruption that still takes place in Cambodia today.\(^\text{18}\)

This previous research is valuable to my essay since it points out some difficulties in the glitch between what is ideal and what is actually possible which is what this study aims to examine further. However it only focuses on one type of journalistic agency (the role of watchdogs). My thesis strives to fully characterize the way some journalists perceive themselves instead of analyzing one particular role in different mediums - as it is not certain all journalists aim to act as watchdogs in Cambodia today. My thesis also aims to combine the normative roles of journalistic agency with the effects of modern technology, in order to further understand media in a transitioning democracy today. Seen from that perspective this thesis can offer new takes on journalistic agency in Cambodia.

\(^\text{17}\) McCarthy, Casey *Media Development in Transitional democratic Cambodia*, Malmo University: 2012. p.45
\(^\text{18}\) McCarthy, Casey *Media Development in Transitional democratic Cambodia*, Malmo University: 2012. p.45
The Democratic Ideal
The literal translation of democracy is “power by the people” but how power is divided in the most optimal way in a society and views on the true aim of democracy differ - which have resulted in diverse theories and models. In the last decade deliberative democracy theory has gained ground and the perspective of democracy as a competitive power balance has begun to be replaced by the perspective of democracy as a community that emerges through cooperation and conversation - social capital.\(^{19}\) This thesis applies developmental democracy theory which uses a three-step model or a “three-wave movement” to explain different stages of democratization.\(^{20}\)

1. *Liberalization* - The first step of democratization in a society is liberalization. It can be either a quick overnight change of policy or decades of slowly breaking up from the old regime. The suppressed society is slowly earning a bit more freedom, as the previous elite is incapable to keep their previous status. Signs of this phase of transition are relaxing censorship of public communication, violent crackdowns on demonstrations, inhuman punishments for protest activities and heavy big brother-like surveillance. Important to note is that it is not necessarily the old regime that loses its grip, sometimes it’s merely a strategic choice to give a little in order to get more. This step is seldom meant to actually liberalize a country even though, if successful, it can sometimes lead to the kind of organized discontent that make old regimes fall apart.\(^{21}\)

2. *Transition* - Transition is the second step of democratization and does not only include breaking up old regimes but also creating new social institutions and systems. This phase is dramatic and unpredictable, and often followed by bloodshed, massive protests and demonstrations. Usually the ruling regime splits up into so called hard-liners and soft-liners - those trying to preserve the past and those pursuing for change. During the transition phase states can undergo negotiated transitions, meaning that the regime is allowed to keep some of the old power within the regime in exchange for free elections. Sometimes negotiated transitions can be more stable for society than mass movements crushing old elites but they come at a high price since it gives old

\(^{19}\) Voltmer, Katrin, *The media in Transitional Democracies*, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.19
\(^{21}\) Voltmer, Katrin, *The media in Transitional Democracies*, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.74
regimes the chance to reorganize and control democratic development later on in the process.\textsuperscript{22}

3. \textit{Consolidation} - The third stage of democratic transition is possible only when a state has created a new constitution and proper elections have been held. Consolidation is a phase that runs over many years, often decades, and includes the entire process of trying to make newly created institutions work, become integrated in every day life and also to stabilize state of affairs. It’s hard to characterize when consolidations are thoroughly completed because the third wave of transition is way too complex but there is consensus on the importance of both having functioning institutions and the democratic political atmosphere that allows democratically free beliefs and attitudes - such as notions of citizenship and tolerance of diversity.\textsuperscript{23}

Even though these three waves are given different criteria’s states often undergo more than one phase simultaneously. Some critics claim that all transitioning states really are stuck in early stages of consolidation, and that characteristics of the other phases simply describe different phases of that clog. States can also, according to other critics, undergo a reverse transition or be developed as far as institutions go but still continue to lack the cultural development considered necessary in a democratic society.\textsuperscript{24}

\textbf{The Journalistic Ideal}

This thesis is based on the four roles of journalism found in \textit{Normative Theories of the Media - Journalism in Democratic Societies} (2009) written by Clifford G. Christians, Theodore L. Glasser, Denis McQuail, Kaarle Nordenstreng and Robert A. White. The authors wish to offer normative theories on media and democracy that are more modern than theories found in \textit{Four Theories of the Press} (1954) by Fred Siebert, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm. The criticism towards \textit{Four Theories of the Press} is partially that it favors industrialized western powers, and instead the authors of \textit{Normative Theories of the Media} wished to create a theoretical framework that could be useful in different civilizations, independent of the different value traditions and sociopolitical philosophies that found public communication in different places of our world.

\textsuperscript{22} O’Donnell and Schmitter 1986
\textsuperscript{23} Voltmer, Katrin, \textit{The media in Transitional Democracies}, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.75
\textsuperscript{24} Voltmer, Katrin, \textit{The media in Transitional Democracies}, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.75
Further *Normative Theories of the Media – Journalism in Democratic Societies* focuses on the normative foundation of journalism in a contemporary world. The claim is that in a contemporary world there’s need for more clarity than what is normally found in books on normative and political theory. That includes providing answers to elementary questions such as what the role of media is in a democratic society and what it should be, as well as to how we classify media systems and journalistic traditions today. That idea makes *Normative Theories of the Media – Journalism in Democratic Societies* highly relevant - as this thesis aims to determine characteristics of the role journalists play in a transitional democracy today.

The criticism towards normative theories in general is that practices always differ from theories but the authors of *Normative Theories of the Media – Journalism in Democratic Societies* recognize that there is still need for normative theories as “cognitive maps”. Since this thesis examines the glitch between what is ideal and what is actually possible the aim is coherent with the idea of the authors. Normative media theory is used as a framework to help discover and describe the journalistic practices performed in Cambodia today. Normative media theory is applicable since such theories are used to determine values and norms and go beyond factual landscape.25

The Four Roles in *Normative Theories of the Media – Journalism in Democratic Societies*:

1. *Monitorial role* – Journalists figurate as a third state power that collects and publishes information of interest to the public or their audiences. The monitorial role means assuring that the information spread provides anything that may be of general utility for information seekers. This calls for journalists to cover a wide range of subjects and by doing so distribute information from many different sources within the political, commercial and private sectors. Dealing with such diverse sources journalists are forced to navigate among motives of profit, social mission and propaganda and must apart from collecting the information accept the role of providing advanced intelligence, advice and warnings when distributing the information onwards.26

2. *Facilitative role* – Journalists figurate as a democratic tool that not only report on civil society’s associations and activities, but also strives to support and strengthen them.

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This does not mean that journalists’ compromise on journalistic practices like integrity, credibility or independence but that they see a facilitative relationship as their role in society. Journalists give (access to) public attention to other players and institutions involved in political and social processes - as long as it is for a legitimate cause that serves society in fields like politics, commerce, health, education and welfare.27

3. **Radical role** – Journalist challenge the ruling regime and authorities by providing a platform for views and voices of opposing ideals and movements critical to established order. Through this journalists support drastic change and reform, and since it doesn’t strive to strengthen or support the present it is far from the role of facilitation. It is in that sense necessary for a participatory democracy. Journalists who perceive their role as radical are great defenders of press freedom and often targeted in attempts to suppress media freedom. The radical role can also include being a voice of criticism on its own.28

4. **Collaborative role** – Journalists are linked to other stakeholders in society, meaning that there’s a strong relationship between the media and sources of political and economical power, mostly the state and its agencies. The cooperation can be a general claim that demands journalism to support national interest or be patriotic and respect authority. It can be more specific in developing societies’ where journalists work to serve particular development goals. The claims from the outside are often consistent with the natural working process among the journalists, or chosen by journalists themselves under certain circumstances when they perceive such a collaboration to be called for.29

I have chosen to apply these roles according to the way they are discussed in *Normative Theories of the Media – Journalism in Democratic Societies* “The typology is less a classification of media tasks than of primary purposes and of the mode and spirit in which a

given medium chooses to operate”.  

A journalistic role goes far beyond daily tasks and the handcraft itself - it is also about opinions, values and beliefs. As Weaver showed in his study on the sources of professionalism, many of the values of journalists and other media professionals in fact come from their families and community backgrounds rather than from actual work experience. When looking at the role of journalists this way it becomes more transparent how other agency and audiences affect it, and what causes roles to change over time. This is relevant when studying transitional democracies, which are complex to describe since social events, relationships with power players and degree of journalistic participation can change rapidly and to great extent within a short period of time. Viewed in that way theory and method strengthen each other as both seek to understand how something is perceived in a certain time and place.

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31 Christians, C et al. 2009 *Normative Theories of the Media, Journalism in Democratic Societies*. Chicago: University of Illinois PRESS p.79
Methods

Unstructured Observations
The strength in observation methods is that as a researcher you become familiar with the ways of the people, their daily routines and the power structures they are subordinate to. Through learning these things one gets a sense of what the informants will speak of later on in the research process.\textsuperscript{33} Because of the complicated interplay between different sorts of agency in transitional democracies and because Cambodia was a relatively new cultural context to me it was extremely valuable to begin the scientific process in such way. It was beneficial for the analysis that I was able to compare my impressions of the lives of the informants to the way they spoke of their experiences.

When scheduling the observations I expressed openly that I wished to watch them in their work environment but did not specify at what stage in the work process. The observations were unstructured meaning that I didn’t interfere with what was going on or being said. I watched each informant for about an hour under which I remained in the background chronologically taking notes of the people, conversations, surroundings and events or actions. The notes were transformed into short reports as soon as the observations were over. I studied the reports before interviewing the informants, and went back to them when trying to bring their impressions and stories together in the analysis.

Observations add reliability and validity to the thesis, as well as to me as a researcher. When a researcher chooses to use unstructured qualitative methods one has to remember the weakness of the method that is often criticized - the fact that we can never fully exclude ourselves from a situation that we are in fact a part of.\textsuperscript{34} But when you are aware of that element and focus on collecting a rich material (both observations and interviews) transparently acknowledging your own part in it during the process, a lot of meaningful knowledge can be derived from it. Awareness is key.

Semi-structured Qualitative Research Interviews
Conversations between people are a natural part of everyday life whether it is small talk or more constructed conversations like interviews and questionings. A semi-structured qualitative research interview produces knowledge by using both natural and constructed

\textsuperscript{33} Kvale, Steinar & Brinkmann, Svend (2009). \textit{Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun}. Lund: Studentlitteratur, p.44
\textsuperscript{34} Kvale, Steinar & Brinkmann, Svend (2009). \textit{Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun}. Lund: Studentlitteratur, p.44
elements of conversations. The method keeps the openness and nonjudgmental elements that allow conversations to evolve on their own, and at the same time adds purpose to conversations through steering the direction of the conversations. This increases the understanding of a specific topic or theme in the world of the informant, as it is perceived directly and independently of scientific explanation. Qualitative research interviews are hermeneutic in the sense that they interpret meaning - the researcher sorts out meaning from experiences of the informants.

Semi-structured qualitative research interviews demand that the researcher doesn’t sway the interviews too much since the strength of the method lies much in the interactive aspects and the knowledge that can be derived from it. Interaction leads to knowledge, not results that the researcher expects to find. This is the complexity of the method - to investigate a specific and previously determined topic but at the same time allow the study a life of its own through the interactive elements of conversations. Such difficulties are further deepened by the unstructured characteristics of semi-structured interviews that call for many decisions to be made as the interviews are taking place instead of earlier on in the research process.

In a practical sense it is important to have a thoroughly structured interview guide, to comprehensively think about themes and potential topics that might come up along with the questions you want to ask. But it is just as important to sidetrack from the interview guide when called for and be able to follow an unexpected route that seems to be important to the informant. And (!) still be able to get back to the questions you initially meant to ask - all whilst using the information you just learned with an open mind.

The semi structured qualitative research interviews followed the seven steps described by Steinar Kvale in Den kvalitativa forskningsintervjun (2009):

1. Themes – What topics did the interviews aim to investigate? What experiences of interest could these specific informants have? What fields needed to be explored? What questions were necessary to ask? These questions demand thorough research on the environment in which the field study will take place. Subjects of interest were cultural differences, the historical and economical context, the media landscape and the political situation. Things that could potentially influence the journalistic

environment in Cambodia today. In addition, meetings with the Embassy of Sweden in Phnom Penh generated valuable insight and complimentary background information that could not be found online. It was really helpful to discuss critical aspects of current events. Talking to locals and spending some time getting to know the customs, traditions and ways of the people helped settling on the final themes as well.

2. **Preparations** – Making decisions on how much time to spend on each step of the method as well as set up the interviews. Work on the aim of the study, narrow it down and find the natural relation between the two academic fields - democracy theory and media theory. Preparations also included an introduction course on democracy theory, human rights and development studies held by Sida 2013/11/17 - 2013/11/20. The field study naturally demanded a lot of practical preparations as well.

3. **Interviews** – The interviews each took between 45 minutes up to an hour and were held in the offices of the journalists or in public places of their choice, aka environments they felt comfortable in which resulted in open and generous discussions. The interviews were all sound recorded on a smartphone (IPhone 4).

4. **Transcriptions** – Turning spoken conversation into written text. When transcribing the interviews a lot of effort was put into keeping the tone of each conversation - not leaving out any small words, sounds, silences or pauses that could be of potential significance to the analysis. Little things like that make the whole picture more complete and becomes valuable when analyzing the material and reporting on the result.

5. **Analysis** – Analyzing the material through chosen theoretical frameworks and previous research. Deciding on how to tell the stories of the informants without reading too much into what have been said, and still managing to find unanimous features. “The analysis of the interviews is somewhere between the original story the informants told the researcher and the final story that the researcher presents to an audience.”

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6. **Verification** – Validation and reliability. Finding out whether the interviews were successful in providing the material necessary to fulfill the aim of the study. “Quality is decided from the knowledge that has been extracted and what it can state.”³⁸ It would have been ideal if more people had transcribed the material in order to make sure that the conversations weren’t affected by my individual experiences and expectations. However the material covers many fields and represents several different voices that were chosen to represent a wide selection of journalists. The idea was to be able to state some conclusions about journalistic agency with certainty, and through doing so provide a foundation for more in-depth research in the future.

7. **Reporting** - The conducted material as part of a scientific report (in this case a bachelor’s thesis). Yet again, such reporting may be criticized to be created and to some extent colored, but great dedication has been put into accuracy and neutrality in this thesis.

Material and Distinctions

Informants
The informants were selected to represent diversity within the journalistic community in Cambodia. In transitional democracies journalists often have a hard time finding their place because of the complex interplay between their journalistic role and the social, historical and political structures they have to take into consideration when maneuvering the media landscape.\(^3^9\) Language, audience, reach, media ownership and spread are therefore all aspects that ought to be important when defining the limitations and possibilities ahead of journalism in Cambodia. As a result a various group of journalists was considered to provide a richer material than focusing on one ethnicity, media channel or gender alone.

Since one out of three research questions concerns social media the search for suitable informants took place mainly on the Internet and in social media - through various websites, blogs, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds. I contacted journalists and editors that seemed active in social media and that differed from each other in terms of background, age, ethnicity and gender. Half of the interviews were booked upon my arrival, the rest of the informants were people I came across while in Phnom Penh. Two informants were recommended to me, but if they knew I had been given their names they showed no sign of it when we met. The journalistic community in Phnom Penh is pretty small and the choice of informants would likely have been more or less the same had they not been recommended to me. The transcriptions of interviews differentiated enough to state with certainty that them knowing each other didn’t influence the result of this study.

In the end the group consisted of eight informants: foreign and Cambodian editors, foreign and Cambodian freelancers reporting for international outlets and foreign as well as Cambodian radio and photography journalists. The group consisted of both foreign and Cambodian men as well as both foreign and Cambodian women. Because of the granted anonymity little specifics such as age, gender, nationality and media outlet can be shared about the informants. To provide a little more detailed insight on the group of informants; it consisted of one foreign editor working at a foreign newspaper, one native Cambodian editor working at a foreign owned newspaper, one foreign journalist reporting for a foreign newspaper, one native Cambodian journalist reporting for a foreign media outlet, two foreign

\(^3^9\) Voltmer, Katrin, *The media in Transitional Democracies*, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.75
freelancers reporting independently and two native Cambodian freelancers reporting for foreign owned media.

Focusing on one ethnicity alone would have left too many questions unanswered to make assumptions on the journalistic community at large. Meeting with only native Cambodian journalists and editors would provide little insight on what the journalistic ideals really are in a journalistic community that has consisted of foreigners since the beginning of democratization. Combining the two could lead to interesting insight on whether the journalistic community supports one another or potentially could do so in the future.

There could be large differences in how journalists are treated, act and perceive themselves due to their gender, as Cambodia is extremely underdeveloped in terms of gender equality.40 Even though this thesis isn’t written from a gender perspective it was important to take into account that it could be brought up in the interviews. As a result I decided that both ethnical backgrounds needed to be represented by both gender as well.

When searching for informants it turned out impossible to find Cambodian journalists working for local outlets that would meet with me. When contacting such journalists I never received any answer and when trying to get in contact with them on the field they gave me their contact info but never replied after I contacted them to set up interviews. This problem is not unique in this context; Casey McCarthy only managed to meet with one government representative for his master thesis even though he already had contacts within the field.41 It is also important to note that this field study was conducted during a time of extreme political turmoil in a post-election context, which might have played a big part in why potential informants were being especially cautious. The lack of native journalists working for local outlets is very unfortunate, but it’s my firm belief that the rich material gathered is enough to generate valuable insight on the journalistic community in Cambodia today.

**Observations**
All informants were asked if, prior to the semi-structured qualitative research interviews, they would let me observe them in their natural working environment. All eight agreed, however

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40 [http://www.socialwatch.org/node/14575](http://www.socialwatch.org/node/14575) 140204
41 McCarthy, Casey Media Development in Transitional democratic Cambodia, Malmo University: 2012. p.23
time wise it turned out difficult because they all travelled a lot. It would have been ideal to observe all informants and I considered not going through with two of the interviews due to the lack of observations. But since the informants were carefully selected and considered equally important the choice fell on including the last interviews without observations. The other observations had already taken place, and even though they all brought valuable insight in various ways they also supported the same general image of the working environment. Also, out on the field I ran into most of the journalists interviewed at the sights and therefore the last two observations didn’t feel compulsory to the conclusions that were drawn.

The observations brought me to coffee shops that function like additional offices to many journalists in Phnom Penh today, to the court sight with some freelancers and photographers, and to the newsrooms of foreign owned newspapers in Cambodia. An example of the observation reports can be found in appendix 1. A part of that observation is used in the thesis but in the appendix the whole report is attached, full length. The only thing that has been removed from that sample is the names of the informants. They have been replaced by XX. Other observation reports have been excluded from the appendix due to the fact that large parts reveal facts about the informants or their work environment that would endanger their anonymity.

It would have been ideal to witness more of the informants’ worlds, returning to their offices, visiting more sights of events together with them, etcetera. However there was a specific timetable that, even though it turned out to be difficult, had to be followed. Through experiencing the overall cultural and political environment, watching the way it evolved and the way it was mediated for ten weeks I became very familiar with the situations described later on.

**Interviews**

Interviews were booked per email and confirmed by text message. They each took between 45 minutes and an hour and were held in the offices of the journalists or in public places of their choice - environments they felt comfortable in which resulted in open and generous discussions.

The interview guide was used as a starting point for the conversations even though the themes in most cases were touched upon through descriptions of events in the lives of the informants...
rather than through direct questioning as seen in the attached transcriptions, which can be found in appendix 2, 3 and 4, and include the actual questions asked. The interview guide was a guideline but questions were asked in an order that felt natural to the conversations and therefore none of the interviews turned out identical.\(^\text{42}\)

**Transcripts**

Transcripts of three interviews can be found in appendix 2, 3 and 4. They have been selected to point out the difference in the way informants spoke and expressed themselves depending on whether they belonged to a specific outlet or not, whether English was their first language or not and whether they were Cambodians or foreigners. Such information is described in the beginning of each appendix.

The three transcripts have been attached in their full length apart from the initial questions used to open up the mind of the informant and make him or her feel at ease. Such questions concern their backgrounds, current jobs, experiences that led into journalism etcetera, which means that the answers include personal details that endanger their anonymity and therefore those parts have been excluded.

**Selection of quotes**

When deciding what quotes to use for the analysis I looked at the themes in the interview guide and highlighted everything in the transcriptions that was somehow connected. I then compared the highlighted parts of the transcriptions with the aim of the study and chose the descriptions that seemed most descriptive. I then compared the observation reports and the interview transcriptions to see if, when put together, they could tell me more about the perceived world of the informants. I compared the highlighted parts in different transcripts and looked for similarities and differences that could be of interest. Last but not least I looked at all my material to see if the informants together told a full story of something I didn’t intentionally search for, but that could increase my understanding, add to the result or be of interest to future research.

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\(^{42}\) Interview guide p.40
Analysis
Each section of the analysis begins with a sequence from the observation report attached in appendix 1, introducing what the analysis will focus on underneath. The analysis is then built on quotes from the semi-structured qualitative research interviews, which together with the observation material generate highly reliable results.

The first part of the analysis - Different Categories of Journalists - explains the four different kinds of journalists that can be found in the journalistic community in Cambodia today. The analysis then examines each of these four categories further, discussing how each kind of journalists perceive themselves and other journalists as well as what limitations and restrictions they face. By doing so these sections answer the first two research questions: How do journalists in Cambodia perceive their role in a democratic transition? What restrictions and limitations do journalistic practices face in Cambodia? The analysis discovers one general ideal but four different ways of performing journalistic practices, which is analyzed further below “Four Roles – One Ideal”.

The last section of the analysis - Social Media and Society - makes an attempt to sort out the complicated interplay between journalistic roles, elements of democratic transition and social media. The impact of social media on democratic development and the response to that from different agents in society, as it is perceived by the informants, leads to conclusions on social media as a potential tool or danger to democratic development - answering the third research question: How do journalists in Cambodia perceive the impact of social media on democratic development?

Different Categories of Journalists
2014-02-11 Phnom Penh Municipal Court

// Outside the gates protesters, activism groups, NGO’s and civilians have gathered to demand the release of the 23 factory workers that are to face their trial this morning. Inside the court premises a large representation of journalists are waiting, all divided into smaller groups. The freelancing photojournalists I arrived with have joined some other foreign freelancers and they are now exchanging information and the latest hearsay over a cigarette. They are waiting strategically up front, right between both entrances - the detained might be snuck in through the back to avoid commotion. On top of the immediate, always aware of what it takes to get that snapshot before someone else does – obvious element of a
freelancer’s everyday life. The Cambodian journalists on the other hand are waiting in the cool shadows alongside the back wall – a contradiction to the foreign news reporter that pushes the guy blocking the court doors for detail information. It’s the same sight, the same situation and yet the behaviors are completely different. //

Entering a scene attended by a lot of different journalists supported the idea that one can’t speak of all journalists in Cambodia as one unanimous group. Since they perform journalistic practices differently their role in the media landscape can hardly the same. There was a large gap between the way native journalists and foreign journalists operated, and there were also - if only more sublime - differences between freelancers and those reporting for specific outlets. “The normative element in media roles is normally a matter of choice, often reinforced by custom and the force of social ties.” Such social ties include historical and political relations that largely determine how they are treated and what access of information they actually have. These social ties are extremely strong, reflecting in large differences in their style of reporting.

The differences among journalists were at first superficially described as ethnical differences, in a simple us-and-them kind of way “I mean mostly there’s a divide between... like foreign journalists tend to stick together and Cambodian journalists tend to stick together.” But when scratched upon it turned out to be more about the political, historical and social ties than the ethnical aspect in itself. It had more to do with what outlet you report for and your relations to political agency: “There’s no way to describe Khmer press and English media in the same rep, two totally different worlds and they’re treated completely different by the government.”

Through observations and interviews four categories of journalists could be distinguished:

1. Foreign journalists working for foreign owned media outlets.
2. Native Cambodian journalists working for foreign owned media outlets.
3. Foreign freelance journalists reporting internationally.
4. Native Cambodian journalists reporting for local media outlets (also called state media or governmentalized media).

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43 Observation Data, appendix 1.
45 Informant. 6
46 Informant. 3
Foreign Journalists Working in Foreign Owned Media Outlets

Informants who work or have worked for foreign owned news outlets, radio and press, describe their main function as being the fourth estate or the fourth pillar of democracy:

“"You know they call the newspapers the fourth estate or you know the, the things that hold governments and authorities accountable and I think we try and do that"" and ""I think we are contributing to democratic development. Simply by existing, right, like I do believe that journalism is the fourth pillar of democracy. I mean without strong, free press democracy doesn’t really develop.""

They all enhance the same journalistic virtues as their lead words – objectivity, balance and neutrality. In their work process this means quoting all sides, basing their stories on several sources, covering a wide range of topics, being a strong voice of the people and informing the public on matters of public interest. In many ways the characteristics of a monitorial role. Because of their independent ownership, free from political gain, they can maneuver around profits and propaganda really well. And since they are paid proper salaries they have no need to engage in journalistic corruption, plus the outlets they work for have a clear ban against bribes.

But providing advanced intelligence, advice and warnings when distributing information forward is contradictive to their beliefs of balance and neutrality, according to the informants: "A newspaper should not be opinionated, it should tell facts and inform people to make their own opinions. Tell all sides no matter how many sides there are in the equation. That way other people can make their opinions." and ""I don’t think it’s the role of journalists to like try and change the society, it’s the role of journalists to keep track of what’s going on in society and make sure that as many people know about it as possible. Then they can decide what to do with that information."

However these journalists do go beyond being neutral, balanced and objective – sharing a will that is perhaps not all impartial and unbiased: "Yeah whenever we have an opportunity to write about wrongdoing we do it." and ""There’s a lot the government’s doing wrong. Um and so, they ought to be called out for it. And they don’t get called out for it by most of their local media. So it’s good that there are other outlets that you know shut them up for what they’re doing wrong."

Native Cambodian journalists perceive foreign newspapers this way too: ""I think they are the best choice here. You know you cannot say they are fair or not fair. At least, at least they try to be fair, you know, they try to be neutral. With the Daily it’s, they try to be harder than the Post you know. When they do stories, it’s harder you know. Accused for being pro opposition party.""
The image is unanimous - there’s a genuine attempt to be neutral, balanced and unbiased but at the same time foreign journalists in foreign news outlets are such strong defenders of press freedom that their approach is really more radical. Something that they seem to be aware of: “I would also say that we, we’re probably um. The English language press is very critical of the government and sort of prides itself on how critical it can be which probably leads to a certain um. Bias against the government”\(^{55}\) This critical perspective that challenges the ruling authorities and the political elite is however defended and described differently by another informant: “When they (the government) put out a ridiculous report saying there’s something like 30 % more forest in Cambodia now than there was x amount of years ago, and most of our stories are about logging and blame being cleared and land being given away - there’s no way that report could be... It should be challenged in a way. And it’s not our reporters challenging it, we’re ringing people who are experts in this field and quoting them. They are the people who are challenging, It’s not our newspaper, we just, we are quoting other people.”\(^{56}\)

Despite who is the critical voice in each article, foreign newspapers function as agenda setters by the topics they choose and they are a critical voice in themselves to the established order. But even though these journalists go far to defend press freedom they are not targeted in government attempts to suppress the freedom of media: “There’s a lot of self-censuring, but to be clear there’s like, it’s like two different worlds, the foreign journalists and the Cambodians who report for the foreign outlets and then the local journalists who report here. Cause we don’t have any of those problems, the Cambodians who report for the foreign outlets sometimes have issues, the westerners don’t. At all. And if they say they do then they’re just exaggerating.”\(^{57}\)

“I think that given the governments like intolerance for decent I think a lot of people don’t really understand why it puts up with such critical English language newspapers, umm there’s like a theory that it sort of allows them to claim that they have a free press when in fact like all the mass media is very controlled by the ruling party.”\(^{58}\) Granting foreign media outlets superficial independency is a strategic choice of the ruling regime. Superficial freedoms are often seen in transitional democracies that bare elements of the transition phase. There’s self-confidence in that what these outlets publish doesn’t matter, as long as the government controls the rest of the media landscape. “I can’t remember who, if it was within the ministry of information or if it was in the municipality or the government but they had basically said we have our ways of giving out information to our people that is not, eh you know, that they - in the sense that: they trust what we tell them through the means that we have to tell them and they’re not gonna trust what you’re saying cause they already know the truth through us.”\(^{59}\) That self-confidence is

\(^{55}\) Informant. 3  
\(^{56}\) Informant. 1  
\(^{57}\) Informant. 6  
\(^{58}\) Informant. 3  
\(^{59}\) Informant. 2
built on the low level of development in most parts of Cambodia. Large parts of the population live in rural areas, most people can’t read or lack access to news. The most popular mediums are still TV and radio, which are more or less under complete state control, and English is a language preserved for the educated Cambodians in Phnom Penh or some of the provincial capitals. “I don’t think there’s a conflict because the government knows that all they have to do is keep their own people in line... ...So I think the way they did it is pretty smart because if you like pick up the Post or the Daily it’s kind of phenomenal, the level of press freedom in this country but actually doesn’t reach that many people.”

Foreign journalists focused a lot on the task, the handcraft, when describing their job rather than what the potential outcome of printing their stories could be to the Cambodian population. “I think it’s important to keep a record of what’s going on in a country for people like yourself who want to like find out what’s been going on and spread that information to other countries...” The attitude was a strong contrast to the way the foreign journalists spoke generally of the function of journalism as a fundamental pillar of democracy. There seems to be a clash between what they ideally would be doing and what they genuinely think they do. “I think like some people have greater views of, like, our role then I do. Some people probably think that like, you know... I’m kind of thinking we don’t have a very large impact on what’s actually going on in this country that um you know...” and“(Social media)...causes like a little astir among the Cambodian society, that kind of stuff makes a difference. Probably more than most of what I do, for the average Cambodian, cause they never see it.”

It explains why foreign journalists don’t grasp a more monitorial or facilitative role. What at first appears to be disinterest is more about incapacity. None of the foreign informants speak Khmer and that, in combination with the outlet they report for, creates a lack of access to sources, information and - above all else - limits their reach enormously. The only Cambodians they reach are a very small, highly educated group or those who fled Khmer Rouge and moved abroad. Other than that they mostly cater to donors and expats. Therefore the freedom they are given as far as profits, political propaganda and corruption go isn’t worth as much as it may seem outside of Cambodia. The need to educate and be facilitative is not there because they don’t see themselves reaching that kind of audience: “The actual policy is that The Daily has been running for 20 years and the government is still doing the same shit that they’ve been doing the last 20 years so yeah. And the expatriate community is, our readers, is very isolated and we talk a lot

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60 Informant. 6
61 Embassy of Sweden, Phnom Penh, meeting: Mr. Andreas. S. Johansson 140116
62 Informant. 6
63 Informant. 3
64 Informant. 3
65 Informant. 5
amongst ourselves but I’m not sure how much of our conversations are reaching beyond BKK. Or if they’re reaching outside of BKK to the rest of Phnom Penh I don’t think outside Phnom Penh they have very much impact.”

Never the less foreign journalists provide a platform for opposing ideals and movements in society. But to cause direct change and reform is hard when they don’t reach a wide Cambodian audience. Informant 1 mentions starting an independent TV-channel for one of the foreign owned newspapers in purpose to reach the rural areas of Cambodia. But in doing so one has to have a Cambodian citizenship and few Cambodians are willing to apply for a TV-channel because of the political pressures it would include. Secondly you’d have to pay 75 000 dollars (!) and thirdly you’d have to be accepted by the ministry. “So even if you’d get your citizenship and come up with the money for it there’s no guarantee you’d get the permission anyways.”

Breaking up this old state control is not a likely development. Technological advances might be more of a game changer in the future, giving Cambodians access to the critical voice of foreign journalists online: “Perhaps social media will be a change to that because obviously social media expands our readership well beyond people that are picking up our newspaper but to anyone that are sharing our stories, stuff like that.”

Cambodian Journalists Working in Foreign Media Outlets
Examples of these news outlets are the Khmer editions of The Phnom Penh Post and The Cambodia Daily, and the foreign radio stations RFA and VOA (offering both English and Khmer services). To these journalists, the possibilities of working in a transitional democracy outshone the limitations: “Because we always surprise the world you know, always something happen, something crazy. Like armed people, open fires, civilians – striking workers, you know it’s always... Crazy things always happen here. (Laughter)” However, the general tone was more serious and they emphasized the need of reform in society and spoke of threats against such development. Threats that had increased as a result of the post-election turmoil that flooded society at the time: “I could see the restrictions of freedom of expression. Yes, just before the election and after the election.”

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66 BKK – The name of the city area in Phnom Penh that is known to be the residential area of most expats.
67 Informant. 3
68 Informant. 1
69 Informant. 3
70 Informant. 4
71 Informant. 4
Cambodian journalists, unlike foreign journalists who shrug away from the word, clearly consider themselves to have a mission in the transition: “I feel that I am responsible for the society that is, that is so corrupt, so um a society that has so many problems from the past and now, yeah. I feel that I have to do this... ....you think about what you have to do for your country. Right? Because you cannot really, you as a national reporter for your country have to think about what you can do.”

Describing how they perceive their role as journalists, journalism went from filling a facilitative role to being a radical and active force of change. “We... Just try to report what this government is trying to hide, what this government is not telling the truth about to the public. That’s our involvement. There, is so important you know. Our role is not just to bring message but go in and be. You know these officers are government officers; they should serve us, not steal from us, not lie to us. So journalism should play this role of like true stories, what’s behind these secrets and all these deals, how come they’re so rich? How much they get paid per month you know. Yeah these kinds of things you know.”

Such truth seeking, investigative and critical qualities are explained as part of social and historical ties: “70 % here are very young, well in their twenties, that’s young to me (laughter) young and they have, one guy survived the Khmer Rouge, he was just a kid. Cambodians, they’re young and brave. Their history makes them determined to seek the truth and tell it. They never say they are too afraid of their safety or something.”

The risks are not just part of their professional practices but part of their lives. It is not a limitation; it’s a necessity when being a Cambodian journalist. “I think eh... that taking a risk here is part of your life. A part of your career so. No problem.”

Cambodian journalists mention receiving threats in the past and when asked of stories that would be impossible to write today one mention criticism against the Prime Minister: “There are some stories that I cannot write because it’s very sensitive and very... (Silence) For example a story about Hun Sen you know... about how he, how he... How he is so... so... protectative you know? Protective. Orderly. Some stories you cannot write you know.”

But the risks Cambodian journalists face go far beyond political agency - Cambodian journalists working for foreign news outlets are relatively protected from such compared with other Cambodian journalists - but there are other, newer agents in society they feel threatened by: “And, also garment stories you know story about garment factories. It’s widely reported, everyone writes about this, but sometimes you cannot tell whether it’s safe or not cause behind all these garment factories you don’t know who are the powerful people you know, because some of the factories are owned by the senior officer or senior government or Chinese mafia, you don’t know.”
These journalists are not only targeted because they report in Khmer, reach a broader audience, or even because they are critical to powerful agents in society. They also serve an important link to foreign reporters – as translators, fixers and sources. They communicate with government people that don’t speak English when in need of comments on stories, they find and speak to people on the countryside and they have important friends: “Often times we’ll get leaked documents from the ministries, cause a lot of our Cambodian reporters are like friends with people, lower level people in the government. Um so that’s one of our most effective ways of sort of... Yeah those sources are probably the most valuable ones to us as people within the ministries, you know, they’re like not allowed to speak about the decisions being made but maybe they’ll leak us a document and then we can follow that up.”

In a transitional democracy undergoing political turmoil where it’s difficult to find trustworthy sources this is crucial to the critical news outlets.

Despite the access that these journalists supply, sensitive topics like corruption are constantly reported on without causing much change. A foreign informant speculates: “We rely a huge part on the Cambodians that we work with and they probably have their own like calculations about how far they are willing to go for journalism. They have to live here, they have families, so like I’m sure that maybe there’s a lack of progressiveness on the part of the Cambodians cause they’re worried. You know their family and their future. If they sort of... Cross the line. I’m not sure of how much that plays anything but it certainly could be part of it. It’s not something that they vocalize if that is part of their concerns or issues.”

Cambodian journalists working for foreign news outlets consider themselves free, despite threats they receive and restrictions they make. But as their reach is expanding, the Khmer versions of the Post and the Daily gaining popularity since the elections, they will potentially be a bigger target group in the future then they have been so far.

Foreign Freelancers Reporting Internationally
Foreign Freelancers reporting internationally emphasize the ongoing change since the elections “In the last six to eight months I think Cambodia has seen some of the biggest changes it has in my time here, like in the five years that I’ve been here the last six months have been amazing... ...There’s kind of a massive rise in social media eeh, a lot more activists, a lot more people talking about politics openly and freely, which is never the case before.” The ongoing change is partially described as very positive – in terms of democratization slowly moving towards building a greater social capital, with a culturally open environment where politics are being discussed. “I was sitting in a taxi one time and

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78 Informant. 3  
79 Informant. 3  
80 Informant. 1  
81 Informant. 2
they were talking politics amongst themselves and I was listening to this conversation as they were talking and it was unbelievable, this guy sitting next to me he was from Phnom Penh and was completely, absolutely, seemed like you know he had just landed. And he had no idea about what was going on and what was happening and this taxi driver was very pro-opposition and very upset and as was the majority of the people in the car, and they would, they basically spent the six or the five hours it took us to get to Siam Reap to you know educate this guy about the elections. It was great fun. It was good. "82

But change in the democratization process doesn’t come for free, it brings along restraints in freedom of expression and freedom of press, a natural consequence when the old regime worries about loosing its grip “Hun Sen made it quite clear, he said it eleven times during the election, if the opposition wins there will be civil war in Cambodia. And that means (!) He is the guy with the guns; He will (!) make sure there is war in order to stay in power... ...they got a knock at this election and you know restricting freedom of expression, banning freedom of assembly - essentially that’s what they’ve done, locking people up, um all these nonsense charges against them it’s largely you know it’s largely driven, and that’s why. So yeah but the space has, I mean the space over the last four or five years has definitely decreased."83

The prognosis for the future is not looking very bright either: “The whole space for operating in Cambodia is closing down. Which I would expect. I mean the opposition came close to winning, these guys are not just gonna walk out on power, never gonna happen. So what are they gonna do, well they’re gonna be more restrictive and more ... ehm try to intimidate people more.”84 So far foreign freelance journalists aren’t experiencing any of these suppressions of freedom, they enjoy the same superficial independence as other foreign journalists “They, they really don’t care what I, or any foreign journalist write, as long as we write in English.”85 One freelancer makes a sad conclusion on the gap between different journalists: “We live in some kind of really privileged la la-land of protective – being protected by the color of our skin really. Which is fortunate and unfortunate... (Pause) It’s not fair really, is it?”86

What differentiates foreign freelancers from other foreign journalists is that they lack the radical aspects of being critical, instead they express the image of being educating and consolidating: “I think media can be educational... ... I mean you can be educational in many ways, bird flu for example you can run the warnings on how you know, animals get sick, this is what we do and all the rest of it. I think there’s a public service um element to journalism sure. You know we try to eh show how society is and by so doing try to improve it. And educating it... that’s all to the better. I think our role’s for that yeah.”87

82 Informant. 2
83 Informant. 5
84 Informant. 5
85 Informant. 5
86 Informant. 2
87 Informant. 5
But despite mentioning facilitative elements freelance journalists don’t perceive themselves to necessarily be the ones to fill that role. There’s a consensus that reporting in Cambodia is not forever. “It’s important that what happens, is covered here yeah absolutely. Whether it’s by me or someone else, I mean I have my own skills and my own points of view and my approach to things, they have theirs. But as long as people are trying to do it in an objective way, and not being sensationalist and trying to be fair and balanced, whatever those things mean, then it doesn’t matter who does it.”

“I think it’s important. I mean regardless of whom, to try and report as much as possible. And as accurately as possible of what’s going on.”

The lack of personal commitment again is a result of language barriers and limits of access:

“So the limitation on that, cause I don’t speak Khmer at all really, the limitation then is that I only speak to people that speak English... ...Eh, I’m looking forward to working in a country where I speak the language, cause I’d get better sources.”

As far as sources go freelancers rely a lot on NGO’s. Without a close tie to the government or opposition NGO’s become the middlemen they need to get into the political game: “We have got a network set up through one of the iPhone apps to share information between people so we’ve created a group, I think we’re eighteen people now in this one group and is just putting in stuff as it happens or as we find out stuff. Like a twitter but for these 18 people that are covering news in Cambodia can get information before things happen or as they happen. Mainly free lancers and fixers and ehm, some NGO people as well.”

This is a positive example of the way that technological advances can be empowering to journalists in a transitional democracy. It has opened up new possibilities for journalists to maneuver around political blocks on access of information.

Cambodia has the most NGO’s per capita and their impact is not overseen by the ruling regime. As they engage in politically sensitive questions they fall under the big brother-like radar of the political elite “The grass root organizations, that’s been a large growth in Cambodia the last ten years um you know fishery organizations, forest protection organizations, all that kind of stuff it’s become kind of a big movement and it’s unregulated and it’s potentially, and this is what the government fears, that the people will vote. They don’t care about what I write, they care about what these people think and what they do and how they operate.”

Limiting NGO’s could take away the most important sources for freelance journalism and be an indirect way to close down their working space as well.

Freelance journalists report on many various topics and are the least politically bound out of all journalists wherefore this would have a negative effect on the overall reporting.
Cambodian journalists working for Khmer press were referred to as “Khmer working for government media”\(^{95}\) and “governmentalized media”.\(^{96}\) When asked for examples of ‘governmentalized’ media several informants mentioned one of the big newspapers in Khmer, Kampuchea Thmey, owned by the daughter of Prime Minister Hun Sen.\(^{97}\) Informants insist local outlets would never publish pieces critical of the government. News channels on TV were other examples of biased outlets that never would portray government actions in bad lighting: “Anything that goes through the TV, even if they’re showing some of the clashes that happened, or you know some moments where an investigation should have been called on to see, to find out what exactly had happened... it will be, it will be extremely biased and completely one-sided.”\(^{98}\)

The unanimous descriptions of these journalists were identical of a collaborative role. Extreme close ties to the government and its agencies, respectful towards authorities and lacking of the qualities needed to provide news for a participatory democracy. The collaborative role is a choice often reinforced by stakeholders, and the government has different ways of sanctioning these media outlets. The work environment of local journalists was described in a way that made it clear, if not for money, why it is a simple choice to stick to a collaborative role: “We don’t get the death threats or the you know get followed or get photographed at these events like we won’t have people try to push us off of motorcycles or they won’t try to ram into us or somebody giving us actual threats whereas Khmer journalists get it all the time. It all depends on the impact of your words.”\(^{99}\)

\(^{94}\) Observation data, appendix 1.
\(^{95}\) Informant. 2
\(^{96}\) Informant. 6
\(^{97}\) Informant. 3
\(^{98}\) Informant. 5
\(^{99}\) Informant. 2
Four Roles – One Ideal

It’s typical for journalists in democratic transitions to struggle in finding their place in the political game due to tensions between the old culture of censorship and the promises of newly won freedoms. Looking at journalists in Cambodia it’s clear that their different relations to cultural structures, suffering different censorships and experiencing different freedoms divides them into different roles. They find it all too hard to relate to other groups of journalists as well as to cooperate on a less superficial level. They share the same ideal and mention balance, objectivity and neutrality, the need for several sources and the wish to function as a fourth estate. But even though they describe a similar ideal of what function journalism should have, professional practices differ far too much and where one ideal can be found for roles can be discovered.

1. Foreign journalists working for foreign owned media outlets.
2. Native Cambodian journalists working for foreign owned media outlets.
3. Foreign freelance journalists reporting internationally.
4. Native Cambodian journalists working for local media outlets (also called state media or governmentalized media).

Foreign journalists working for foreign owned media outlets focus on a critical perspective and credits themselves on challenging the ruling elite – a radical role. Native Cambodian journalists working for foreign owned media outlets describe the same radical perspective but when describing the ideal the tone is more facilitative. Due to social, historical and political restraints they hold back more than their foreign colleagues, meaning that the way they perceive themselves ideally and practically place them somewhere between those two roles. Foreign freelance journalists are less bound to political powers, conventions and traditions: and therefore they are most free from influence of others. Unfortunately, in a transitional democracy not having close ties politically grants them less access to inside news. So far they rely a lot on NGO’s to be their main source and being politically free, in comparison to other journalists, they turn the journalistic ideal into a monitorial and facilitative role with a public service element. Cambodian journalists working for local media outlets have a collaborative role, described as government media. Facing the threats they do, which other categories of journalists don’t, it’s no wonder they are far from others in the journalistic community.

Knowing that they affect the voting public the most, the government keeps them in close

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100 Voltmer, Katrin, The media in Transitional Democracies, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013. p.117
collaboration. The biggest limitations and restrictions to foreign journalists are language and reach, which is the reason they are granted a superficial independence from the government: An independence that may seem generous but means little in reality, according to them.

The positive part when looking at the journalistic community at large is that they all describe it as uncompetitive and open, and a lot of information is traded in a beneficial way between different journalists, activists and political agents.

Social Media and Society

2014-02-11 Outside Phnom Penh Municipal Court

// A former Cambodian soldier, who appears to suffer some sort of drug problem, walks up to the awaiting freelance journalists and tries to start a conversation with them, showing some scruffy photos of himself in his younger days wearing a uniform - but no one is really interested. It’s clear that the past and Khmer Rouge has been outdated in the journalistic community, overrun by the eagerness to break news of the ongoing politics. //

The informants all mentioned working on in depth stories on Khmer Rouge in the past. That changed, from just before the 2013 elections and onwards. To cover and clarify what went on in the past through long, explanatory pieces has been exchanged for breaking news and being on top of current political events as they happen, mostly online. “You just concentrate a lot on the immediate and making sure that you can get stuff out quickly, ehm rather than you know doing the research, spending time on one topic and then, you know, spending time on what you’re gonna output.”

According to informants the changes are closely related to social media, which have had a major impact on political events and reporting of such. “I think that ignoring the conversations that are going on there (on Facebook) ignoring the role that it’s having and the governments response to that, is no longer possible. Whatever is going on in social media is not isolated from what’s going on in society.”

Around the elections in 2008 the government stopped text messaging a couple of days prior to the elections and foreign owned newspapers were the only ones reporting on the opposition at all. In the 2013 elections the ability to regulate political conversation had changed completely, due to the communication revolution that has taken place in Cambodia. “There’s kind of a massive rise in social media eeh, a lot more activists, a lot more people talking about politics openly and freely.

101 Observation, appendix
102 Informant. 2
103 Informant. 3
104 Informant. 5
which is never the case before.” To understand the surprising election result one must weigh in that never before have the opposition party had a platform from which they can mediate their message to the Cambodian population. “I’d say that like the CNRP forced social media into the narrative of what’s going on in the country by you know advertising Sam Rainsy’s Facebook page, I think Sam Rainsy has like half a million of followers so um yeah by aggressively pursuing social media to get out their message, I think that’s when it became part of journalistic conversation.”

A communication revolution must be seen from two perspectives – the advances of technology and the result of new forms of communication. The technological aspects are crucial for new forms of communication to develop. In Cambodia such aspects are cheaper smartphones and broadband, which have given more Cambodians access to social networks.

“You know the price on smartphones is gonna continue to drop and Internet is going to be more accessible over all and I’m sure with time it’s gonna have more impact.” The second part is that through these social networks new ways of exchanging information has begun: “An expanding group of Cambodians, millions of Cambodians are able to see what’s going on in the country in a way that they have never been able to see what is going on in the country before.” The interactive aspect of social media adds a participatory democratic element to transitional democracies - where the level of participation usually is regulated by the ruling regime. The reason that Facebook has become so immensely popular is because it has offered a space for completely uncensored conversation in a society of censorship and soft sanctions.

“Social media has yeah, like slowly revolutionizing I guess the way that people gather information.” The information flow has changed enormously in more ways than that though. Social media as a communication revolution fundamentally changes not only how citizen learn about and interpret politics but also how a government communicates with citizen and how political participation is organized. “It becomes very difficult to, for... “State media” to compete with those narratives like difficult cause they can’t pretend they didn’t shoot a protestor when there’s videos of them shooting protestors going around.”

The government now run a lot of their contact through Facebook, remarkable for a post-communist party but a clear sign that social media is so

105 Informant. 2
106 Informant. 3
108 Informant. 6
109 Informant. 5
110 Informant. 3
112 Informant. 5
immensely popular that not even the government can ignore it. “Either they are gonna have to take a much harder stand against independent news or change their own business models or... yeah.”

But it’s not only the conversation between political agents and citizen that has changed, the political debate between the parties has also transformed. The two-sided war that earlier took place in the papers, managed by journalists and editors, has now become comments posted in a second for everyone to see – shared, shown and spoken of in society. “So some very nasty things going on. Sort of seems like there’s more activity on CPP’s side of trying to create fights with the CNRP. CNRP too, they are very, they called Hun Sen a dog and it’s all very sort of high charged defamatory stuff that you could never say in the real world that people sort of seem to take some pleasure in saying online.” And:

“The way their supporters communicate on Facebook is very representative of the way the two parties speak to each other and interact with each other... ...There’s not much of like a sort of discussion on whether they can discuss policy or agree on going forward together it’s all very combative and very personal. Yeah so I would say that that definitely has trickled down to the way that the supporters communicate on social media.”

That is the downside of this new space for expressing opinions, this newly won freedom - the feeling that what is said in a post on Facebook is not as severe as what is said in real life. It’s problematic in a transitional democracy where freedom of expression isn’t rooted. This freedom often crosses the line and becomes a threat to tolerance of diversity. In Cambodia historical intolerance towards Vietnamese has blown up again – after being used by the opposition to gain votes in the elections – and now it endangers democratization. It shows how fragile a transitioning democracy can be and why sometimes a slow build-up or slowly released sanctions can be better than rapid changes or sudden freedoms: “There’s a lot of misinformation getting out there and there’s a lot of sensitive information going around and eh I think you could kind of see it with the anti Vietnamese stuff that’s spreading a lot through social media and um... it’s... (Pause) if you sign onto Facebook and the first thing you’re seeing is a hundred thousand people saying oh my god when that shooting happened it was Vietnamese soldiers, you’re gonna be like fuck, look what happens, Vietnamese soldiers are here shooting Cambodians and you’re... yeah I think there’s definitely dangers with social media.”

What the exact effects of social media will be is difficult to predict, because of the political game plan that changes rapidly in a transitional democracy. The informants speculate that a block on Facebook is potential but also suggests that it has already gained too much ground.

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113 Informant. 3
114 Informant. 6
115 Informant. 3
116 Informant. 6
for such a suppression of freedom on the Internet to be made. “I mean I think it would cause up a massive stir if they went out and said there will be no use of Facebook no more. I think people have a lot of, a lot of sentimental attachment to it.”117

Independent of what direction freedom on the Internet will take, these new means of communication will play part in democratization as Cambodia continues to struggle to reach full consolidation. Even though the political conversation in Cambodia hasn’t yet become constructive it is usually better for society that democratic development happens more step-by-step then the communication revolution the Cambodians have experienced through social networks.118 The informants predict that it will be the case. “You know sometimes you go out and you expect something to be that one thing that sets things off but it’s never the case it’s, it’s just a really really slow build up, and it’s not gonna be from one day to the next it’ll be like... over months or maybe years”119

117 Informant. 2
118 Voltmer, Katrin, The media in Transitional Democracies, UK: MPG Printgroup 2013 p.75
119 Informant. 2
Conclusion and Commentary
The field study took place half a year after the 2013 elections in Cambodia, in the aftermaths of great political turmoil. The unforeseen result of those elections, in which the opposition won nearly half of all the seats in the national assembly, caused commotion among the government as well as in society at large. It was a specifically important and very interesting time to observe and interview journalists.

The analysis aimed to answer three research questions that stretch from ideas, values and opinions to the reality of the informants as it’s perceived by the informants and experienced by me as a researcher. The combination of unstructured observations and semi-structured qualitative research interviews generated reliable results relevant for further research.

How do journalists in Cambodia perceive their role in a democratic transition?
It was clear not all journalists in Cambodia could be described in the same way - the historical, social and political ties were much too different for journalists to operate in the same way. Even though they shared the same ideal they performed journalistic practices differently and described their role in society differently. All in all four categories of journalists – and four different roles - were distinguished:

1. Foreign journalists working for foreign owned media outlets – holding a radical role.
2. Native Cambodian journalists working for foreign owned media outlets – radical as well but with a more facilitative idea and less critical than the above in practice.
3. Foreign freelance journalists reporting internationally – being relatively free politically they operated in a more facilitative and monitorial way than other journalists.
4. Native Cambodian journalists reporting for local media outlets (also called state media or governmentalized media) suffering the most political pressures and fill a collaborative role because of their close relationship to the government.

Foreign news reporters and local journalists are the furthest away from each other – local journalists fulfill a collaborative role with extremely close ties to the government whereas foreign news reporters take on a radical role being a critical voice to established order. Finding such opposites in the same journalistic community one understands the struggles journalists face when trying to find their place in transitional democracy. Freelancers who are
the least dependent on political agency manage to have a monitory and facilitative role, and they even mention a public-service element to journalism.

The way journalists have taken on different roles in Cambodia supports the idea that transitional democracies can be stuck in the phase of consolidation and that getting out of that clog is a slow process that can run over decades. And that transitioning states simultaneously can suffer from features that usually describes liberalization and transition phases. All informants described the bloodshed and restrictions usually seen in earlier phases of democratization as well as the big brother-like surveillance and sanctions, which were constant features in everyday-life at the time of the study.

The bright side of the journalistic community in Cambodia today is the sharing and exchanging of information between different journalists and other agents in society. The analysis finds that the government seems to consist of both hard-liners and soft-liners. Some very firm preservers of the past work against change but some softer hands secretly welcome change. This conclusion is drawn from the fact that the most important source for the most radical journalists (foreign news reporters) is found within the government. The leaked documents of such sources contribute to a critical printed press – challenging the ruling regime. The negative effect is that journalists don’t challenge their roles beyond reporting critically. Even though they know that their professional practices are much monitored by the government they accept the negotiated freedom.

What restrictions and limitations do journalistic practices face in Cambodia?
The differences in how journalistic practices are performed are partially a matter of own choice and partially a result of the force of social, historical and political ties. In Cambodia it is more about the force of such ties than of choice. Those ties determined the role of journalists, and belonging to one or another category meant different restrictions and limitations.

Cambodian journalists consider themselves relatively free but there is a potential idea among other journalists that they hold back a bit because of precautions, aware of what might happen if they don’t. However their social and historical ties make them passionate about their work.
and they have a strong will to contribute to change and help building a more generous social capital.

Foreign journalists on the other hand were limited because of their lack of language skills and consequences of that. Partially it affected their access to sources but firstly it limited their reach enormously as few can speak English, and even less read it. The lack of access to mediums like radio and TV further enhanced the difficulties in reach. Foreign journalists working for foreign news outlets enjoy a superficial independence where they can be extremely critical given the environment they work in. However it’s a strategic move on behalf of the government, as they don’t view foreign journalists publishing material in English as a potential threat. The strong self-confidence within the ruling regime is based on the fact that the mediums that reaches the most Cambodian citizens today all are state-controlled. As long as that continues change is expected to happen slowly, which decreases the motivation among foreign journalists and increases radical aspects of their professional practices. These are limitations that potentially could change though, as more and more Cambodians get access to social media and get access to news from various sources.

**How do journalists in Cambodia perceive the impact of social media on democratic development?**

The last section of the analysis - Social Media and Society – investigated the complicated interplay between journalistic roles, elements of democratic transition and social media. The impact of social media on democratic development and the response to that from different agents in society, as perceived by the informants, led to the conclusion that social media could be a beneficial tool for journalistic development but at the same time a danger to democratic development.

The interactive elements of social media and web 2.0 started a communication revolution in Cambodia. Facebook has become immensely popular and a way for citizen to publish, share and gather independent news. This revolution has opened up for political conversation between citizens, between the CPP and citizens, between the CNRP and citizens and between the CPP and CNRP. So far so good. But unfortunately Facebook is not only good news - it is also having a negative effect on democratization. Being a transitional democracy Cambodia is in a very fragile state and the sudden freedom of expression that Cambodians experience online has led to a decrease in tolerance of diversity. The opposition has used historical
intolerance towards Vietnamese to gain votes and that intolerance has, together with the rest of the political debate, moved online creating new dangers and dilemmas.

Whether the freedoms on the Internet are signs of genuinely relaxing censorship of public communication or if new Internet laws are to expect social media has already had a big impact on democratic development in Cambodia. Providing the opposition with a platform to mediate their message probably played a big part in the surprising election results. In the same way that social media became a platform for the oppositional party it could perhaps be the platform for foreign journalists to reach a wider Cambodian audience in the years to come. In that sense it could be beneficial to journalistic practices - if it manages to maneuver around political strategies and constraints.
Further Research

The material collected for this thesis generated a lot of valuable information that was helpful in defining the role of journalists in Cambodia, the limitations and restrictions they face and the benefits and risks involved in the interplay between social media and democratization. To perform this study in other transitional democracies would be valuable in order to make more general assumptions on media and transitional democracies in a contemporary world. Therefore it would be interesting to:

- Compare the roles of journalists found in Cambodia to journalistic communities in other transitional democracies.
- Discover whether the same restrictions and limitations can be found in other cultural contexts or if they are closely related to the historical, political and social constraints in a specific time and place.
- Study if social media has affected journalistic and democratic development in similar ways in other transitional democracies that have experienced communication revolutions in modern time.

Apart from putting this study in a more general perspective, the generous sharing of the informants led to many other aspects that would be interesting and relevant for in-depth research in the future - both in Cambodia specifically and in other transitional democracies.

Regarding the role of journalists it would be highly relevant to further investigate and interview journalists working in state controlled media in Cambodia since I didn’t manage to get hold of such informants for this study. It would also be valuable to compare the role of journalists working in Phnom Penh with those working in provincial capitals and rural areas. Also, the informants mentioned other categories of journalists that weren’t brought up in this thesis, since they didn’t match the definition of journalists used, but probably impact the way Cambodian citizens view journalists – for example corrupted journalists, paid journalists, blackmailing “journalists” etcetera.

Regarding social media it would be interesting to look closer into the phenomena of citizen journalism, which informants described as a growing group in Cambodia. Also, to interview other power players such as political elites on the communication revolution and whether it has changed the way they look at communication and the media would be an exciting addition to the aspects of social media investigated in this thesis.
All informants stated that corruption was one of the main reasons for the lack of democratic development. Apart from high-ranking government corruption some informants spoke of nongovernmental organizations and foreign embassies handing out money to local journalists. When asked, although they didn’t want to name specific organizations, journalists and editors agreed that this was a common event in Cambodia. Both journalism and democracy would benefit from further research on journalism and corruption, since neither of the two will be fully developed as long as corruption continues to thrive. Learning more about this would mean a much better chance for Cambodia to fully reach the phase of consolidation – which would be the true end to the Cambodian curse.
Appendix: Interview Guide

Initial talk

First of all it’s really nice of you to meet with me, and I really appreciate that you want to contribute to my essay. Like I’ve told you earlier I’m a student at Stockholm University where I study journalism science as my bachelor subject. These interviews will be used as scientific research material for my bachelor thesis, which will be published through my university as well as handed in to Sida (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) because of the scholarship I’ve received. The interview is semi structured, and I have some guidelines set up, but I’m of course interested in anything that comes to your mind as we go along. Also the interviews will of course be anonymous, and you will be referred to as journalist xx in the final report as well as in the transcript of your interview that I hand in together with the essay.

Do you have any other questions before we start?

I would like for you to start by telling me a bit about yourself and your background (for my understanding alone).

- When did you start working as a journalist?
- Did you have formal journalistic training? Where did you study that?
- How is it that you came to work in Cambodia of all places?

Themes and questions

1. Journalism in practice

- Could you describe the working process of producing news?
- What does a regular working day look like?
- Which are the topics that you usually cover?
- Would you say that is based on your own initiative or more of a process through others?
- Can you cover all types of issues? Why/why not?

- Is the working process different when it comes to different kinds of news?

- How are different sources valued?

- How would you say that the variation of positive and negative news is divided accordingly to what is displayed?

- Reporting style:
  How would you characterize the tone of reporting at your newspaper?

  Or, in your freelance assignments how does that differ?
  How is your work stirred by who you’re working for/what you’re writing about?

2. The role of journalism in Cambodia today.

- How would you describe journalism in Cambodia?

- Why do you think that is?
  Other reasons perhaps?

- Why is that unique for Cambodia do you think?

- How does it differ from other places you’ve worked or what it would be like working in other contexts, do you think?

- What would you say your main challenges are working in this specific environment? Examples.

- Has the situation changed in Cambodia in any aspect while you have been working here?
  If yes how, and why? Please describe an example!
3. **Journalism in a transitional democracy.**

- When one talks about journalism in a changing democracy it’s described as highly interrelated with political events. There have been a lot of discussions lately of human rights due to previous protests, how does such kind of events affect your role (if you think it does)?

- What could be the difficulties when working as a journalist under such circumstances?

- Do you ever feel limited or restricted in your work? If so, in what ways?  
  (Could be by agents in the field, or limits of access, or limits in information spread)

  + follow up questions  
  (why, how do you mean, could you describe a situation when that occurred etc.).

- Do you feel that you have a certain **mission** in this kind of setting? (Your individual view on journalism as a whole). Please describe that.

5. **The journalistic ideal.**

- Is there a journalistic ideal in Cambodia today, collectively speaking, do you think? How could that be described?

- Are there complications in correlation to the democratic development?

- What do you think that journalists should strive to achieve in a working environment like this?

- What do you think that the general mission should be?

- What are the biggest issues in need of change connected to journalistic practices do you think?
- What political/democratic issues do you think could be solved through or affected by journalism?

- In what ways do you think that journalism would could should interfere with democratic development?

3. Different stakeholders in the media field in a developing democracy.

- Do you feel that you are given a certain role as a journalist in Cambodia (collectively)? How would you describe that? What do you think that could be a result of?

- Could you describe the relationship between journalists and political stakeholders in Cambodia today? How they communicate and what channels they use? Examples of when that occurs/ is noticeable? Why is that, you think?

- How do politicians choose to mediate their messages here? Government/Opposition? Have you seen any trends or tendencies when it comes to different kind of media houses?

- Are there different messages/mediators in different media houses?

- How do you think that the public perceives journalists in Cambodia today?

- Difference in how they perceive different journalists? Different media houses?

- Corruption in terms of paid journalism is often mentioned in discussions about Cambodia, how would you describe the situation? Do you feel affected by it?
- Who would you say control the media in Cambodia today? Examples of how that is visible?

- How does that affect your field of work? What possible dangers, or opportunities, could be related to that?

- Is that related to sensitive subjects for journalists to report on do you think? How do journalists tackle that today?

4. Social media in a transitional democracy.

- How popular is social media in Cambodia today? Among the public vs. journalists?

- Has your role changed the last couple of years - or been affected by - the changes in the media landscape? How is that? (Mediocrity, social media, web 2.0, information society, infotainment etc.)

- Which social media do you use? Privately, work related?

- How does your use differ?

- Is there a glitch concerned with that do you think? Difficulties? Benefits?

- Do you feel that has been positive, negative or both? In what ways? Examples?

- How do other agents in the society look upon social media? Could you describe such use that pictures that? (Government, opposition, the public).

- Why do you think that web 2.0 is not more widely restricted? Could that be connected with danger or opportunities would you say? Why is that?

- How do you think that is correlated to your role/mission?
- Could that affect journalism as a profession here in the future in some ways?

Thank you so much for taking the time to complete this interview with me.

- Is there anything else that you would like to add?

- Can I get back to you if there is something that I feel I need to clarify?

Thank you!
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Other sources
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Personal meeting with Mr. Andreas S Johansson at the Embassy of Sweden in Phnom Penh

Front-page photo credit: Tora Hultgård
Appendices: Observation Data and Interview Data

Appendix 1: Observation Report

Freelancers in Cambodia - ‘Free 23’
Date: 2014-02-11
Time: 07.30-12.00

They have already started their coffee drinking at Commes la Maison when I meet up with them. Early mornings are clearly not a favorite among the crowd, especially not for XX who swears a bit about it, but they still seem excited carrying their equipment in their laps and holding motodop helmets in their hands. Helmets, not for motorcycling but to protect from the eventual violence that has recently been a repeated feature at occasions concerned with the garment strikes in the beginning of this year. XX impresses the others with his steel helmet, bought in Bangkok by a friend. His old one cracked as Cambodian police had a go with it. You see, a dangerous place Cambodia is, one of the others laughs as I get into the tuk tuk that will take us to the Appeal Court, situated next to the Royal Palace on Riverside. The laughter spreads and it’s a warm laugh, but there are still some tones of seriousness underneath.

The day before XX called and told me they would be holding the hearings against the supposedly violent protesters, that were arrested and detained, this morning and that the protesters would be brought in from a long way from Phnom Penh. It’s not clear who the source was, XX told me earlier on that most of their information comes from NGO’s but that 18 foreign freelancers/journalists have an app where they share that kind of information. And they clearly seem to collaborate, one guy in the tuk tuk (XX) is filming a documentary and has only been here about a year (compared to the others who have had 4-6 years in Phnom Penh) but still hangs out with the others, and as we get out in front of the appeal court journalists are greeting each other in every corner. Perhaps in a country where information can be hard to access there’s a less competitive tone, my thoughts stretch as I watch them share cigarettes and hear says from behind the guarded court doors.

We move along the courtyard to have both entries in our vision, not knowing which way the minibus will choose for its suspected arrival. Rumors have spread that not all are being brought to the trials, only the ones they will set free. How can they know that before the trials,
one of the younger journalists bursts out. The veteran of the group, XX, who has been here since the nineties and seems looked upon with great respect, laughs openly at the remark showing his lack of teeth on one side and a less obvious cynical sense of humor. If they show up at all, one guy mutters pessimistically. No one is sure yet, and so we wait. And we smoke. Waiting is what we mostly do, the other XX laughs. And photograph each other; the others fill in snapping photos of each other’s grins while discussing cameras and the latest technique. There seems to be a ranking system among the group, based on experience, how many years you’ve been in Cambodia and how modern your use of technology is. The lower rank goes to a Khmer journalist all dressed in white, who seem to have more of a safari look going while approaching us with multiple cameras hanging from his shoulders and his belt.

We wait some more, smoke some more, and a former Cambodian soldier of some sort, with a suspected drug problem, comes up and tries to start a conversation showing photos of himself in his younger days but no one is really interested. It’s clear that the past has been outdated, overrun by the hunger to break news and make a change. As a minivan drives up the race begins and a horde of media people runs across the courtyard snapping photos and filming supposedly eight guys in orange prison uniforms and flip-flops. But they ran for nothing, these guys turn out to be robbers or similar and not the ones we are all so eagerly waiting for. Rumors that we are not going to get the pictures we were hoping for intensify and within 30 minutes are confirmed by reliable sources. The hearings will proceed without the offended present. I woke up early for nothing, fuck; XX swears and puts his cigarette out. Hate it. To cheer him up XX suggests a fake run to see how many followers they get from the media crowd and the joke is successful as a majority starts leaping before realizing the nonexistent footage opportunities.

Most of the reporters go to photograph the crowd outside – mostly demonstrators, curious citizen journalists and nongovernmental organization volunteers involved in human rights work. A little Cambodian girl and what looks like her grandmother, are wearing bandanas that have “Free 23” handwritten on them. 150 people present all in all, XX tweets. The reporter that I haven’t met yet but whose reputation foresees him in so many ways. But I do meet XX, who is interested in meeting with me but points out how important his anonymity will have to be if the interview is to take place. Clearly something that put him in trouble before or made sources unwilling has been published online. I assure him that won’t happen, and tell him that I can let him approve any material I may use before handing the essay in, curious about what
caused the heavy discretion when all other foreign reporters have been so open and denied rumors of danger in the working environment.

XX introduces me to Khmer journalists along the way and in particular one girl seems unwilling to speak to me. Shy of the blonde western girl sure, but I sense that there’s more to it. She shrugs at the word investigates (used by XX) and I suspect that I might have a hard time making an appointment with her before going home. XX and I move to exit in the back, it’s time for more tuk tuk and coffee while waiting and planning for the next story.

We end up at Samaky and while we sit there others drop by. It’s clearly where they work, and I find it interesting that there is really no secrecy or fear in discussing subjects in the open among the group. They move on to the next story, upcoming Valentines Day on Friday and the openness around sex. 86 percent claim that they will have sex on Valentines Day, a 30 % increase from last year and free condoms will be handed out. A more open society is the positive summing up of it. The dark side is pointed out by XX; it will include rape. Fuck, these women here. They get treated shit. That’s a real issue. Freedom is clearly not just a matter for the prisoners from the protests, it’s something women don’t enjoy either - even if they’re living what is called free life.

After a couple of hours I leave them to their emails, hunting for contacts and updates in social media. I want to do a big story, XX states turning his computer to show a picture of what appears to be a huge riot, with a wave of police helmets everywhere in the photo. XX agrees: I’m not wasting a couple of days here and there. It needs to be something really big. A big story, their eyes are glowing at the thought of it. But right now the little stories, as small as tweets, seem to be what needs to be reported in Phnom Penh. Maybe XX will have to go back to Libya or Uganda, like his planning to, to find what he is looking for. There are no scoops to be discovered in Phnom Penh; there are big changes that need to be pushed for, one small step at a time. The rumor that claims 19 of the 23 detained are to be released on Friday is such a step. An important tweet but hardly the next big story for adventurous free lancing photographers.
Appendix 2: Transcript of Interview with Informant 1

Foreign Editor
2014-02-05
14.00

Initial talk...

The topics, if we focus on the English version paper, you said it’s a little bit more political?
No it’s not more political, eehm, we tend to don’t run with the crime and murder type of
stories, ehm, there’s much, we do have a column called police blotter, which has been an
institution for the 21 years this paper has been going and that covers a lot of the crime stories
I talk about. The Khmer audience really seem to enjoy, this is the main staple of, not of our
paper but there are other Khmer language papers in Cambodia, if you’d translated their front
page every day there’d be mostly crime stories and very little of the political stories, most of
the Khmer newspapers tend to be aligned with the government in one way or another, and
they certainly were rarely put a critical story of the government on their front page, our paper,
ehh our two papers, do. Eh but as the government does a good thing we put that up on the
front too. Eehhm,

Today’s paper. (Holds up an issue of it)
Is about inequality with women working in the workplace so that’s not really a political story
that’s more a little labor story, eh probe yeah there are three stories here: the second story is a
probe in the shootings outside the garment factory last month. In the protests there were four,

at least four people that we know of, shot dead. The government promised an inquiry so they
had the inquiry but they won’t tell anyone what the findings were, that was the story; they
maybe come out with that today. And the third story, the main story, was some 23 people
were arrested and detained during that shooting outside the garment factory and then locked
up in prison a long way away from Phnom Penh. And some politicians and our reporters went
with the families of those people to go and try and visit them and they were all denied entry
so that’s, there’s a sad picture of this little girl leaning on the prison gate with her mum trying
to go and see her dad eeh you could say that’s a slightly political story but we don’t
necessarily run with politics every day eh we take ehm stories on the on the on the news angle
you know that had newsworthy. The day before we had a claim from the government, one
story on the front page about how much forest is regrown in Cambodia, ehh but then we
looked into it and we discovered the rubber trees and all the things they had planted in the you know original forest and you know we’ve had, you know there’s a bit of a slaughter there.

*So there’s a bit of a critical perspective, that’s the unanimous thing?*

Oh. Yeah there is. Eeh. There’s I think, you know they call the newspapers the fourth of state or you know the, the things that hold governments and authorities accountable and I think we try and do that. Eehm and that’s one way of it you know. When they put out a ridiculous report saying there’s something like 30 % more forest in Cambodia now than there was x amount of years ago, and most of our stories about logging and blame being cleared and land being given away there’s no way that report could be… It should be challenged in a way. And it’s not our reporters challenging it; we’re ringing people who are experts in this field and quoting them. They are the people who are challenging. It’s not our newspaper, we just, we are quoting other people. We do it that way, we just, we don’t try and write opinionated pieces it’s very much not allowed in this place. It shouldn’t be allowed in a lot of newspapers. There’s a place for opinions, and that’s the opinion page. If you start putting opinions in the news stories then you’re showing bias and you’re leaning one way or the other and that’s not what we try to do here. We try and play very straight. Every story that concerns the government we will ring the government minister involved and ask for a comment and if we can’t get through to him we will put in the bottom of the story the minister was unavailable for comment to show that we’ve tried to do a balanced story.

*Yeah. How would you say different sources are valued then?*

Ehm we have all sorts of sources here. Cambodia, one of the good things about Cambodia, there are a lot of good things about Cambodia, being such a small country with a very small population, Phnom Penh is really quite a small town, it’s not unusual for me to be sitting in a café and the government spokesman to be sitting at the table next to me. Which has happened quite a lot, or one of the government ministers. And the other thing, we have all their phone numbers and they, 90 % of the time they will pick up their phones and even at ten a clock in the night if our reporters will call them and apologize for the late call and but we need a comment on this and 90 % of the time we get it. We don’t have to go through the press secretaries and all the stuff you tend to get to in the western world because Cambodia is a small country, it’s still learning and it’s still growing and people are very accessible here and this is one of the things that make our job a lot easier. Not only government people but all sorts of business people and eh in the private sector as well, being such a small town we know
all of these people and we know all the ambassadors for example and we have all their phone
numbers and we just call them up and there are some issues of course they can’t comment on,
you know if you rang the spokesman for the American embassy with a particularly curly
question like how does America think of China’s involvement in… he wouldn’t be able to tell
you on the top of his head he would have to call Washington and get an official response but
he would pick up the phone and at least say that eh so it’s ehm…

Other sources then, other than the political I mean?
Oh lot’s of sources, umm…

For example you mentioned before the interview that a lot of sources were opinionated?
Thinking of people that perhaps would like to have influence…
Yeah yeah, there are a lot of very opinionated people here, some very anti government people
who try and push their opinion on us, and some very pro government people, you know I get
about 150 emails a day and I get some emails, people who write letters to the editor and
they’re private citizens but we know from experience that usually these guys either hate the
government or support the opposition or vice versa, and they’re trying to push their opinions
over one way or the other and pull that off into a news story we don’t use that in
our stories, we just don’t touch it. Eehm.

You use other, more reliable sources? More frequently used?
Yeah, yeah we try and get more than one source on every story; I think that you learn that at
any basic journalism classes that you always get more than one source on every story. To
make sure it’s always 100 % correct and not some guy telling you a little bit of a white lie or
an extremely outrageous lie to make someone else look bad and use your paper as a tool to
make someone else look bad. It’s… We’ve never been sued and I’ve had a couple of angry
calls from the government but not in the last six months. Not since before the last election I
haven’t had an angry call or a letter or an email or anything. Umm.

Was there an increase of phone amongst calls and emails around the elections?
Oh there was a lot yeah yeah, yeah.

From stakeholders?
(Laughter)
Ehehm, there was a lot. There was a lot of stuff going on around the elections. There wasn’t that, any angry calls from the government, we were reporting everything, we reported the return of the opposition leader from exile eeh, so did our Khmer language paper. Some of the Khmer language papers didn’t even report that guy was coming back. Can we just put that on hold for a second?

Interview paused.

Interview continues

It’s on again. So journalism in Cambodia, you spoke a little bit about that before this was on, so you said you thought that it was not very...

Khmer language press there’s only, there’s only well I should be honest to you about the English language press first, The Phnom Penh Post is 21 years old is she, Daily is 19 years or something like that I think, it’s a little A4 sized sure I have a copy of it somewhere here, it’s a small version. Cambodia Daily run pretty much the same things we do, there’s a lot of competition between our papers ehm but with the Khmer language press apart from our paper the majority of the Khmer language press pro government leaning towards the government, the prime ministers daughter owns one of the papers. And ehm they you will really see I can’t read them but my Khmer friends tell me you’ll never see an anti government or pro opposition story, very very rarely but our Khmer language paper has gone up to number two or three in the country since the election. And we try all sorts of ways to increase the circulation, we’ve created out more crimes stories in all types of things to appeal more to the Khmer population and the big game changer was completely out of our hands was when the election came along when Sam Rainsy the opposition leader was given the when he came back to Phnom Penh there was a hundred thousand people lined up along the streets to welcome him back from between the airport and the city we ran it on our front page and so did the Khmer, our Khmer language paper, with photographs and the story. They were the only Khmer paper to cover his return. The other Khmer papers, if they did cover it, had two little paragraphs like a brief thing and eh the population saw that and eh the population in Phnom Penh voted 7 out of ten people voted for the opposition in the Phnom Penh, I think that’s what the government minister told me. So our Khmer language paper just suddenly sougthed popularity, from the moment Sam Rainsy stepped back. And then they followed the election coverage in The Post Khmer we call them and it was much, it was balanced, it was
fair - they haven’t been sued the same way we haven’t been sued, they haven’t gotten letters just the same as we don’t, they report as honest and fair as we do. We’re not anti government in any way, we’re not pro government, we just try to play straight and we report both sides in any way we can, and that’s what they do. But their popularity has just gone through the roof. And, I think they’re probably number 2 in the Khmer language paper, which, they do actually get a lot more traffic on the website than the English one does, you have to remember in Cambodia it’s a country with a small population, but so many people fled in the seventies they’ve been living in deputy, there’s a lot in France there’s Long Beach in California, there’s a whole town of Cambodians in Australia. They, the refugees, spread out all over the world. If they wanna read the websites, I mean, in their own language Post Khmer is the best one to read. The other newspapers have websites, which are pretty much pro government and there’s a few bloggers about, but there’s not very many reliable sources of news. And that goes for the English version too, it’s only us and the Cambodia Daily. And the Cambodia Daily only started their website last year, we’ve had ours for many years, ehm.

As I was saying our website gets a lot of traffic but the Khmer one gets more and we are emerging, our website is a work in progress, we rebuilt it last year, we got a whole unit of people doing videos, and different things – multimedia stuff. We have text alerts and different stuff for mobile phones and tablet things and. It’s a work in progress but it’s going very very well, it get’s a lot of traffic, we’ve got more than 20 000 followers on twitter every day,

Yeah that’s one of the main fields, the interaction with social media, from what I hear it’s very popular in Cambodia today...

Yeah, yeah, it’s very big, this is our twitter feed, we have quite a lot of people on it, when something happens you’ll see that this thing comes alive and it goes on top of the twitter feed, if there’s a protest or when something goes ugly in Phnom Penh and are guys are out there, they’re on their mobile phones, they all have smart phones.

In general, with the public it’s very popular?
Yeah yeah. For sure.

Lets talk a bit more about the role of journalists in general here in Cambodia?
It’s eh, very different to the western world. Eh, reporting demands for journalists to be well prepared in forms of water, electricity that kind of stuff if there’s a story on logging on the countryside for example. There have been cases where journalists have been killed or
detained. The military police have been shooting at journalists, beaten them with wooden sticks, not badly but serious beating anyways. I mean when you’re hit with one of those wooden sticks you have a bad headache for a couple of days. They have to wear helmets and wests, and there have been cameras that have been smashed and those sorts of things.

How do you think that has affected the journalists in their role, has it?

70 % here are very young, well in their twenties, that’s young to me (laughter) young and they have, one guy survived the Khmer Rouge, he was just a kid. Cambodians, they’re young and brave. Their history makes them determined to seek the truth and tell it. They never say they are too afraid of their safety or something. It’s not like in Bangkok where people were scared and refused to write a story. I’ve never had anyone saying no to writing a story. They’re very brave; this one guy heard the bullets from an AK47 whistle right pass his ears, the guy that filmed the garment protests. But I mean he shouldn’t be at the front line. If something happened, that would be the worst thing.

Yes.

Are there other difficulties for journalists here?

There’s the ehm, cultural differences of course, working western and Khmer so closely. Differences in what is considered respectful for example, you don’t walk into a Khmer home and put your feet up, showing that is the ultimate insult. That kind of stuff when the staff is a mixture, foreign, Khmer. Other than that Cambodians are very friendly, they are not cruel or something, they’re very friendly. And the longer into the country you get the friendlier and more open they are. I mean it’s the same in Sweden probably, in the US, in Thailand.

But the violence has increased, you said before?

Yeah, only since the elections last year. There hasn’t been violence much previous years, so it has increased. To a small amount with the demonstrations and the strikes. The government has become more heavy handed I’d say. A lot more, the elections made it clear. The opposition took them by surprise, opposition has gained strength. It’s not going back to civil war but I’d say the opposition needs to take up strategies for negotiating with the opposition. The government never jumped on you before but, it wouldn’t have been such events if the opposition hadn’t gained strength. They need to get involved, that’s my opinion.
We don’t take sides, we report both opinions. If the opposition says something that we quote we get the governments opinion too. Telling both sides is probably why we’re doing so well, why the website does so well.

*Could that be a certain mission?*
No there’s no mission. I think if you go on a mission hunt you can be a mission targeting blog site or you become opinionated. There are lots of those opinionated newspapers, especially in South East Asia. A newspaper should not be opinionated, it should tell facts and inform people to make their own opinions. Tell all sides how many no matter how many sides there are in the equation. That way other people can make their opinions. It’s my judgment and I think it’s a fair judgment, not that my judgment is always the best (laughter) But it’s fair.

*So you don’t use social media in a personal way?*
We link our articles in social media; it’s a tool to spread information more than opinion. But you can see the opposition leader, Sam Rainsy; he is very forward in Social Media.

*Interview ended.*

*Additional talk, interview 1.*
There are two types of people, the ones who live in a bubble apart from the people and those who live with the people, marry them, meet the families etc.

NGO’s hire people for a hundred bucks a month. They write reports on building toilets and send someone to build them. Not all but there are those who do. NGO’s biggest source for journalists, the corruption is never written on.

Buy a TV channel buy a Cambodian citizenship 75 000 dollars
Appendix 3: Transcript of Interview with Informant 2.

Foreign Freelancer
2014-02-06
10.00

Initial talk

During the time that you’ve been here is that something that has changed?
Oh absolutely, there’s a lot that has changed. In the last six to eight months I think Cambodia has seen some of the biggest changes it has in my time here, like in the five years that I’ve been here the last six months have been amazing. Amazing yeah yeah. There’s kind of a massive rise in social media eeh, a lot more activists, a lot more people talking about politics openly and freely, which is never the case before. Ehm. Yeah so definitely there’s a change in the air, but it’s an extremely slow process. It’s very step-by-step, little bits here and there.

I was talking about it with a friend last night it’s like, you know sometimes you go out and you expect something to be that one thing that sets things off but it’s never the case it’s, it’s just a really really slow build up, and it’s not gonna be from one day to the next it’ll be like… over months or maybe years.

It’s interesting that it’s happening now anyways, is that something that you feel has changed the way that you’re reporting?
It’s definitely changed the way… Yeah it’s changed the way I work in the sense that I spend a lot of time
(Pause) following what’s going on. And it’s extremely time consuming.

And then you just concentrate a lot on the immediate and making sure that you can get stuff out quickly, ehm rather than you know doing the research, spending time on one topic and then, you know, spending time on what your gonna output - it’s really a lot more day to day everything. So it’s a bit, it’s a bit draining and I wanna like switch off a bit and do a little more like long term stuff. It’s been a long time of doing breaking news breaking news breaking news…

You think that could be a danger, the immediate flow being the reporting you see everywhere and that could be concerned with opportunities as well of course?
Yeah it is definitely as well.

I think a lot of you the collective has gotten a lot of attention and a lot of recognition for the, for the news coverage that we’re doing. Ehm, a lot more than the features that we’ve done and ehm and for that I think it’s good for the collective in a sense that

(Pause) we, we keep offering information to to, to people, so its not these long waits between projects and I think it’s a good balance if we can, you know, find a way to be able to cover what is going on and, you know, if some of us are able to do more lengthy in depth pieces. I think it’s important to, to do both. And not only locally, regionally as well.

In a more general sense then, apart from the collective, how would you describe journalism as a whole in Cambodia?

I think we’re really lucky here in a sense that there’s a very good community eh, at least amongst photographers definitely. Even though you know if there’s a bunch of us that are all competing for the same thing we, there’s a good energy, there’s a good share of information. Ehm. We have got a network set up through one of the iPhone apps to share information between people so we’ve created a group, I think we’re eighteen people now in this one group and is just putting in stuff as it happens or as we find out stuff. Like a twitter but for these 18 people that are covering news in Cambodia can get information before things happen or as they happen.

Are you all free lancers these 18 people?

Mainly free lancers and fixers and ehm, some NGO people as well. Cause there’s a lot here, a lot goes through NGO’s. That’s the other thing that I think is maybe different from other places is that NGO’s are behind a lot of what’s going on ehm that they’ll help communities ehm (Silence)

How do you say, what’s a good word for it, they give guidance for, in activism in trainings and then ehm education and ehm and so a lot of. Like they’ll organize events, local NGO’s I’m talking about local NGO’s, they’ll stage an event for commemoration of the for the victims of the clashes even though they don’t have ehm. Or they’ll set up a press conference or they’ll… so that’s how it is. But it’s not like Bangkok or some of the other places where it’s you know where everybody is kind of battling against each other.

Why do you think that is unique for here?
I haven’t worked in any other place where I’ve gotten that impression, that people are so, where people are so willing to share information. And having worked in Bangkok I have the feeling that people are a lot more secretive about their information and not as openly share stuff that’s going on ehm. Yeah. Yeah.
Same in if I worked in New York or in Australia, I didn’t get the same impression so.

*What could be the reason for that?*
I don’t know, it’s… I don’t know what triggered it. I don’t know what makes it different working here rather than somewhere else. I couldn’t say for sure.
Maybe because Cambodia attracts an interesting, strange mix of people.

*(Laughter)*

*Yeah perhaps*

*(Laughter)*

*And, that’s positive, but the main challenges in this environment, what could those be?*
I think everybody… I don’t know, I don’t know, I think that, I don’t think there are much difference in… Can I go back to that other question where you’re saying describing journalism in Cambodia?

*Yeah of course!*
Because I think there’s an interesting thing happening here with ehm citizen journalism, where there is you know any protest or event that you go to will be eeh will be documented by dozens and dozens of people with their Iphones and Ipads and, and cameras and what not and then it will be uploaded on to your Facebook and there’s a…
Facebook has this massive, I don’t know what it… I don’t know how to describe it, but there is just a lot of people that take Facebook as being this platform for their news, for news and this platform for, you know, distributing information and they’ll go to these things just to be able to, you know have their own video or their own features that they can put on Facebook so that they can have more followers and more likes and there’s a few people in, in particular that you know they have like hundreds and thousands of followers and friends on Facebook ehm. And they’ve created their own kind of news note where they’re like, they are their own presenters and hold out their Ipads and they’ll talk to their “Dear Facebook followers, this is what’s going on over here” and yeah.
So it’s sort of in a sense of them wanting to be amateur journalists? Or?
Yeah I think so, and I think also they care, I don’t know, I think that’s the main thing. There’s two things, one is that they actually care and there’s also a status thing that goes along with it. Eh some kind of recognition, but I think in most cases it’s down from the fact that they actually care and that because the only, the only strands for independent media here are radio, foreign…foreign language newspaper so, The Cambodia Daily and The Phnom Penh Post, and that’s it. Like TV is all strictly controlled; eeh, Khmer print media is all strictly controlled, ehm so people feel the need to try to get information out there past that, to the public.

Is there a different reliability in that?
Oh yeah definitely but I mean if you see the newspapers, the Khmer print newspapers here there’s also a different reliability in that, I mean there was -- up until several months after the elections the Khmer language papers were not printing anything about the opposition, and they noticed their sales were going down and, so, it’s only fairly recently that they’ve started printing about the opposition activities as well. Sorry I’m rambling a bit now.

(Laughter)
No it’s great. My questions are only guidelines so. I’m thinking about the recent political events, protests etc. and the climate since the elections.
Do you feel that there has been any limitations do to that or challenges concerned with that?

What do you mean with limitations?

I mean, the debate on human rights issues, the freedom of expression, that kind of thing, there has been a lot of headlines stating that there’s a backlash on those things but when you describe it it doesn’t really sound like it, so I’m interested in how you feel about those things? I don’t know, like there’s an interesting… Can’t remember what it related to (noise) I can’t remember what it was related to exactly but there was, there was… There had been this event and ehm the government news, the ministry of information, had put out this information which was completely different from what Facebook and all the foreign media ehm the few independent news radio stations was saying and ehm and when questioned about this and then again I can’t remember who, if it was within the ministry of information or if it was in the
municipality or the government but they had basically said we have our ways of giving out information to our people that is not, eh you know, that they - in the sense that “they trust what we tell them through the means that we have to tell them and they’re not gonna trust what you’re saying cause they already know the truth through us” so… Ehm. Yeah.

_Could that be naïve you think?_

Absolutely, I think there’s a big, there’s a kind of impunity among, I feel like, amongst high-ranking government people and that they, they don’t care. Ultimately they really don’t care. What their image is. The deputy governor was caught on video bashing up a motorcycle driver with a megaphone during a protest eh last week, and no comment. The only thing he said was I think the video has been tampered with to put me in there. You know in a bright pink shirt as well hehehe (bursts into laughter) _Continued laughter_

It’s beautiful…

And then also looking at Facebook and the responses, the information that the government is putting out and the responses and the comments is sensational, like you’ll have Hun Sen the prime minister put out a comment yesterday about the strike of the garbage collectors, the waste collectors, and the first comment was “Stop blaming others you asshole.” Like this you would have never gotten before. Like, I mean even in in June, in June or July this monk got fired from his job as a teacher for making political comments on his Facebook and I’m sure that still happens all the time, I have a friend on Facebook that got told by somebody in some ehm I don’t now someone in the government or someone in a high ranking position to close her Facebook page and open a new one because you’re blacklisted. And… yeah but then on the other side there are all these people that are free to comment and there’s always the you know I love you Hun Sen and then there’s the people that are “you’re actually talking rubbish here” and yeah. Which is good.

_Yeah._

_Have there been any events where you feel that the government or other political stakeholders have tried to limit the opinions on your side?_

On our side no, as foreign press we’re really lucky here because as foreign journalists we, we don’t get harassed or attacked or, like there’s only two occasions where, that we’ve been… One occasion when we were particularly targeted, um, and they didn’t care who was who they were trying to hit anybody and everybody um.
What situation was that?

That was, they were staging a hunger strike after the elections, at Wat Phnom and eh it was nighttime, they were gonna stay there for I don’t remember if it was 48 hours or 24 hours there so I came at night and police, riot police, descended on the area and just surrounded the people from one side. And, and then basically opened up and let all of these thugs come through, plain clothes, people with sling shots (?) and batons and eh and Tasers (?) cattle frogs (?) and they just went hard on everybody and anybody they could get their hands on. Eh, that was one time.

And then, and then, since then, there was one occasion where, where they turned against me because I was trying to photograph from arrested somebody that they didn’t really want me to photograph and I was a bit pushy and so they turned around and hit me as well. But no dramas. *(Small laughter)*

Ehm and that same day one of the other photographers, one of the Khmer photographers got hit as well. He wasn’t wearing a helmet, unfortunately, but he still pulled through okay. And then last week two journalists got attacked with this eh and it was a very strange situation because, like, we were all there, we were all in this, pretty much in the same area like I don’t know 30 square meters, and the only people that got targeted were Khmers, one Khmer journalist/photographer and one Japanese and, I don’t know if they had been particularly pushy or what but eh I was in the same area pushing, had these shields pushing against me to try to get me away from taking a photo and I was pushing back and nobody hit me. I don’t know if, this time I’m not really sure what happened exactly, but I think we live in… We live in some kind of really privileged la la-land of protective – being protected by the color of our skin really. Which is fortunate and unfortunate.

It’s not fair really, is it?

No.

*(Laughter)*

Being of that, that you are protected in that sense, do you feel that you have a certain mission?

*(Silence)*

I mean, I think it’s important. I mean regardless of whom, to try and report as much as possible. And as accurately as possible of what’s going on. Regardless of the fact that I’m… I
mean everybody puts out a lot of information and eh I don’t think. We don’t get the death threats or the you know get followed or get photographed at these events like we won’t have people try to push us off of motorcycles or they won’t try to ram into us or somebody giving us actual threats whereas Khmer journalists get it all the time. And citizen journalists as well getting a lot of it as well - it all depends on your popularity I guess or the impact of your words.

But when it comes to being allowed access to information how does that differ to Khmer journalists then?
That’s a good question, I’m not sure, I don’t really know, I think we have the same restrictions. Yeah. I think when they don’t want us to see something they don’t want anybody to see it. I don’t think we’ll get particularly better access.

So that’s a reason to why you have the app for sharing information?
Umm. (Nods).

So journalism in correlation to the democratic development: the journalistic ideal.
Objectivity, freedom of expression, freedom and the press... That kind of thing, often mentioned as the basic practices of journalism,
Do you feel that there’s an ideal around what journalism should be?
An ideal for what journalism should be in Cambodia?

Yeah
I don’t know if, I’m not sure if I answer your question now but ideally, ideally there’s channels for free media. Umm, ideally there’s an independent TV. Ideally there’s independent Khmer press. News papers or articles that eh, government news workers that are unbiased. I mean ideally there’s equal treatment between us and… Between foreign journalists and local journalists. Umm. Yeah ideally there is. Yeah that, you know, the equal security and ability to do your job without being discriminated upon if you’re Khmer. Yeah and then the outlets. The outlets that are distributed locally especially.

And if we say those are issues, that it’s not really like that here and now, where’s the need for the biggest changes you think?
I think the biggest change would come with, if there’s independent television. I think that’s definitely the, the first and most important step to being able to spread information to other countries.

I mean the whole reason their not accepting an independent TV-stations is, is, well this is my personal view, I’m biased - my assumption is that they probably know that if, that if they do an independent TV-station it will be a massive catalyst to bring along change in Cambodia. I mean even in the poorest houses in the middle of nowhere you’ll find a TV. You know they will hook up to a battery and have an antenna on the roof and they’ll be able to catch on the two channels. I think even more so than, even more so then the radio. I mean every morning; every morning you go to the majority of cafés where people hang out they will have a news report on the television.

And usually, usually it’s road accidents and crashes that will be presented. They have, you know they have a special strand, a special strand of roadside accidents. I don’t know (laugh) not ideally what I’d like to watch in the morning (laughter) but … some people like it I guess (laughter). A desire to spland on what is going on.

(Laughter)

*And so then the difference between, obviously then the government is very closely tied to TV as a medium, but other political parties, the opposition for example?*

Umm so a lot of the information, maybe I’m not answering your question, the CNRP doesn’t have a voice for itself. It does everything through social media and the Internet which is, even that very limited reach so they, ultimately they don’t have a voice. And anything that goes through the TV, even if they’re showing some of the clashes that happened, or you know some moments where an investigation should have been called on to see, to find out what exactly had happened… it will be, it will be extremely biased and completely one-sided. They’ll be showing you know the protestors as being anarchists and rootless youth going out destroying the property of the people that are trying to help the nation, which is then the current government and the police as victims of these people. And the only way they can take care of this is by opening fire. People with wood sticks and… ayayay.

*And then the public, how do you think they perceive different journalists and different mediums, do you think they feel there’s a difference between journalists and journalists?*

You know I like to think that they do, I’d really like to think that they know. But I mean the people I talk to, you know, that you know like we’ll be talking to people that protest or people
that are already there or that are educated. Young people that know how to use the Internet then yeah definitely there’s a trend. That way if I base my information on that I think there is, but this is only in Phnom Penh, they’re informed on the facts they are getting out of government mediums is not accurate but when you take it out of, out of that circle and look at the whole picture I think there’s a lot there’s a big there’s a way to go In the sense that in the country side there’s a majority of people that don’t have access to different forms of information. But many people will listen to radio; especially the older generation will listen to the radio. I don’t know about kids in the countryside.

I was sitting in a taxi one time and they were talking politics amongst themselves and I was listening to this conversation as they were talking and it was unbelievable, this guy sitting next to me he was from Phnom Penh and was completely, absolutely, seemed like you know he had just landed. And he had no idea about what was going on and what was happening and this taxi driver was very pro-opposition and very upset and as was the majority of the people in the car, and they would, they basically spent the six or the five hours it took us to get to Siam Reap to you know educate this guy about the elections. It was great fun. It was good.

Also when you think about journalism in Cambodia some people mention paid journalism, corruption...

Not that I know of. No, we work mainly for international media; I don’t work, I don’t work with local media so much. I give pictures to Cambodia Daily, because I have a very good relationship with them, I like them and the journalists. I’ll give them photos so that, if they don’t have a picture, ehm but dadadada other than that no, I don’t have any relationships with local publications.

So social media again, yeey.

(Laughter)

How popular would you say that it is? The use of it I mean.

Anyone that can afford an IPhone or a smart phone or whatever. I think it’s kind of concentrated to the main cities; people that can afford to buy it. I mean a lot of these girls (waitresses in the café) a lot of them will have Facebook but they wont have a phone that can use Facebook. So their use of it is very limited. You know anybody that can afford these, how much is the cheapest one? Like 80, or 100 dollars or something like that. Like these girls are on 80 dollars a month so one of those is a month salary so...

Yeah and then maybe some of the provincial capitals umm… but that’s it.
It’s very popular among the journalists here...

Social media yeah of course. Among journalists everywhere, like twitter is extremely popular with like for foreign journalists but local journalists, for local and citizen journalists would use Facebook and… Facebook would be the go to, whereas the go to for us would be twitter.

Looking at twitter flows from here makes you a little surprised that it’s not more restricted, the web 2.0, why is that you think?

I think it goes back to what I was saying before, this kind of feeling that they’re untouchable. That you can’t touch us. You felt it after the elections because I think, they took a, they took a massive blow. There was a lot of, like, I wouldn’t say unfunded rumors but there was a lot of like I’d better say funded rumors coming out of from within the government you know giving 55 seats to the opposition was a massive concession and they didn’t expect that to happen. At all. And Hun Sen announced before the elections that he was gonna have another win like he did in 2008. So yeah, I think the only reason it hasn’t been blocked is because they think they’re untouchable.

Do you think that is changing or has changed as well?

Now again this is just my opinion but I believe that it will change. And I wouldn’t be surprised if sometime in the future Facebook will be blocked. Definitely not in a near future but Facebook has the potential to be blocked. Like they block, like they already do. They block certain pages. Some are already blocked so you have to go through a proxy to get access, you can’t access directly.

You said previously that the use of social media is constantly growing, increasing, you think that is eventually going to lead to the block then?

Yeah. Definitely. I may be a pessimist but yeah. I don’t think it’s gonna last, I don’t believe it can last.

Yeah I’m interested in how social media can effect...

It will have a massive impact. And I think even if they try to block it now it will have a massive impact. I mean I think it would cause up a massive stir if they went out and said there will be no use of Facebook no more. I think people have a lot of, a lot of sentimental attachment to it. But um I don’t know, I think that. I think that like it’s only recently that the
government has started using it, the CPP has a fan page they have a how do you called it, where ministers will start putting things in. It is the most entertaining. If you have a minute I recommend you go through some of these government ministers on Facebook, the minister of information - go through his Facebook page absolutely brilliant (irony). Same thing with Hun Sens page like go through the comments on what Hun Sen posts on his Facebook. Absolutely brilliant. You can spend hours just doing this. It’s, it’s.

I can’t read Khmer - but I use Google translate and it’s not always accurate but some of it’s really funny. Like the minister of information said one day “ I have to go to bed because my ass hurts to much from sitting on the floor all day”. Like that’s the minister of information saying that my ass hurts.

(Laughter).

Maybe trying to counter the opposition pages by having their own pages but I don’t think it’s worth it to be honest.

Maybe once they do realize the dangers with it and they get advice from China – they’re very good friends with China –

I’ve noticed.

(Laughter)

I have this friend yesterday who interviewed the government spokesman and when they came out he pointed at a building and said, look that’s a gift donated from China. We’re very good friends with China!

(Laughter)

Okay but great, thank you very much!

Do you have something that you want to add?

No, no I don’t think so.
Appendix 4: Transcript of Interview with Informant 4.

Native Cambodian Journalist reporting for a Foreign News Outlet
2014-02-13
13.00

Initial talk

And when you work as a journalist here in Cambodia, how would you describe the working environment?
Haaah, I think that for me it’s free.

Mmmhm
Yes. In general, but if you look at some cases you see just before the election and after the election you see a kind of trend, a worrying trend. Some of the journalists got killed in the last two years, got killed for reporting their stories like illegal logging and, or fishing. Eeh so I could see the restrictions of freedom of expression.

The last two years that is?
Yes. Yes just before the election and after the election. But last year no one got killed so. No but there was one in Rotarakiri province you know when his body was found in his car. And very recently another journalist was killed in Kampochini province. He was a journalist in that province but he was kind of like handing out tips to journalists like about illegal fishing. But he was beaten to death after drinking party you know.

Do you think those things have affected your role as a journalist?
No, for me no, this has not affected me. For me you know it is so free. I think because I work for big organizations no one wants to touch me. But for some like local journalists who really deal with local officials or corrupt officers they are really the ones who need to deal with these kinds of threats every day. Even when I work at the Daily I had like a few, a few threats against me but only like “Oh I’m gonna suit you if you write this” “Be careful” but that’s all. Because as long as you are very professional, you get the story from all sides so people not willing to do anything to you, you know. Because you bring their voice and you bring the other sides voice. But there is some problem with local newspapers cause they have to be one-
sided or another. They have to be pro opposition or pro the ruling party, there’s no… There’s none that is in the middle.

*What about the English language newspapers? Are they in the middle or pro opposition?*  
Haah. *(Pause)* I think they are the best choice here. You know you cannot say they are fair or not fair. You cannot complain and say they are not fair. At least, at least they try to be fair, you know, they try to be neutral. With the Daily it’s, The Daily is, they try to be harder than the Post you know. When they do stories, harder you know. Accused for being pro opposition party.

*So when journalist cover stories here it’s often from one of the political parties perspectives?*  
Yeah, yeah. I mean the Cambodian newspapers, all the Cambodian news sites. Today many Cambodian news sites you know.

*And the topics that you’ve covered, what topics have that usually been?*  
Oh here I cover general, I do everything from economics to land grabbing to corruption… to everything because I am the only reporter here. Eh yeah, I cover the Khmer Rouge Court as well. Eh yeah I did logging story in ____ with _____. Eh yeah. So everything.

*When you mentioned the threats you got, what topics were you covering then?*  
*(The informant tells a specific story removed due to sensitivity of the matter).*  
Yeah, yeah that’s it. And the other one was just a phone call you now from a private number it didn’t show the number, just a voice said to me and then done. So it’s free for me.

*Yes well, so the stories that you write and that you have written were those initiated by you or your employers?*  
Yeah yeah now, I mean before we worked as a team you know. I brought up some ideas and if they liked it okay we go with that. And I worked together with a foreign journalist, we go out together in the field. And usually they have ideas and they need us to help and you know we do like this.

*So a joint effort?*  
Yeah.
Are there any stories that you feel that you have not been able to write about but that you have wanted to write about? For example, safety reasons or other restrictions?

Yeah yeah. There are some stories that I cannot write because it’s very sensitive and very… (Silence)

For example a story about Hun Sen you know… about how he, how he… How he is so… so… protective you know? Protective. Orderly. Some stories you cannot write you know. Eh your employer would say that is it safe for you to write? Eeh I said no but I also said yes, you know, like you need, because in this field it’s like always taking a risk you know. But with the ___ story a colleague ask me you want your name on it, because it is too dangerous you know. And I said yes no problem. At the end you know it was ___ who got killed you know. Not me. Ehh… I think eh… that taking a risk here is part of your life. A part of your career so. No problem, eeh yeah. And, also also garment stories you know story about garment factories. It’s widely reported, everyone writes about this, but sometimes you cannot tell whether it’s safe or not cause behind all these garment factories you don’t know who are the powerful people you know, because some of the factories are owned by the senior officer or senior government or Chinese mafia, you don’t know.

So there are definitely risked involved with reporting on sensitive topics like that?

Yeah.

And unique for reporting here from Cambodia in general?

What is special about working here? (Rephrased).

Oh! It’s always interesting place to work as journalist, some stories are so, are so… Because we always surprise the world you know, always something happen, something crazy. Like armed people, open fires, civilians – striking workers, you know it’s always… Crazy things always happen here.

(Laughter)

You know once in a while quiet, but then crazy things will happen. And here you can talk to a minister, just call on the phone. It depends on your luck, sometime you cannot and sometime you can. But maybe in other countries you cannot call a minister on the phone or you have to reach through an assistant or something like that.

And about if journalism is to develop more, what do you think the changes that are needed would be?
Yeah we need like real independent media organizations here, there is no one that is, there is no Cambodian ones that the Cambodians need, you know. The Cambodians need to read real news you know like not one side this is real news but only pro government so we need like we need real TV. Now we have some radios that are owned by opposing party but not independent ones.

*And about the political atmosphere and the democratic atmosphere, how do you think that journalism could be a part of that? Do you think journalism could help that?*
Yeah… I don’t know. I don’t know.

*Do you think that journalism should be a part of democratic development?*
Yes, should be yeah.

*Yeah, in what way?*
We… Just try to report what this government is trying to hide, what this government is not telling the truth about to the public. That’s our involvement. There, is so important you know. Our role is not just to bring message but go in and be be. You know these officers are government officers; they should serve us, not steel from us, not lie to us. So journalism should play this role like true stories, what’s behind these secrets and all these deals, how come they’re so rich? How much they get paid per month you know. Yeah these kinds of things you know.

*Would you say that corruption is one of those things you should report on?*
Yeah corruption is big problem here.

*(Silence)*
And I don’t know how you’re going to solve this corruption issue you know. Even when the opposing party I don’t know what’s going to, I don’t know, what can they do? Maybe slowly, very slowly. Because here corruption begins at a very young age you know. First grade you go to school you pay teachers five dollars per month because teachers are already so low…
Corruption is so normal here you know.

*Is there corruption within journalism as well here in Cambodia?*
Yeah, yeah a lot of corruption in journalism. Even in private sector, companies or NGO’s would give journalists some money, small money, to cover events for them. So this is really unacceptable for them. They cannot do this anymore. Especially when you are NGO or even if, foreign embassy pay journalists to cover events so it is not good.

Do you feel that as a journalist working here that you have a certain role or mission? Yeah I think so for me, yes, I feel that I am responsible for the society that is that is so corrupt, so um a society that has so many problems from the past and now, yeah. I feel that I have to do this, do this, do this every day. Not every day but you think about what you have to do for your country. Right? Because you cannot really, you as a national reporter for your country have to think about what you can do. Yeah.

And the relationship between journalists and political stakeholders, we talked a bit about that but can you describe that more? Yeah I think that media should be independently financed you know because now there is problem with finance for media sector you know they don’t have funding to run by themselves. So usually there is ruling party behind them, support them. So yeah, I think all this Cambodian journalists they don’t need more training you know, they are trained. It’s just the funding. They not paid enough money you know.

And politicians here, have you seen any trends in how they spread their messages, around the elections and after? Yeah it is. Around this election, big change. After the arrival of social media you know. The CNRP are known as the Facebook party you know because they don’t have like immediate channels so they spread their message through… twitter, no not so much twitter but Facebook you know, they have like teenagers, a young teen updating Facebook news about what happens, you know about problems somewhere else, they put it on Facebook so yeah. Big change this election yeah.

And the government? The government was not so much; there was not a big change in the ruling party. It’s the old communist party so they don’t want change, they don’t like change. And they were kind of surprised that Facebook really brought even places to the opposition party. I think they were
chocked. And the CNRP was also chocked I think when they won these, so many seats. It was not expected to win so many seats you know.

*So a big change for the political scene?*
Yeah

*How do you think the public perceives journalists in Cambodia today?*
I think the people have begun to respect journalists more every day. Eh like finding the professional ones. Some discrimination going on against pro government newspapers or (and) TV. Some hatred towards those media, I think that that is what, cause in the past they don’t broadcast their voice so now that is what they’re ripping, it’s what they do, like say “we see what you do”. But this is not good as well you know. So much discrimination against one another.

*There’s not much communication in between?*
No.

*And about social media, how popular is that in Cambodia today?*
Oh very popular! You know very popular. Eh people have begun using this as a forum to insult government, insult Hun Sen you know, but some still, still… Afraid to show their faces, show their identity because, the restriction is still there you know. They might go to jail or they might get fined for deformation against the government or against Hun Sen. The hatred, the anger on social media is out there, people express themselves, they want to say things they say it, not like before they had nothing to say. Yeah its very popular and it is the only channel that they can get out the anger, the hatred.

*So it is the media channel for the people?*
A media channel for them yes. Here you go to court if you are fighting a rich person, you go to court you loose case. That would be a story for newspaper but here they don’t. So they use this Facebook to broadcast themselves yes.

*And then how has the journalistic role changed because of social media, how has social media changed the role of professional journalists?*
Yeah it’s some news from Facebook are very fast you know, that there was rumor oh Rainsy fled the country on Facebook, it was false, so that is not real news you know. But as a real journalist you need to check with sources and then just confirm that it is not true.

_Could that be a danger you think, that there are rumors like that going around on Facebook?_ Yeah it’s a lot of danger you know, someone put the story just one and then the story is all spread all over. Like the anti-Vietnamese here is very strong, people who hate Vietnam. I don’t hate Vietnam but if I say that in public or on Facebook I might be in trouble you know, because you betray your own country. You don’t love your country enough. For people here it’s kind of like, not so much educated you know, they blame all the problems on others you know so you need to really be really careful when you speak out. So Facebook is really good but not good as well.

_And you said that you use social media privately, what could be the problems when you use social media privately and at the same time you use it through work?_ Yeah that’s a problem, what if you say something wrong. If you say something and then it turns out to be wrong later? Big problem, it still affects your reputation as well known journalist here, as a well-known Cambodian journalist. You need to be really sure, sure. Like one, last week I tweeted this story about Hun Sen’s niece and it turned out to be… not true. But this is a story in the Phnom Penh Post, this story was about a trafficker from Australia, he was convicted and imprisoned for ten years but later he was released and married to Hun Sens niece. Phnom Penh post website post this story and then a few hours later they took it off, and I talked to _____, a reporter, and he said that it was posted by someone accidently. So silly and crazy.

_So the use of social media, is it positive/negative…?_ Negative and positive, both. It tends to be both. Sometimes so much opposition. Sometimes reasonable is good you know. Yeah.

_And how does other look at social media and the way that you use it you think?_ Ehhm.

_Could it be a conflict, your personal views? From government or other stakeholders?_
I think they don’t care much about me. Usually my stories are general, more general. Not so much impact on local community, like here that they care.

*Like we talked about the restrictions in Vietnam, and countries in the region, why do you think that it’s not more restricted in Cambodia, why does it differ?*

I mean Cambodia is kind of tricky you know. Sometimes free… I think it just one, one year after the election or six months before the election it’s always problem. That’s when the government tries to restrict news, try to not stop but slow the news, not to get people know so much. So that’s, it’s free but not so free all the time. Yeah and you can read the news, it’s all kinds of news here it’s so free you know. But once in a while you have journalists’… bad journalists. But they don’t deserve to be killed you know these journalists when they stole some money from corrupt officers every day. Not every day but again and again so they might be killed out there in the province. But if you are a really good journalist you don’t have these problems.

*Do you think that in the future that social media will be more restricted in the future?*

I think so yes it’s in the process. I think that, here they try to make a law on this… so. Even now when they don’t have a law they can convict you, you know there was one case, the first Facebook case. There was this actress who without names she accused someone of stealing her something and she was sued for disinformation and she was fined 5000 dollars. And now she’s going to appeal court. First case of conviction and there’s no law! And why would a judge care about this you know?! So many crimes out there! Why would he have time to look at this Facebook case you know?! It’s one case in the country.

*Do you think that is because they are noticing that it is becoming a tool? A trend?*

Umm yeah! A very important tool and very powerful. You can say anything, no one censor you and it just goes out there.

*So that conviction could be a tendency that there will be more rules?*

Yeah, now people hear about this case and at least people get more afraid to say anything crazy or try to be more careful. Or maybe you say but anonymously.

*Okay great, thank you very much! Do you have something that you want to add?*

No, I don’t think.