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Thüringisch-Kambodschanischen Gesellschaft e.V.

Band 3 – Film production in Cambodia

The glories past of the Cambodian cinema, with international well known filmmakers like the former King Sihanouk, seems to be well and truly over. The current breakdown of the Cambodian cinema industry shows an alarming circle and reflects a desolate situation. In this book the author Kirstin Wille examines the existing framework conditions and figures out the reasons for this situation. In doing so a model is developed that contains general key factors for the success of motion pictures and interrelations among these factors. Due to country specific demands, she conducted a survey among cinemagoers to figure out the key components and gives advices which framework conditions must be changed generally and what kind of movies should be produced in order to build up a prosperous film industry.

Kirstin Wille, born in 1985 in Chemnitz, studied Media management at the University of Applied Science in Mittweida. During her studies she did many short films and worked in several film production companies in the production department. After her four month internship at the Royal University of Phnom Penh in the Media Department she got a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange service and wrote her Diploma Thesis about Film production in Cambodia.

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Film production in Cambodia

Kirstin Wille



Conditions and structure of the Cambodian film production
market – demand and supply in consideration of film genre

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-tkg- Schriftenreihe

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Band 3

Erfurt, Februar 2009

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Vorwort

Mit diesen Ihnen vorliegenden dritten Band der Schriftenreihe der Thüringisch-Kambodschanischen Gesellschaft e. V. (TKG) „Film production in Cambodia“ von Kirstin Wille schaut die TKG mit einem weinenden und einem lachenden Auge in die Zukunft. Setzt dieser Band doch so etwas wie den Schlusspunkt hinter eine fünf Jahre andauernde Projektzeit, wo es Ziel der TKG war, die sich seit Anfang der 1990er Jahren stark veränderte kambodschanische Medienlandschaft zu erforschen. Das weinende Auge trauert ein wenig, da eine kleine Epoche zu Ende geht, die uns über die Jahre sehr vertraut geworden ist, das lachende Auge freut sich, da im Ergebnis all diese Forschungsbemühungen zu mehreren Veröffentlichungen führten, die den Forschungsstand der Internationalen Kommunikationsforschung erweitern.

Neben der Diplomabschlussarbeit von Kirstin Wille entstanden unter dem Betreuer, Herrn Prof. Dr. Otto Altendorfer an der Fachhochschule Mittweida insgesamt vier studentische Abschlussarbeiten, die aus den verschiedensten Gesichtspunkten einen Blick auf Kambodschas Medien richten. Zu nennen seien hier:

1. Jana Franke (2005): Newspaper Marketing in Cambodia's Changing Environment. An Examination of the Phnom Penh Post.
2. Christoph Waskow (2005): Entstehung und Aufbau des kambodschanischen Privatfernsehsenders CTN (Cambodian Television Network) unter Berücksichtigung der Produktion einer kambodschanischen Version des TV-Formats „Pop Idol“.
3. Jörg Hartmann (2007): Das Mediensystem des Landes Kambodscha unter der Betrachtung der theoretischen Etablierung einer Produktionsfirma für eine landessprachige Fernsehserie.
4. Kirstin Wille (2008): Film production in Cambodia. Conditions and structure of the Cambodian film production market – demand and supply in consideration of film genre

Die Thüringisch-Kambodschanische Gesellschaft e. V. leistet nicht nur mit ihren drei Bänden der Schriftenreihe ihren Anteil, nein, vielmehr gelang es ebenfalls mit zwei Publikationen das Projekt „Medien und Demokratisierung in Kambodscha“ erfolgreich zu beenden. Einerseits mit der gleichnamigen, in der Schriftenreihe von Prof. Dr. Kai Hafez (Universität Erfurt) erschienenen Dissertationsveröffentlichung von Martin Ritter, aber auch andererseits mit dem Sonderband der Vierteljahresschrift „ASIEN“ der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Asienkunde (DGA) vom April 2008, wo 15 Studierende der Universität Erfurt ihre kommunikationswissenschaftlichen Forschungsergebnisse, einer im Sommer 2007 stattfindenden Exkursion in das südostasiatische Land, publi-

zierten. Die Studierenden waren zeitgleich mit Kirstin Wille vor Ort, um das derzeit gerade beginnende Rote-Khmer-Tribunal aus Mediensicht zu untersuchen.

Bleibt uns als Herausgeber Ihnen liebe Leser aufschlussreiche Stunden mit der Ihnen vorliegenden Analyse zu wünschen und somit zeitgleich für uns, symbolisch dieses Kapitel unserer Vereinsgeschichte zuzuschlagen, jedoch nicht ohne, einen kleinen Blick in die Zukunft zu wagen.

Der sich bereits in der Planung befindende vierte Band unserer Schriftenreihe wirft seine Schatten bereits weit voraus. Zukünftig wird unser Augenmerk auf dem Gebiet der Umweltpolitik Kambodschas liegen, einem Feld, welches große Anstrengungen von den beteiligten Akteuren abverlangt.

Noch im Frühjahr erscheint als Band 4: Cindy Völler (2009): Juteproduktion in Rohal Soueng – Ökologische und soziale Chancen.

Erfurt im Februar 2009

Mathias Geßner

Vorsitzender
Thüringisch-Kambodschanische Gesellschaft

Martin Ritter
Oda Riehmer
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Herausgeber der Schriftenreihe

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List of abbreviations

AADAC	Association d'aide au développement de l'audiovisuel au Cambodge
ARPAA	Association pour la recherche, la production et l'archivage des documents audiovisuels
BBC	British Broadcasting Cooperation
CCDD	Cinema and Cultural Diffussion Department
CTN	Cambodian Television Network
DC-Cam	Documentation Center of Cambodia
DOP	Director of Photography
DV	Digital Video
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
EFEQ	Ecole française d'Extreme- Orient
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
HDV	High-definition video
HE	His Excellency
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IDHEC	French National Cinema school
KMF	Khmer Mekong Films
KNUA	Korean National University of Arts
KR	Khmer Rouge
MCFA	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
Mini DV	Mini Digital Video
mm	millimeter
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PRK	People's Republic of Kampuchea
R	Riel
RUFA	Royal University of Fine Arts
SOC	State of Cambodia
SSW	Staying Single When
TV	Television
TVK	Television Kampuchea
UK	United Kingdom
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USIS	United State Information Service
VCD	Video Compact Disc
VCR	Video Cassette Recording

Introduction

"In Cambodia we do not have a film industry; we only have an entertainment industry." (Rithy Panh)

The current breakdown of the Cambodian cinema industry shows an alarming vicious circle: In fear of losing money, Khmer filmmakers do not draw back from producing qualitative and money extensive movies. As a result of that, cinema owners do not have good movies to screen, audiences become frustrated and stay away. Due to this, the ticket incomes are shrinking and less money is made to make better films and at the end cinemas have to shut down.

All in all this reflects a desolate situation – the film industry collapses. Cambodia's market is not comparable to neighbouring countries like Thailand. But what are the reasons for this desolate situation? What must be changed in order to build up a prospering film industry? This thesis tries to find an answer to these questions.

Cambodia has experienced many kinds of government since gaining independence from the French in 1954. The most well known is the Khmer Rouge regime. During this period books, money, private property, formal education and freedom of movement had been disestablished. Links to the past were destroyed. Emerging from this era, Cambodia found itself in a fragile state. One result of this trauma was that Cambodia's historical record was either destroyed or spread throughout the world. Books, films and artistic works created before the Khmer rouge took over power were often destroyed.

This thesis makes a small contribution in order to reveal a part of the Cambodian history. By using documents from the National Archives of Cambodia and interviews with filmmakers and other working in the field of cinema in Phnom Penh, a historical overview about Cambodia's film industry will be given. In chapter one, the development of the film industry is being traced from the French protectorate (1863-1953) to the subsequent political regimes of Sihanouk's Sangkum Reastr Niyum (1955-1970), Lon Nol's Khmer Republic (1970-1975), The 'Democratic Kampuchea' of the Khmer Rouge (1975-1979), the People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989), and the present situation of the constitutional monarchy.

In chapter two current issues, such as legal and social matters, film funding, state support and intervention as well as industrial assistance, will be discussed. Until now, only a few persons have faced up to this topic and

therefore this thesis had to draw on personal interviews with local producers, directors, organisers of festivals, representatives of the Ministries and other persons related to the field of cinema and film.

Despite their immense and still growing economical importance and specific product characteristics, the marketing literature on success factors of motion pictures is rare. In chapter three a model is developed that contains several key factors for the success of motion pictures and interrelations among these factors. Due to country specific demands, a survey among cinemagoers was conducted to figure out the key components in order to build up a film industry. Therefore questions like "What kind of movies Cambodian want to see?", "Why do people go to cinema?" and "What are the demanded topics and issues?" are answered.

In this thesis the terms „movie/movies“ and „film/films“ reflect all formats of feature length productions, not exclusively referring to those shot on film stock but also on video. Cambodians commonly call movies made in the Horror Genre „ghost movie“ or „ghost story“. The terms „ghost story“ or „ghost movie“ will be used to describe the Horror Genre. Furthermore, many of the Cambodian filmmakers refer to certain films as „folk stories“ because of the unavailability of films it is impossible to define the exact genre Action, Romance, Horror or Historical Epic. Therefore all these genres are entitled „folk story“ in this thesis. If not mentioned explicitly, this thesis exclusively treats movies for cinema.

Recapitulatory this thesis follows two aims: First, to examine which framework conditions exist and give advices on changes that must be made in order to build up a prosperous film industry. Second, to present Cambodia as a shooting place to the outside world. Therefore general conditions are described and common questions of foreign filmmakers are answered.

1. History of Cambodian cinema

1.1. Introduction into the country

The Kingdom of Cambodia is located in mainland Southeast Asia between Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and the Gulf of Thailand. It has about 17 million inhabitants. Ninety percent of them are Khmer which is the largest ethnic group, followed by Vietnamese and Chinese. The official religion is Theravada Buddhism. The government is seated in the capital Phnom Penh which is located in the south at rivers Tonle Sap and Mekong. The leading party is the *Cambodian Peoples Party* with the Head of State Hun Sen.¹ Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in the world and it relies heavily on aid. According to the Human Poverty Index² the poverty line is US\$ 1 income per day, 39.3 percent of the Cambodian live below this line. That is the highest headcount compared to neighbouring countries.³ The literacy rate is 73.6 percent for people aged 15 and older.⁴

Figure 1: Map of Cambodia⁵



1 World Fact Book 2005, Accessing date August 01, 2007

2 The Human Poverty Index for developing countries (HPI-1), focuses on the proportion of people below a threshold level in the same dimensions of human development as the human development index - living a long and healthy life, having access to education and a decent standard of living. (comp. Human Development Report)

3 Comp. Frommer, Jessica, 2005 page 39

4 Comp. Human Development Report, Accessing date August 01, 2007

5 Copyright: BBC News Asia- Pacific Country Profiles: Cambodia

Chronology of major political developments:

1863-1954:	French colonial period.
1954:	Cambodia gained independence.
1955-1970:	First Kingdom of Cambodia with Prince Norodom Sihanouk as head of state.
1970-1975:	Sihanouk overthrown in a coup by Lon Nol, who sets up US-supported Khmer Republic.
1975-1978:	Democratic Kampuchea (DK), known as Khmer Rouge (KR) led by Pol Pot.
1979-1989:	People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) and Vietnamese occupation. From 1979 till 1991: Three resistance movements join to oppose Phnom Penh government.
1989-1992:	State of Cambodia (SOC), renamed after the PRK under leadership of Hun Sen as Prime Minister.
1992-1993:	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) period, highlighted by general elections in May 1993. First Coalition: Royal Government of Cambodia with Prince Ranariddh as First Prime Minister.
July 5-6, 1997:	Violent coup. Prince Ranariddh removed from First Prime Ministership by Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.
April 15, 1998:	Pol Pot died of a heart attack.
July 23, 1998:	Post-UNTAC elections.
December 1998:	Cambodia joins ASEAN. ⁶
2007:	Khmer Rouge Tribunal ⁷ started. ⁸

⁶ The Association of Southeast Asian Nations or ASEAN was established in 1967 in Bangkok. The aims and purposes of the Association are: (1) to accelerate economic growth, social progress and cultural development in the region and (2) to promote regional peace and stability.

1.2. The early years and development in the 1940s & 1950s

Kon, the Khmer word for film, has evolved from the root word "kol" meaning "trick". To a Cambodian, *kon* refers to the art of "moving pictures" using tricks to shift a viewer's mood into being sad, happy, shocked or angry. The word originally describes a traditional shadow puppet play⁹ - *lakhaoun sbaek*.¹⁰ The puppet plays told stories on a lighted screen to an assembled crowd, similar to cinema nowadays. Kon therefore is now used as word for modern cinema along with the terms 'Kon Khmer' or 'Khmer Cinema'.¹¹ A Cambodian understands film as the seventh art form "which combines the elements of other six art forms: painting and photography, sculpture, pantomime, music and poetry, drama, and novel plus its own unique trait."¹²

According to records of the National Archives of Cambodia, the first modern cinema, called *Brignon cinema*, was established on the riverfront in Phnom Penh in October 1909. The audience primarily consisted of Europeans but soon films were being presented to Khmer students as well. By the 1920s, films were shot almost exclusively by foreign cinematographers. According to Ingrid Muan and Ly Daravuth, Cambodians started to shoot films on their own in the 1940s. By 1951, seven cinemas had been established in Phnom Penh. Five of them screened French and other western movies; the other two presented Chinese films. During the 1940s, going to cinema was still a special occasion for foreign and upper class people in Cambodia.¹³

In the 1950s, the United States Information Service (USIS) was shooting documentaries in Cambodia. USIS also promoted films as a medium for education, development and as anti-communist propaganda to "win the hearts and minds of Cambodians".¹⁴ USIS mobile "cinécars"

7 The Khmer Rouge tribunal is a trial to prosecute the senior leaders of the Khmer Rouge. This court is called the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia for the Prosecution of Crimes Committed during the Period of Democratic Kampuchea.

8 Comp. Seamedia, Accessing date: August 05, 2007

9 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Daravuth: Cultures of Independence, 2001 page 143

10 lakhaoun sbaek: a kind of play where one shows the shadow of images depicted on cow or buffalo skin on white cloth.

11 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Ly Daravuth: A Survey of Films in Cambodia, 2001 page 94

12 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

13 Comp. ibidem page 144

14 Comp. ibidem page 145

travelled through the country and showed films about life in America, health, education and contemporary domestic and foreign affairs to the villagers. Furthermore USIS trained local staff to run and repair the equipment necessary for projecting the films, but also trained Cambodians to become cameramen, editors, and sound technicians. Representatives of various Ministries, police and army took part in USIS filmmaking training programs in Phnom Penh during the 1950s and 1960s.¹⁵

Figure 2: Cinècar, 1958¹⁶



Cambodian films of the 1950s were black and white short silent films, shot on 16mm. They were presented either with a separately taped soundtrack or a live narrator. Shortly before Cambodia gained independence, the Ministry of Information was transferred from French to Cambodian authority in 1951. Within the

ministry, the Office of Film was established in order to monitor and regulate the number of foreign films entering the country.¹⁷ At this time, French films still dominated the import of foreign films due to several reasons. First, immediately after its creation, the film office had issued a royal decree signed by the young King Norodom Sihanouk to regulate the screening of films and set up quotas for foreign films. Therefore the decree paved the way for the big influx of French, American, Indian, Chinese, and Thai movies. The six articles of Royal Decree 675-N-S signed on July 27, 1951 and published December 31, 1951 are as follows:

Article 1: All the films shown in Cambodian cinemas must follow a regime called film-restricted regime until 01/07/52

Article 2: Within 13 weeks, cinema owners must show French films for 5 weeks leaving the other 8 weeks for either French or any other foreign films.

15 comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Daravuth: Cultures of Independence, 2001 page 144-145

16 Copyright: US National Archives RG286 CAM-58-606

17 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Ly Daravuth: A Survey of Films in Cambodia, 2001 page 94-95

Article 3: In order to identify the nationals of the films, we must only consider the nationalities of the production companies. Any foreign films shown with French sound tracks are still considered foreign.

Article 4: Those who violate these decrees will be punished according to royal decree 660 N-S signed on 20-06-51.

Article 5: All the articles here will take effect from the day this decree is published in the royal decree series.

Article 6: Prime minister, minister of justice ministry, minister of publication ministry, and minister of interior ministry must be responsible for their duty in accordance with this published royal decree series.¹⁸

Another reason for the dominance of foreign films was that watching films in French was a sign of status and prestige during that time. Most upper class families even spoke French at home in combination with Khmer. French was also used as academic language at university and with watching French films, students had the chance to improve their language.¹⁹ Other foreign films had been presented with live narrators reading out the dialogue in Khmer. There was no technical device available that could mix sound to films yet, therefore each movie theater had live narrators. Indian films were also shown in that way. They were very popular among ordinary Cambodians at that time since they drew on legendary and supernatural stories similar to Cambodian folklore and belief systems.²⁰

1.3. 1960s: The golden age and the films of King Sihanouk

By the early 1960s, the office of film also included a production section. It produced newsreels²¹ and informational short films, which were shown in movie houses before the feature film started.

The regulatory arm of the film office kept strict control on film imports and extended the standards. Accordingly, all films imported into Cambodia required authorization from the regulatory section. In order to encourage local production, the government imposed a tax of 40 percent on foreign movie tickets. A former Cambodian filmmaker²² praises this regulation and compares it to nowadays:

18 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 5

19 Comp. Ibidem page 5

20 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Daravuth: Cultures of Independence, 2001 page 167

21 „a short film and commentary about current events“ (wordnet.princeton.edu)

22 Wishes to stay anonymous

“At that time there was no corruption and the money really went to the government and was used for the development of Cambodia. In recent days this money would not go to the government but into the pocket of some high ranking officials. It is more a pocket money than a tax. Nowadays the cinemas also have to pay a tax, but this money also goes into the pocket of some high ranking officials.”

In addition to the 40-percent-tax on foreign movie tickets, the government gave back parts of tax revenues to local producers whose films had been screened at the cinema, for instance a 20 percent share on taxes for box-office takings. This tax incentive for local productions supplemented the producers' profits.²³ Apart from that, filmmakers earned money from ticket receipts. Yvon Hem, filmmaker in the 1960s explains the system:

“There were two different systems. We had the opportunity to share the incomes of the sold tickets. The cinema owner got 40 percent and the other 60 percent went to the production company. But if they were really sure that their movie would earn a lot of money the production companies rented the cinema. The rate for one day was 6000 to 7000 R²⁴ but in this case the production company got all the ticket sales.”²⁵

In the 1960s a big number of local movie production companies as well as 30 movie theatres were established throughout the country. According to the Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department (CCDD)²⁶ there were up to 60 production companies in Cambodia and filmmaking reached its peak.²⁷ Yvon Hem remembers working practices at that time:

“We had about 12 technicians, like cameramen, lighting directors and all the crew assistants and of course the director and the actors during shooting at the set. People loved to watch long movies from 120 to 180 minutes. For this it took us one year from the preproduction until the film was screened at the cinemas. The shooting schedule was four to five months. The most difficult thing was that we had to send our shooting material to France because we were not able to develop it here in Cambodia. This increased the production cost enormously. Normally we had to spend about 60,000 R to 80,000 R for one film, but compared to the

23 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Ly Daravuth: A Survey of Films in Cambodia, 2001 page 101

24 Riel, Cambodian currency; 50 R was equivalent to US\$ 1 at that time

25 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

26 In the following also: “film department”; read more in chapter: Film associations

27 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

situation right now, the production companies earned a lot of money, because a lot of people went to the cinema"²⁸

Because of moderate ticket prices, people could afford to go to the cinema, Yvon Hem makes a comparison:

"The living and education standard was quite high at that time and even vegetable sellers could afford to go to the cinemas which had three classes of seating. In 1964, one plate of noodle soup was about 5 R and a first class ticket was about 35 R, the second class about 25 R and the third class about 15 R. Of course, compared to only one bowl of noodles, it seems to be expensive, but the people could afford it."

Going to cinema was popular and different films attracted different audiences, divided by social parameters. European films were extremely popular "among students and educated white-collar workers, locally produced Cambodian movies attracted less educated farmers and labourers of the working class".²⁹ Movie theatres were distinguished by the type of movies they showed so that the different social classes of audience rarely met at a screening. For audiences of all ages going to the cinema was a social activity which often ended up in lingering along the streets until midnight after the screening. Sometimes busses brought people from the provinces to Phnom Penh to watch a movie at the cinema.³⁰ Almost everyday the 30 existing cinemas were fully booked. According to Hem, "a lot of people went to cinema because they [...] were excited about this new development [...] Cambodian people liked to watch historical movies, especially about legends and traditions."³¹ In the curriculum of national schools, the reading of traditional Cambodian stories often was mandatory. Thereby, students and parents became a reliable audience and were excited to watch what they read before.³² The public revealed a great desire to see the fantastic and supernatural aspects of these stories seemingly brought to life on the screen.³³ Favourite Cambodian films from this period included *Lea Haey Duong Dara* (engl. Goodbye Duong Dara) and *Pos Keng Kang* (engl.

28 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

29 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Daravuth: Cultures of Independence, 2001 page 149-150

30 Comp. Interview Ly Bun Yim, July 14, 2007

31 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

32 Comp. Interview Ly Bun Yim, July 14, 2007

33 Comp. ibidem page 150

The Keng Kang Snake) by Tea Lim Kun as well as *Sabbseth* and *Au Euil Srey An* (engl. Khmers After Angkor) by Ly Bun Yim.³⁴

Figure 3: Poster *Au Euil Srey An*



During this time, cinemas did not only flourish in Phnom Penh, but also spread to provincial towns and districts. Most provinces housed cinemas; large provinces like Siem Reap and Battambang housed three or four cinemas.

On May 28, 1960, the first full-length Khmer feature film in color, entitled *Phka Riek Phka Roy* (engl. Blooming Flower and Withering Flower), was commercially shown in public. But the film industry in Cambodia was still young at that time and faced a range of problems. The shortage of equipment and poor technical conditions made filmmaking a risky business until the early 1970s. Muan and Daravuth point out

that "Although color film could be developed in Phnom Penh in 1960s, the results were often of poor quality due to the lack of temperature control."³⁵ Most producers still sent their films abroad either to France or Hong Kong to be developed. Films were still screened with live narrators until 1968. After that a sound studio was opened where filmmakers were enabled to record sound and voice onto one single track. Ly Bun Yim remembers the introduction of this new technology "as a decisive moment for filmmakers."³⁶

Another problem was the lack of good training which was mainly accessible abroad, except the training programs provided by USIS. Cambodian filmmakers were divided into three groups: one emerged from the context of the Royal Palace and King Sihanouk's personal interest in filmmaking. These filmmakers usually had studied cinematography in

34 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Ly Daravuth: A Survey of Films in Cambodia, 2001 page 101-102

35 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Daravuth: Cultures of Independence, 2001 page 151

36 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Ly Daravuth: A Survey of Films in Cambodia, 2001 page 101

France. The second group emerged from the training offered by the United States Information Service film section and the last group formed based on peoples own interest in film.³⁷

One push towards the booming of the industry was the decision of foreign film companies to shoot in Cambodia. In 1962, Marcel Camus primarily hired Cambodian cast and crew for his movie *L'oiseau de paradis*. Some of them later became famous film producers in the country.

In the late 1960s, on an initiative of King Sihanouk, Phnom Penh hosted a series of film festivals. The first International Film Festival of Phnom Penh was held in 1968, and King Sihanouk's film *Le petit prince* won the first prize, the Golden Apsara Award. One year later, the second Festival took place and Sihanouk won again. The International Film Festivals were held "in order to select, and encourage the production of good quality films, to contribute towards cooperation on an international scale between those engaged in film production and to promote the evolution of the art and industry of film making generally."³⁸ The King either did not have competitors or there were only a small number of entrants to the festival. Ly Bun Yim explains why: „I did not submit my films to the festival because the king also sent in his films to the festival and I did not want to compete with the king because if my movie would have won, it would not be very good for me."³⁹ Critics complain that "the pretence that Sihanouk was a world-class filmmaker became institutionalised in the Phnom Penh International Film Festival [...] it was in fact a charade: Sihanouk on both occasions won the grand prize."⁴⁰

Films of King Sihanouk

The young King Norodom Sihanouk is often considered to be the first Cambodian filmmaker. He had started film making in the late 1940s. Concerned with the amount of time the young Sihanouk devoted to attend the cinema in Phnom Penh, his parents decided to send him to the Lycée⁴¹ Chasseloup-Laubat in Saigon for secondary education. After his return he

37 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2003 page 7

38 Comp. Règlement du Première & Septième Festival International Du Film Phnom-Penh, article 1, 1968 & 1969

39 Comp. Interview Ly Bun Yim, July 14, 2007

40 Comp. Osborn, Milton, page 188

41 Lycée is comparable to an American high school. After three years pupils get a baccalauréat, comparable to a highschool degree.

began experimenting with short length, 16mm films, shot within the walls of the Royal Palace and shown only to those who were close to the monarch.⁴² Milton asserts that "Sihanouk's passionate interest in the cinema dates back to his early youth. In the years before independence he had produced and acted in two comic films, which had only been shown to a restricted audience within the royal palace."⁴³

Since he became King of Cambodia in 1941 Sihanouk has made forty-six films, forty-three of them after his abdication in 1955.⁴⁴ On average, Sihanouk has made about one film a year over the span of his formal political career. The 1960s and the 1990s are his most prolific production periods. Sihanouk has displayed a preference for fiction films. To date he has made twelve documentaries and thirty-one fiction films since 1960 (see appendix I). Sihanouk's enthusiasm brought him the title of "Father of Culture and Arts". His strong involvement in filmmaking serving as producer, director, writer, composer and sometimes even as actor in the mid 1960s had pushed the film atmosphere in Cambodia another long step forward.⁴⁵

Figure 4: Sihanouk during shooting⁴⁶



Film making took more and more of Sihanouk's time - that resulted in his increasing absence from the capital and an imprudent use of the states resources to fund the films. This increased the frustration of the elite because Sihanouk refused to delegate power or decisionmaking responsibilities to his subordinates.⁴⁷ Milton writes that "the prince's passion for filmmaking [...] came at a time when the Cambodian state was poised to slide into disaster." By

42 Comp. program 1st Southeast Asian Biennial Film Festival and Photo Exhibition, 1997 page 34

43 Comp. Osborn, Milton, 1994 page 177

44 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Politician, Artist, 1998 page 17

45 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 8

46 Copyright: www.nordomsihanouk.info, person in the middle

47 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Politician, Artist, 1998 page 24

1965, Cambodia had lost its claims to be a neutral country that was free of extreme democratic and communist ideologies. There was deep mistrust against Sihanouk as noted by Milton: "The conservative politicians were no longer convinced that [Sihanouk's] policies served [their] interests. The men and women of the left were planning a move into full-scale resistance. Sihanouk devoted more and more time to filmmaking after 1965, to the point where many in Phnom Penh saw his preoccupation as obsession."⁴⁸

Most of Sihanouk's movies had political content with historical allegories or other symbolic representations of political circumstances.⁴⁹ More than half of his fiction films can be described as romantic tragedies. Sihanouk has also made three romantic comedies. He noted:

"Healthy and happy people only like sentimental and sad topics with a tragic end. The reason is that man has an instinctive need for change. A person who is deeply concerned in its everyday life seeks gay songs, books and films. A people as ours who smile and laugh almost permanently, need to escape routine. That is why we see them queuing up at the doors of picture houses which shown films supposed to make them cry."⁵⁰

Sihanouk's documentaries from the 1960s and the 1990s convey images of his leadership. They present him as the symbol of continuity and as an indispensable person for Cambodia. It can be argued that the documentaries are a kind of modern version of the royal chronicle for a twentieth century king. Sihanouk's fiction films and his documentaries nearly had the same content or were thematically related. From his point of view the fiction films are a compromise between the two forms. Sihanouk described them as 'documentaries romanticized'.⁵¹

With a few exceptions, four main character types can be identified in Sihanouk's fiction films: The Neo-Traditional Leader, the Traditional Khmer, the Weak and the Politician. "The first two represent Good and the latter two Evil. The evil character types can be identified by their willingness to align themselves with foreign interests or ideologies which objectives are detrimental to the Khmer. Their evilness is due to their politicization or moral weakness."⁵²

48 Comp. Osborn, Milton, 1994 page 6

49 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Politician, Artist, 1998 page 1

50 Comp. Kambuja Revue Mensuelle Illustrée No. 57, 1969 page 239

51 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Artist, Filmmaker, 2001 page 110

52 Comp. ibidem page 111

Sihanouk's films were types of personal expressions and appeared as projections of his personality. But the films were also part and parcel of Sihanouk's strategy to maintain his relationship with the Khmer population. In particular, his fiction films enabled him to embrace the contradiction between being the king of a traditional folk on one hand and leading a modern state on the other hand. He was able to communicate his political imperatives in a way that the Khmer interpreted as typical for a king.⁵³

The production of the films was never erratic or unconsidered. There was a remarkable continuity and consistency in his film making. Each film was produced to cause a certain political effect.⁵⁴ In a population, in which prior to the modernization of the education system only a handful of the elite was literate, Sihanouk could use his films to overcome this obstacle and communicate with the uneducated Khmer. Furthermore, the films were easily brought to the people - without the necessity of Sihanouk's presence or his direct control, he was able to reach audiences much larger than he could reach directly at one time.⁵⁵

Sihanouk has made many efforts to ensure that his films are seen by many audiences, not only the Khmer. Distribution and screening varied according to political circumstances. In the 1960s his films were widely shown throughout Cambodia, at cinemas in Phnom Penh as well as in the provincial cities and, as already mentioned, at film festivals all over the world. According to the film department, some of his films entered International movie festivals in Moscow and France as well. During the 1990s his films have been shown on Cambodian television as well as at open-air screenings attended by several thousand Khmer.⁵⁶

53 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Politician, Artist, 1998 page 1

54 Comp. ibidem page 17

55 Comp. ibidem page 35

56 Comp. ibidem page 29

Figure 5: Reglement of first and second film festival⁵⁷



As Sihanouk deliberately wanted to emphasize the amateurishness of his fiction films, he chose a cast of non-professionals. They were members of the royal family, elected politicians, public servants and others from the wider Phnom Penh community. Sihanouk was convinced that amateurs were more creative and could perform the roles out of their own.⁵⁸ Contrary to that, he preferred to use professional actors for the difficult roles.⁵⁹ Ly Daveth, a well known actress in the 1960s, remembers the way of working with the former king:

“Whatever it was, it was such a pleasure to work with him. He was simple and nice and was a great joke teller. He was always making people on the set laugh and felt relaxed. He was never rude and showed a lot of respect for all the actors. One time when we went to Kampot to shoot he came down to where all actors were lodging and made sure that we were all comfortable and were being well looked after. When I worked with him, I never thought of him as a king but as a producer and a lover of the arts.”⁶⁰

As written *Kambuja Revue Mensuelle Illustrée* in 1969, people remember the shooting with the king as follows:

57 Copyright National Archive of Cambodia

58 Comp. *Kambuja Revue Mensuelle Illustrée* No. 52, 1969 page 173

59 Comp. Romey, Eliza: *King, Politician, Artist*, 1998 page 40

60 Comp. *Touchstone Magazine*, 2007 page 41

"The most fitting word for the atmosphere that prevailed while Samdech directed the filming was, I think, cheerfulness. [...] Furthermore, Samdech does not hold back compliments. When he is pleased, he says it loudly. And I must acknowledge that when he is filming he is always pleased. His joy is contagious and around him you see only smiling faces. [...] Between two shots, Samdech still finds time to study a file, give signature, distribute a round of fruit or candy and make sure his crew is supplied with fresh sandwiches and drinks."⁶¹

Mostly Sihanouk shot one scene only in one take, he rarely did two or more. He was convinced that the creativity of the actors would get lost during several takes.⁶²

Western commentators often have chosen to dismiss his films as examples of his foolish behaviour or the corruption of his rule. For Eliza Romey, who wrote her master dissertation on Sihanouk's films, evaluations of Sihanouk's filmmaking seem to have been mostly incomplete, inaccurate and misleading,⁶³ furthermore she is convinced, that westerners have failed:

"[...] to understand the importance of the films; they compare the images and the acting with Western forms [...] thus, they cannot appreciate the wonderful opportunity the films offer as an insight into Sihanouk, his world, and his political views, both in the palace and the nation."⁶⁴

Mostly critics interpreted Sihanouk's filmmaking as anomalous and could not understand why Sihanouk made what they considered as embarrassingly amateurish films. They also believed that Sihanouk's film festivals made a mockery of Cambodia. Critics understand his behaviour as a demonstration of incredible childishness and unreadiness to treat state business in a serious manner.⁶⁵ Milton Osborn underlines these statements:

"Sihanouk's absorption in filmmaking was evidence of the hereditary lack of mental stability that had plagued the Norodom branch of the Cambodian royal family. [...] Sihanouk's films are evidence of a man for whom fantasy was increasingly more attractive than the real world."⁶⁶

61 Comp. Kambuja Revue Mensuelle Illustrée No. 33, 1967 page 188

62 Comp. Kambuja Revue Mensuelle Illustrée No. 52, 1969 page 173

63 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Politician, Artist, 1998 page 127

64 Comp. Cambodia Daily, Accessing Date August 15, 2007

65 Comp. Romey, Eliza: King, Politician, Artist, 1998 page 7-8

66 Comp. ibidem page 12

These arguments counter Romey saying that “he used a modern form to reinforce his traditional position and comment on matters of politics with the little people and thus bypassing the modern system.”⁶⁷

In 2004, Norodom Sihanouk transferred all his personal archives from the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh and his residences in Beijing and Pyongyang (North Korea) to two international institutions: His written documents now can be found at the Ecole française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO) in Paris, and his audiovisual archives are at the Monash University in Melbourne.⁶⁸

1.4. 1970s: The early years

In early 1970s, even though civil wars took place everywhere, Cambodian movies were still produced. Although budget and travel restrictions made it difficult to make films, production continued, there were up to 33 cinemas in Phnom Penh and movie going was extremely popular at that time since it offered an opportunity to escape from the increasingly harsh realities of daily life. At this time local film production produced 30 to 40 movies on 35mm per year. They were even screened successfully abroad in Singapore, Indochina and Malaysia and could compete with films from neighbouring countries.⁶⁹

From 1973 to 1974, the government threatened to close all entertainment places because they seemed inappropriate in times of war and also because they had become a target for Khmer Rouge grenade attacks. But movie house owners and filmmakers convinced the officials not to close the cinemas. Ly Bun Yim explains how he argued:

“It was maybe in 1974 that the officials called us to a meeting to announce that they were closing all the movie houses and dancing clubs. [...] I raised my hand and protested because at that time I had a movie theatre, the *Hemakchea*. [...] At the meeting I said that I had just come back from Hong Kong where I heard them saying that Phnom Penh was surrounded by Khmer Rouge just waiting for us to die. I asked the Hong Kong people, “You believe that? Why have I come to Hong Kong if it is like that? Moreover, why should I be making a new film if it were like that? [...] One of the Hong Kong people thought about what I said and then said, “He’s right”. [...] I

67 Comp. Cambodia Daily, Accessing date August 15, 2007

68 Comp. ibidem, Accessing date August 15, 2007

69 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

told them that I had come to develop a film and that my movie house in Phnom Penh was full of customers. So then, after giving this example, I asked the officials at the meeting who wanted to close the movie houses to think about it carefully. If we close the movie houses [...] the enemy would have won. If we kept the movie houses open, people outside the world are still able to say, "Do not believe the Khmer Rouge! Cambodia is not dead already! There are still films!" The officials asked for ten minutes to think about it and they went into a back room. When they came back, they said the movie houses could stay open. All the movie house owners were very happy [...] and said that I had been a clever talker."⁷⁰

In late 1974 and early 1975 movie house owners began to close their establishments themselves. The audience did not go to the cinema anymore because war had come too close and the general public was too scared to go out for entertainment.⁷¹

1.5. The Mid 1970s: Time under Khmer Rouge

The invasion of the Khmer Rouge (KR) into the capital Phnom Penh on April 17, 1975 marked the death of the Cambodian film industry. The premise of the Khmer Rouge was: Everything thought of as a leftover from capitalism should be destroyed in whatever way.⁷² The newly installed Khmer Rouge government nationalized all means of production in Cambodia. Money and private property were abolished and agriculture was collectivized.⁷³ During the so-called *revolution*, the Khmer people lost their civic liberty until 1979. During that time, about two million people died from execution, famine, disease or exhaustion. This represents nearly one-quarter of the country's population.⁷⁴

34 Comp. Muan, Ingrid/ Daravuth: Cultures of Independence, 2001 page 188

71 Comp. ibidem page 154

72 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2003 page 10

73 Comp. Cambodia e-Gov Homepage, Accessing date August 20, 2007

74 Comp. New York University, Accessing date August 20, 2007

Figure 6: Entrance of Khmer Rouge in Phnom Penh in april 1975⁷⁵



Cambodian culture was completely demolished. All cinemas nationwide were closed and ruined because they symbolized entertainment, which was declared as an enemy. The KR used them as warehouses or for storage. The projecting machines were destroyed or seriously damaged. Film making companies were liquidated. Most of the technicians who had worked under the former regime were persecuted, murdered or forced to hard labour on the fields or in fishing cooperatives on the Tonle Sap. Only six out of 75 persons belonging to the film companies were found alive after the time of the KR regime.⁷⁶ Artists, men and women, young and old, were murdered, beaten to death with hoes, bamboo or metal sticks. Others were pierced with bayonets or pointed iron poles. Many had their eyes put out, were disembowelled or buried alive. Very well known actors died, such as Sin Sisamouth, Neang Huy Meas, Has Salan, Pou Siphon, Voy Ho.⁷⁷ Only some actors survived such as Dy Saveth, one of Cambodia's leading actresses in the 1960s, who fled to France.⁷⁸

The 101 films⁷⁹ produced by KR on the purpose of propaganda covered a variety of subjects. Some examples include scenes of everyday life during

⁷⁵ Copyright: Columbia University Press

⁷⁶ Comp.: People's Revolutionary Tribunal, 1988 page 145

⁷⁷ Comp.: ibidem page 144

⁷⁸ Comp.: Touchstone Magazine, 2007 page 41

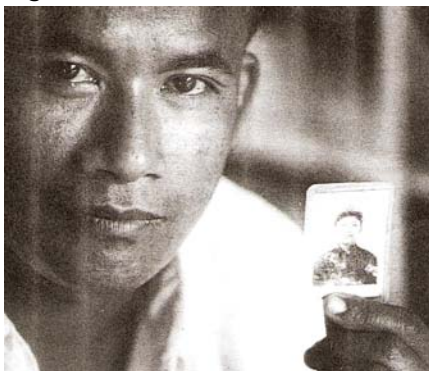
⁷⁹ Comp.: Sorb Sarim, List of documentary films, 1998

the regime (e.g. planting and harvesting, weaving, carrying earth, building dikes and canals), visits of foreign leaders like from Korea which were sympathetic to the regime, military scenes (e.g. Khmer Rouge troops re-enacting battles with Lon Nol soldiers during the invasion in April 1975, political meetings of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) congress at the Olympic Stadium or KR leader Pol Pot inspecting a dam.⁸⁰

These films were possibly made with technical aid of the Chinese. According to Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) "people say that they also used former filmmakers [...] before they killed them brutally. Nobody knows exactly who produced all these movies because everything belonged to the *revolution* and the producers were not mentioned on the videos."⁸¹ Furthermore Chhang adds that Chinese troops trained new people from the countryside to produce propaganda films such as *Nhem En*. En used to be a photographer and cameraman at the Tuol Sleng prison⁸² and is still convinced that life during KR was "better and equal".⁸³ He explains:

"I was an ignorant and uneducated person in the countryside. But then I could come to Phnom Penh and go to study in China, I even knew how to shoot films, video, and to make a map. This is something that should be considered."⁸⁴

Figure 7: *Nhem En*⁸⁵



80 Comp.: Chhang Youk, 2006 page 2

81 Comp.: Interview Chhang Youk, July 27, 2007

82 Tuol Sleng used to be the Tuol Svay Prey High School in Phnom Penh until it was taken over by Pol Pots forces and was turned into the S-21 prison camp, where Cambodians were detained and tortured during KR.

83 Comp.: Maguire, Peter, 2005 page 165

84 Comp.: ibidem page 165

85 Copyright: Columbia University Press

Survivors of the regime remember that films were occasionally screened at collective meetings, public places and rice fields. Chhang Youk, explains the importance of movies at that time:

“Today we would say that these movies are a crime against humanity and propaganda. But during the KR they were glorious and measured their victory. It depends on the eyes of the audiences. People remember the movies weakly. Usually they were black and white and there was no story to follow and nobody can remember the content because they had no real content. Although the movies had no story, people loved to see them because this was the only form of entertainment they had. Usually they were shown during the break from the hard work and people became hopeful when they saw all the colourful rice fields. Even though it was a false hope, there were no books or other forms of entertainment and people were happy to see other parts of their country through the movies.”⁸⁶

The following example demonstrates the use of movies as political instruments. When Foreign Minister Ieng Sary oversaw the country’s limited contact with the outside world, he produced a documentary film which was shown to Cambodian expatriates in Paris and other European cities. The film featured long shots of the idyllic Cambodian countryside and Tonle Sap Lake. During a screening of the film in Paris in August 1975, Sary told the audience that the evacuated residents of Phnom Penh had returned to their homes. The foreign Minister promised the group of expatriates, mostly middle- and upper-class professionals and intellectuals, that, if they return to Democratic Kampuchea, they could work in their areas of expertise. Approximately 1,000 Cambodians, living in France, Eastern Europe and the United States, returned to Cambodia between 1975 and 1978 but only a few of them survived.⁸⁷

After the regime was overthrown, the KR propaganda films were housed at the Cinema Department of the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. This cinematic heritage is of inestimable value to Cambodia, particularly in the light of the trials that have been and are being held against the Khmer Rouge leaders.⁸⁸

86 Comp. Interview Chhang Youk, July 27, 2007

87 Comp. Maguire, Peter, 2005 page 98

88 Comp. Chhany Youk, 2006 page 1

1.6. 1980s: Vietnamese occupation

After the end of the KR era in 1979, everything seemed to be just reborn again. Vietnam established a satellite regime called People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) but the new government included many former members of the Khmer Rouge, as well as some Cambodians who had sought refuge in Vietnam. The newly installed regime restored much of Cambodia's life in the way it had been before KR, including the practice of Buddhism, the education system, as well as the cultural practices. Movie houses in Phnom Penh reopened almost immediately. Mao Ayuth built up the first cinemas from 1984 to 1985 and had to face some difficulties:

"Of course, there was no air conditioning at that time and it easily became very hot inside the cinemas. We came up with the idea to cut a big hole at the backside of the cinema room. We put a huge ice block on wood with several fans behind it. Therefore the seats in the back were very expensive because it they were cool and the seats in the front cheaper."⁸⁹

However, there was no domestic film industry left, because many of the filmmakers and actors from the 1960s and 1970s had been killed or had fled from the country. Negatives and prints of many films were destroyed, stolen, or missing. Money and equipment for making films were non-existent, as Mao Ayuth remembers:

"We really had nothing at that time. No dubbing studio, no lighting equipment, but because of the lack of equipment we became very inventive and made everything by ourselves. For example, we used a washing basin as a cover for the lamp. Many films were silent because of the difficulties to dub voices. In 1982, I asked several people from each cultural center of the provinces to come to Phnom Penh. I trained them very hard how to voice over perfectly in real time. We loaned these people projection equipment and movies and so they could show the films in their villages while performing the speaking parts. In the beginning, it was very hard because we had no car for transportation and they had to carry the equipment with a cow cart from Phnom Penh to all the provinces. There were no paved roads at the time. The dirt paths were bumpy and steamy. Two years later I applied for a car at the Ministry and we got one finally."⁹⁰

89 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

90 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

There was no private company in Cambodia which produced movies at that time.⁹¹ The movies mainly came from Cuba, Eastern Germany, the Czech Slovakia Republic or the Soviet Union, due to that, the movies screened were merely international propaganda. People were hungry for entertainment of any kind. Moviegoers flocked to the theatres, even though most of the films consisted of clichéd socialist propaganda fables or romantic dramas about lovers struggling against class boundaries. Crowds of people squeezed into the cinemas watching everything - old movies and new ones, films about wars or politics, stories of love or stories of class struggle. The Cambodian Daily reports in 2002:

“Back in 1980s, when filmgoers stood in long queues for tickets, those who tried to cut in line might be whipped or caned. People lucky enough to make it to the front of the line would buy as many tickets as they could for their friends, or to sell at a higher price [...] Movies sold out quickly, but even after all the tickets were gone people would bribe security guards and ticket-takers to get in. They didn't sit in their seat only by standing could they hope to catch a glimpse of the screen [...] Moviegoers situated near overflowing toilets couldn't even smell them because of the overpowering cent of human sweat that pervaded the room. Sometimes the smell was so oppressive it forced people to leave but usually they stayed, no matter what.”⁹²

Censorship by the Vietnamese-backed communist government meant that the majority of the movies shown were communist. Soon the Cambodian people were fed up with these films and wanted to watch movies about present Cambodian society. But those who watched prohibited films, from non communist countries, could be fined.⁹³ Yvon Hem was the first Cambodian filmmaker to shoot a movie after KR in 1987. He remembers:

“Even under the occupation of the Vietnamese we could not produce any movies. During that time everybody told me that I will never be able to do movies again and I felt so hopeless that I decided to leave Cambodia and go to France. But when I applied for the visa, Hun Sen the Prime Minister called me and asked me why I wanted to go. I explained to him my situation and how hopeless I was and then he gave me the permission to do movies again and so I decided to stay.”⁹⁴

91 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

92 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 12

93 Comp. idem page 13

94 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

But his first movie, *Shadow of Darkness*, shot in 1987 could not be screened until 1989. The problem was that the 35mm film material could not be developed in Cambodia and no trade connection to other countries existed. The Non-governmental Organisation (NGO) Oxfam⁹⁵ finally helped Yvon Hem to send the film material to Australia to be developed.⁹⁶ The filmmaker comments on the situation:

“After I got the permission to do movies, other filmmakers started to do movies, too. But they did not shoot on film stock and used instead video material. Although I was the first one who was allowed to do movies, other filmmakers could screen their movies much earlier than I could, because they did not need to wait for the development of their film material. I also thought about shooting on video, but Hun Sen always reminded me about the quality and so I had to wait a long time for the development.”⁹⁷

Also in 1987, the Department of Cinema started to produce its own movies. At the same time the number of cinemas increased. The people liked to watch the government produced Khmer movies. That again encouraged private production companies to produce movies again on video. According to CCDD, Vietnam and the Soviet Union had provided budget support to the Khmer film industry, so it could stand up after the collapse. With the money, the government trained its filmmakers and technicians and cooperated with other socialist countries to produce films about the misery of life under Khmer Rouge, love stories and documentaries. According to Mao Ayuth, some of these movies had been taken to compete with others from socialist countries at international movie festivals where Cambodia had received two golden medals: one in Leipzig, East Germany and the other in Moscow, Soviet Union. He remembers his stay at the festival in Leipzig:

“The foreign news reporters had such quiet cameras. I was jealous, because ours were so huge, big and noisy at that time. I told everybody at the festivals about our situation and they felt so much pity for me that they even gave me a camera at the end.”⁹⁸

Cambodian film companies slowly began to re-emerge. They had to find a balance in order to make films that would entertain the masses and yet not

95 Short for „Oxford Committee for Famine Relief“, Comp. Oxfam.org

96 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

97 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July 3, 2007

98 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

anger the government. Films such as *Chet Chorng Cham* (engl. Reminding the Mind) and *Norouk Pramboun Chaon* (engl. Nine Levels of Hell) examined life under the Khmer Rouge or told love stories under the 1980s People's Republic of Kampuchea government. Within a few years the number of film production companies jumped from zero to 215, and films competed against each other to be shown in over 30 Phnom Penh cinemas.⁹⁹ Production companies often produced sentimental films and karaoke movies. Rithy Panh (read more in chapter: ray of hope: Rithy Panh) explains why only a few movies were made about KR "When you have just come out of a genocide then you don't want to go straight back and shoot it. So you make Karaoke – people just want to forget, drink, and escape."¹⁰⁰

With the start of TV in 1989 the private film production companies decreased again, less Khmer movies were produced for cinema and smaller audiences came to watch the movies.¹⁰¹ According to Yvon Hem "they had other problems to deal with and could also buy videos or later VCDs and DVDs."¹⁰² As a result, Cambodia was quickly overwhelmed by videos and television programs from abroad.

1.7. 1990s: Crash down

The influx of pirated movies, video and then VCD in the 1990s, effectively killed Cambodian cinema. Many film companies shut down because they could neither control the distribution of their films any longer, nor make a profit. According to Mao Ayuth, people preferred to watch international movies, like Thai, Indian, US and Chinese. Movie analysts say that the huge influence of foreign movies is the reason why the Cambodia film industry went down.¹⁰³

Some of the production Companies only survived because they changed their portfolio to producing karaoke videos instead of films. Cinemas across the country started to close down one after another due to falling profits. The last commercial movie house closed in 1996.

99 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October 01, 2007

100 Comp. Phnom Penh Post, 2007

101 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

102 Comp. Interview Yvon Hem, July, 3 2007

103 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June, 3 2007

One reason for this was the poor law enforcement, which allowed the distribution of illegal copies of intellectual property like films without legal punishment. The large-scale importation of cheap copies of foreign movies into the country and the establishment of many TV stations discouraged most filmmakers from pursuing the business seriously. People complained about poor storylines, poor performances and poor pictures. Cambodian productions seem to be way below the standard of foreign movies. Another big problem traced back to scriptwriting: Cambodian authors were rooted from basic novel writers and had never passed any training to be a film scriptwriter.¹⁰⁴ Former filmmaker Mao Ayuth says "Some directors filmed a traditional Cambodian girl with traditional clothes but with colored hair style, filmed women and men wearing traditional clothes dancing in the bushes, and so on - just like filming a blind man wearing a watch. Nothing was considered in the script before".¹⁰⁵

People of the 1990s never believed the Cambodian film industry could survive.¹⁰⁶ Cinemagoers said: "I've had enough films on TV. I came [today] to see the cinema, not the movie".¹⁰⁷

1.8. Ray of hope: Rithy Panh

Still, there were interesting exceptions to this rather dismal situation – like Rithy Panh. He is Cambodia's most prominent director and founder of the Bophana Audiovisual Center (read more in chapter: Bophana Center). Rithy Panh was eleven years old when the Khmer Rouge entered Phnom Penh. From 1975, he was imprisoned in rehabilitation camps until he escaped in 1979. He fled to Thailand where he lived in a refugee camp for one year and finally emigrated to France in 1980. In Paris, he graduated from the prestigious French National Cinema School (IDHEC). He returned to his native country more than a decade later, in 1990, and chronicled his country's history through features and documentaries.¹⁰⁸

His feature films and documentaries have been critically acclaimed in France and Europe, where they have won many prizes, as well as in

104 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 15

105 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

106 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 15

107 Comp. Cambodian Daily, Accessing Date September 01, 2007

108 Comp. Milazzotto, Lucia, 2004 page 12

Cambodia. His first feature film, *Les Gens de la Rizi re* (1994, engl.: Rice fields), was screened at the Cannes Film Festival, like his most recent feature *S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003). *La Terre des  mes errantes* (1999, engl.: Land of the Wandering Souls) won the first prize at the documentary film festival Cin ma du Reel in Nyon (Switzerland) in 2000 and the Golden Gate Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival in April 2001. Other films by Rithy Panh include the documentaries *Bophana* (1996), *One Evening After the War* (1998), and his 2005 drama, *The Burnt Theater*.¹⁰⁹

Figure 8: Rithy Panh¹¹⁰



In an interview with Lekha Shankar for Thai Days in 2006, Rithy Panh said that: "Cinema to me is a rewinding of memory, so that the present and future generations can remember the past and learn many lessons from it. The genocide led to a drastic eradication of memory in my country. We lost our identity and our dignity, and I want to reinstate these through my films."¹¹¹ Blum-Reid confirms that Panh's films engage a personal return to the terrible, yet unfinished story of his country and a personal involvement, although not overtly.¹¹² He has become the voice of Cambodia: not just of the victims of the Khmer Rouge but also of the young people to whom he teaches cinema. With his films Rithy Panh wants to be a part of building up a new Cambodian identity.

"Whenever people are facing a tragedy like the genocide they have a problem to speak about their history. Genocide not only kills people, it also kills much inside in the people who survived. Genocide destroys our identity and when you have to fight to survive, you do not have time to think about your family or your own past. But one day your child will ask you "Where is my grandpa?" and now you should answer him what the KR did. It is very painful for people to talk about what happened in the past. So first we have to reconstruct our identity. Although KR is only a small part of our history

109 Blum-Reid, 2003 page 107

110 Copyright www.buddhachannel.tv

111 Comp. Thai Day, Accessing date September 01, 2007

112 Comp. Blum-Reid, 2003 page 116

but we can not hide it and books and also movies help to reconstruct our identity.”¹¹³

From 1994 to 1995 he was co-director of the documentary training program “Atelier Varan - Cambodge”.¹¹⁴ He has also founded on-set training courses for young Cambodians. Whenever he hires foreign professionals he asks them to train at least ten young Cambodian students.¹¹⁵

In an interview in 2007 Rithy Panh complains about the current standards of film in Cambodia:

“There is no content at all. All produced films are only ghost stories right now. The most important thing to build up a film industry is to have good script writers. Technicians you can train in two or three workshops but script writing you can not learn. This is an intellectual skill. The genocide killed all the intellectuals and we had no good film directors or screen writers anymore. A change of the behaviour in watching a movie can only happen if Cambodians watch good films and discuss them. How you should write a book if you have never read a book before. It is the same with doing movies. You have to see good ones before you make some by your own. You can not talk about a cinema industry here in Cambodia as long as people are still watching ghost movies. Here is no cultural heritage, only entertainment!”¹¹⁶

1.9. 2000s: Slow Comeback

Since early 1990s till the end of the second century, the Cambodian film industry was equal to being dead. In 2001, one of the first major Khmer film productions since the Khmer Rouge regime, *Child of King Snake*, was released. It was a joint-production between Thailand and Cambodia and filmed in 1999 depicting a snake impregnating a peasant woman while her husband is away.¹¹⁷

While more and more cinemas reopened, film producers started to doubt if more cinemas would make any difference and if more competition would consequently mean a more stable rental system. Their bigger concern,

113 Comp. Interview Rithy Panh, August 23, 2007

114 Founded in 1981 by Jacques d’Arthuis as a non profit non-governmental association it trains young filmmakers from developing countries how to exhibit daily realities and how to use images and sound to express what a cultural identity is

115 Comp. Blum-Reid, 2003 page 118

116 Comp. Interview Rithy Panh, August 23, 2007

117 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 17

however, was, that theater owners would rely more on foreign films to fill the seats because Khmer films were more expensive to buy. According to the cinema owner Pov Soeng, Khmer movies can cost theater owners as much as US\$20,000 while Thai films only cost US\$1,500. This, in turn, almost doubles the ticket-prices for Khmer films (4,000-6,000 R) compared to Thai or other foreign film tickets (3,000 R).¹¹⁸ "Some cinema owners buy foreign movies for a cheap price, so they can sell tickets below the Khmer movies so they get bigger audiences," states Ung Son San, President of Phnom Pich Movie Production.¹¹⁹

Until 2002, especially Thai films were preferred. This changed in January 2003 when reports about a Thai actress claiming that Angkor Wat belonged to Thailand spread through the country. These reports ended up in anti-Thai riots and resulted in an informal ban on Thai dramas being shown on Cambodian television or at cinemas. Peter Maguire, writer of the book "Facing Death" remembers:

"When I left DC Cam, I hailed a moto and headed toward my hotel. We were soon slowed by a pack of twenty or thirty students, riding three abreast, each motorcycle carrying two to four passengers. All of them were honking their horns and waving piece of paper above their heads. I thought that they were students celebrating the end of final exams, but my moto driver told me otherwise. He said the Cambodian youths were protesting the alleged statements of Thai soap opera star Suwanan "Kob" Kongying, printed in a Cambodian newspaper. Associated Press reporter Chris Decherd later told me a much stranger story. The beautiful and demure-looking Thai actress was said to have claimed that Cambodians had stolen the temples of Angkor Wat from Thailand. Although she publicly denied making any such statements and even apologized, Prime Minister Hun Sen and the Cambodian press continued to fan the flames. Hun Sen entered the fray on Monday, January 27. He gave an inflammatory speech from Kompong Cham that was broadcast on Cambodian radio. The prime minister said that the life of the Thai movie star "is not equal to a few bushes of grass near Angkor Wat" and called for a boycott of all things Thai. Papers like *Rasmei Angkor* and *Koh Santepheap*, and Beehive Radio continued to spread the story far and wide. Hun Sen warned the Thai television station on Cambodia, TV5, to stop broadcasting "Kob" Kongying's films "because I am afraid people will go to destroy the television station."¹²⁰

118 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 17

119 Comp. Cambodia Daily, Accessing date September 03, 2007

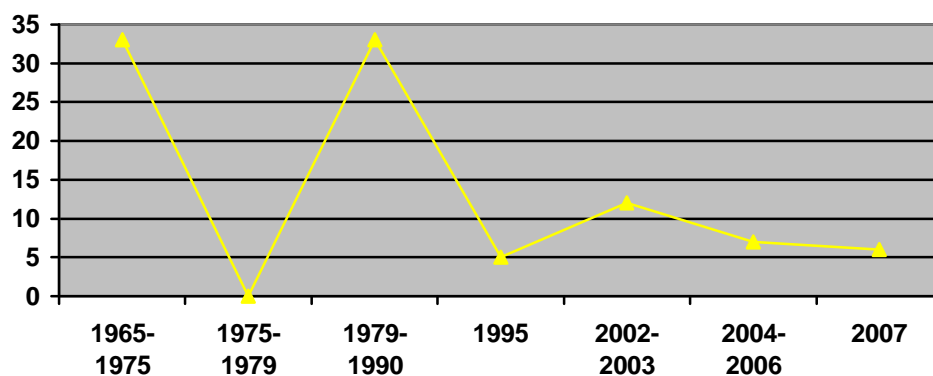
120 Comp. Maguire, Peter, 2005 page 185

Immediately after the event, Thai programs had been dropped from any regular Cambodian television broadcast. Also cinemas abruptly stopped showing Thai movies, which they had bought in advance. So they got frustrated and lost profit. According to Chea Chou, Heng Tola, Kirirom cinema owner comments on the event as below:

“The January 29th 2003 event did affect my business. At that time I had imported lots of Thai movies, which were not shown yet. But after the event I needed to bury that - no one allowed us to show them and also no one would watch Thai movies anymore.”¹²¹

With the ban of Thai and other foreign movies, Khmer films had to serve the audience's demand. Movie theaters also began to reopen, and by mid 2003 over a dozen theatres were operating in Phnom Penh, and more local production companies were being formed.

Figure 9: Number of cinemas in Phnom Penh¹²²



Although most of the local production companies were still devoted to producing cheap karaoke videos or dramas for television, movie production was steadily rising. The years 2003 and 2004 saw the release of several Cambodian films that were box office hits, ranging from the classic Cambodian folktale *Tum Teav*, to the contemporary family drama *A Mother's Heart*, written and directed by Pan Phuong Bopha, who is one of the few working female writer-directors in Cambodia. In 2005, the outstanding production *The Crocodile*, written and directed by Mao Ayuth,

121 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 17

122 Comp. Interview Mounk Sokhan, July 10, 2007

attracted the largest audience at Cambodian cinemas in the 20th century so far.

The problem after the rebirth of the Cambodian film production is that production companies produce more of the same. In 2001, most production companies focused on producing historical films talking about either Cambodian history in early centuries or stories written in the early 10th century. But from 2003 to 2007, a lot of scary movies were produced. Mostly, film producers did not research at all. If they saw any stories getting a hit, they just followed that idea. Som Sokun, employee at the MCFA, gets the point:

“The Khmer movies today do not have something special and everybody is just copying from each other. So the audience is getting smaller. Ghost movies make up 40 percent of the films produced within the last five years and about 30 percent are educational movies (e.g. how to help or love your mother). Only a few comedies were produced. I am worried that history will repeat itself and all the cinemas will close down like in 1995 because nobody wants to watch movies anymore. We do not need a lot of movies but three to five good quality and interesting movies per year would be enough to attract the audience again.”¹²³

Sylyvann Borei, producer and trainer at Women Media Center confirms this statement:

“Before I went to cinema quite often, but now you can only see copies and adaptations of stories, which are screened several times before. Nearly 90 percent of the so called new movies are copies of old movies or Thai movies. It is worthless to go into the cinema, because you know the story already before and the technical standard is even worse.”¹²⁴

1.10. Foreign films made in Cambodia

Cambodia's Angkor Wat was the location for the filming of 1965's *Lord Jim*, but it wasn't until the early 2000s that foreign filmmakers made their return to the country. In the last few years a small number of foreign films have been shot in Cambodia, including the blockbuster *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, which was shot on location around Angkor in 2000, *City of Ghosts* by actor-director Matt Dillon in 2001 and *Two Brothers* by Jean-Jacques Annaud in

123 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

124 Comp. Interview Sylyvann Borei, July 2, 2007

2003. Directors such as Oliver Stone, Stephen Spielberg and Detlev Buck have also scouted for possible future locations.¹²⁵

Figure 10: Foreign feature films made in Cambodia¹²⁷

Production year	Country	Title
1986	Czech Slovakia Republic	* ¹²⁶
1992	France	The Farmer
1994	*	Femme de passion
1996	France	One Night After The War
1997	Thailand in Cooperation with TV5 Cambodia	Khemarin Chantrea (not allowed to broadcast)
1998	*	New Man
1998	*	Parler moi de Malro
1999	USA	Lara Croft: Tomb Raider
2000	USA	City of Ghosts
2002	France	The Two Siblings
2003	France	Holy Lola
2004	Korea	R.Point
2005	France	The Tiger Empire
2005	France	The Generous Person
2005	USA	Sacrifice
2007	Russia, 35mm	Saison of Rain
2007	South Korea, 35mm	Find the best friend

Hanuman Films, a film servicing and location company in Cambodia was selected to service *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* in 2000, the first Hollywood production to come to Cambodia since *Lord Jim* in 1964. It involved a two month preparation period for eight days of shooting in and around the temples of Angkor. A crew of 150 personnel flew in from the UK, including actors Angelina Jolie and Ian Glen and the director Simon West. Together

125 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October 01, 2007

126 These facts are unknown

127 List provided by the Cinema and Cultural Diffussion Department

with a local support team of more than 500 people, the shoot went seamlessly putting Cambodia firmly on the map as a new destination for filming in Asia.¹²⁸ Shortly after this, *Two Brothers* by Jean-Jacques Annaud was shot in Cambodia. Set in Cambodia in the 1920s, the film tells the story of two tigers who end up in captivity, one as a circus performer, the other as a pet to the royal family.¹²⁹

Nick Ray, location manager at Hanuman Films explains why Cambodia becomes more and more attractive for foreign filmmakers and states the advantages of shooting in Cambodia:

“First and foremost: locations which have not been used many times. Old Asia can be shot here in Cambodia. The production costs are quite lower than in other countries and the transport and accommodation is reasonably cheap. Crews here manage to be very creative. Often they do not have a high budget and are very flexible and adoptable. We did a landmine explosion and instead of using expensive makeup, they used bloody meat. Makeup and props are generally very good and creative and also the directing skills are good and have a big potential. Finally, once you get the approval permission, the interference is quit low during shooting process.”

Most of the foreign film teams are very happy with what they experience while shooting in Cambodia. Bertrand Tavernier, director of *Holy Lola* told in an interview “We had no problems at all and were accpeted by the people and everybody helped us. We also hired Cambodians during shooting and two thirds of the crew came from Cambodia.”¹³⁰ The director of the first Russian feature film *Saison of Rain*, shot in Cambodia, told Cambodian Daily “the experience I had had been very positive”, adding that he would come back to do more filming in the future. Despite all the positive things, filming in Cambodia presents one obstacle: The weather. The heat is a big issue, particularly filming all day under a tropical sun.¹³¹ But it also happened that film crews had very bad experience while shooting in Cambodia. Nick Ray explains why:

“When the team from Holly came to Cambodia they did not ask for a Cambodian coordinator and did everything on their own. They asked at the Ministry of Culture for a shooting permission for their sensitive topic and at

128 Comp. Hanuman Films

129 Comp. Hanuman Films, Accessing date September 20, 2007

130 Comp. Critic, Accessing date September 20, 2007

131 Comp. The Cambodian daily weekend, 21-22. July 2007

the end they fed only the small fishes and did not ask the right people. They went to the wrong people but at the time they realized it and turned away, they got more enemies from the Ministry of Culture and never got a real permission from the cinema department. They went to the wrong Ministry and annoyed them later on. It was their fault. They did everything wrong that they could do. The problem is that they ran out to the world and created a wrong picture out in the world and told everybody "there is only corruption in Cambodia and it is a cruel film country." They created their own problems and the worst scenario, what could happen to a foreign film production in Cambodia, happened to *Holly*".¹³²

According to Nick Ray, the disadvantages while shooting in Cambodia are, that skills of local film crews are not comparable to an international standard, neither the technical skills nor the language. The quality of local technical equipment is does not meet the standards for shooting a high quality feature film. Therefore, it needs to be brought from Thailand or other neighbouring countries. Film crews should generally know about Cambodian culture and history and understand that people in the film industry are not used to working with foreign crews.¹³³ Darren Campbell, Executive Producer of Ocelus Production, adds:

"Here is a very unofficial way of working on the set. Foreign teams might be a little bit shocked how the people work here. Film production from abroad should know what they want to shoot here. Frustration will come because things will not be as they are used to. They should not be worried what happens in the middle. They just should be aware of the result and this will be the same."¹³⁴

Nearly all foreign films, including Matt Dillon's 2002 directorial debut *City of Ghosts*, and Guy Moshe's *Holly*, have chosen to emphasize the country's "sordid and seedy side."¹³⁵ Local filmmakers, such as director Tom Som, complain about the content of most of the feature films shot in Cambodia:

"There is a real difference between foreign eyes and Cambodian eyes; they want to see different things. Foreign films show only the bad bits of Cambodia as it is more interesting. When I hear that foreign filmmakers come to Cambodia to make another film on human trafficking I feel

132 Comp. Interview Nick Ray, August 29, 2007

133 Comp. Interview Nick Ray, August 29, 2007

134 Comp. Interview Darren Campbell, August 28, 2007

135 Comp. Phnom Penh Post, 24.08- 06.09. 2007

unhappy. Sometimes these documentaries are not accurate – they exaggerate to make things look worse.”¹³⁶

According to Som, the production team of *City of Ghosts* spent about US\$10,000 on making one particular location look more squalid than it was before. Mao Ayuth adds: “for the people who live here, the portrayal of Cambodia in these films is too negative.”¹³⁷ Many Cambodians worry about the impact on international perception of their country: “Cambodia is portrayed as a scary place you can run away to from other countries, where there are many criminals, said Som. This is not a good image for Cambodia. Foreigners who come to Cambodia must respect Cambodia”, said Tom Som.¹³⁸

136 Comp. Phnom Penh Post, 24.08- 06.09. 2007

137 Comp. ibidem

138 Comp. ibidem

2. Current issues of Cambodian film industry

After the booming of local film productions in 2003, the film industry regresses again and cinemas close down due to low numbers of cinemagoers. The following chapters describe current issues of the local film industry in 2007 and give advices and information to foreign filmmakers who want to shoot in Cambodia.

2.1. Legal and social regulations

The influx of pirated illegal movies, on video, VCD and DVD in the 1990s is recognized as one reason for the breakdown of Cambodia's cinemas. Although there are some regulations against piracy, they are not being observed. Filmmaker Ly Bun Yim complains:

“Many film companies died out because they could no longer control the distribution of their films and no longer make a profit. Today, the survival of Cambodian cinema hinges on enforcement of copyright and intellectual property laws. The government must crack down on piracy. Pirating is the real killer of Khmer movies and culture”¹³⁹

2.1.1 Copyright

In 2003 a copyright law has been passed. The purpose of the law is “to provide rights for the author and to protect cultural products, performance, phonogram, and the transmission of broadcasting organization in order to secure a legitimate exploitation on those cultural products and thereby contribute to the development of culture.”¹⁴⁰

It punishes production or reproduction without having permission from the performer, phonogram producer, video producer or broadcasting organization with six to twelve months sentence and/or five to twentyfive million Riels¹⁴¹ fine. Broadcasting without permission is punishable by one to three months and/or one -to ten million Riels¹⁴² fine. In both cases double punishment will be applicable in case of repeated offense.¹⁴³

139 Comp. Cambodia Daily, Accessing date October 01, 2007

140 Comp. Law on Copyright and Related Rights, article 1

141 about US\$ 1,250.00 to US\$ 6,250.00

142 about US\$ 250,00 to US\$ 2,500.00

143 Comp. Law on Copyright and Related Rights, article 65

The protection of economic rights starts from the date of creation of a work and covers the life of the author and the 50 years following his or her decease.¹⁴⁴

Even though the copyright law was signed on March 5, 2003 in Phnom Penh and a Sub Decree¹⁴⁵ has been passed, it takes time for it to become enforced and be seriously applied. DVD piracy remains rampant, discouraging many filmmakers from investing in new productions. Fay Sam Ang, owner of 9Star production in Cambodia, estimates that 80 percent of their films hitting the market are copies.¹⁴⁶ But so far no film production company started a successful lawsuit. Som Sokun, employer at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, explains:

“According to the law, all owners of the film production companies have to complain to the police about piracy and if they do not submit a complaint to the police we can not do anything. But normally the production companies think it is just a waste of time to complain because the court is not fair and if they loose a lawsuit they have to pay all expenses. We are only the middle persons who give a stick for original DVD’s [...] but we can not enforce punishments. Of course this is also one of the facts which decrease the local film production.”¹⁴⁷

Eng Sokly, Head of Video Production of the production company, Hang Meas, complains that his company is loosing money with their original DVD’s or VCD’s, because “the people preferred the piracy DVDs about 2000 R instead of the legal one about US\$2 to US\$3”. He adds “copyright or piracy is a big problem in Cambodia. When we want to release a legal DVD or VCD we have to buy a stick from the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts. The piracy people do not care about this and do not spend money for the sticks¹⁴⁸ and just sell the DVDs and VCDs very cheap.”

144 Comp. Law on Copyright and Related Rights, article 30

145 Read more in the next chapter: Sub Decree on Management and Control on Film and Video

146 Comp. Globe Magazine, 2007 page 50

147 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

148 These sticks prove that the DVD is an original.

2.1.2 Sub Decree on Management and Control on Film and Video

The Sub Decree mentioned above constitutes responsibilities for piracy in the film and video sector, aims to crack down on illegal video and film production and tries to ensure respect for social morality.¹⁴⁹

“Controlling and cracking down on illegal producing and exploiting activities, and broadcasting film and video is the authority of each provincial and municipal department of culture and fine arts as well as commune and district culture and fine arts offices in collaboration with local authorities.”¹⁵⁰

Fines for selling, exporting and broadcasting films or videos without a visa¹⁵¹ from MCFA are stated exactly in articles 25 to 27. So far there is no exact fine declared for illegal copies. Article 31 constitutes:

“Whosoever illegally copies the film or video from whatever company granted visa by Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts for making business, broadcasting or communicating to the public by any means that affect other people’s benefits will face a complaint at the court.”¹⁵²

As already mentioned, nobody who produces or sells illegal copies had to face legal complaints so far. But it is beyond all question that illegal copies affect the film industry negatively. Jason Rosette, organizer of the Cambofest¹⁵³, suggests:

“In neighbouring Thailand, VCDs of popular movies are available legitimately for a very low, consumer-oriented price. If VCDs of popular movies are made available legitimately for consumers at a very low price in Cambodia, people will buy them instead of pirated versions. It’s all about the money, and also knowing that with a legitimate copy you won’t be watching the back of someone’s head throughout the entire movie.”¹⁵⁴

Next to the written laws there are unspoken moral concepts and social principles which need to be followed like a law.

149 Comp. Sub decree on Management and Control on Film and Video No:63 ANKR/BK, article 2

150 Comp. ibidem article 23

151 Visa is officially used as term for permit in Cambodia.

152 Comp. Sub decree on Management and Control on Film and Video No:63 ANKR/BK, article 31

153 Read more in chapter: Cambofest

154 Comp. Email Jason Rosette, September 06, 2007

2.1.3 Moral concept and taboos

It is important that films being produced in Cambodia are linked to Cambodian tradition and culture. Apart from that the culture should not be criticized in movies. During a survey in June 2007 students from Germany found out that topics concerning the government, the king, religion, corruption of high officials and question of borders should be treated very sensibly.¹⁵⁵ Also Norbert Klein, the director of the Cambodian „Mirror“ said in his speech in June 2007, “that it is better to say nothing critical in the Cambodian society otherwise people could remember it later and could use it against you.” He added: “Many people would never say something different from the majority and it is not common in the society to criticize. Also sexual scenes should be treated very sensitively.” Matthew Robinson, producer at Khmer Mekong Films (read more in chapter: Production companies), explains: “Five years ago people were not used to kiss on their lips privately, just on their cheeks. Now it has changed, but even now no couples kiss each other on the street. So I avoided lip kisses in my films.”¹⁵⁶

Recapitulatory, a production company seeking permission from the MCFA or CCDD should avoid the following topics:

- Human trafficking
- Prostitution
- Politics
- Corruption
- Sexual scenes
- Violent scenes (bloody beaten body)
- Drug abuse
- generally all topics which show a negative view on Cambodia

If a script contains sensitive topics the CCDD will request a correction. When changed, a shooting permission can be handed out.¹⁵⁷ Despite this fact, there is no official censorship in Cambodia as the next chapter explains.

155 Comp. Speech student group of Germany, June 15, 2007

156 Comp. Interview Matthew Robinson, June 07, 2007

157 Comp. Interview Ly Dany, July 06, 2007

2.1.4 Censorship

There is no law which explicitly forbids or censors film content yet. Som Sokun from MCFA states:

“We strictly forbid showing any drug abuse, killing or bloody fighting in the movies. Also we do not allow showing cruel, sexual or pornographic scenes because this would provide a negative impact to young people. Furthermore we will not give the permit to any movie which is against our culture or attacks and criticises Buddhism. If the movie is involved in politics you will get trouble with the government. Local film production companies know about these rules and so there is no need to write it in a law.”¹⁵⁸

Darren Campbell, producer at Ocelus Production adds: “There is no book of rules but some topics are sensitive and producers avoid them for example: monks, religion and political issues.”¹⁵⁹ Another film producer, who wants to stay anonymous, confirms that:

“In Cambodia there is no culture of criticizing the government, either on radio, TV, newspapers or magazines. The media is reflecting the power of the government and so you can also call it self preservation. All critical organisations are banned and also critical journalists are arrested. You have got to trade so carefully and you have to have an instinct of what is acceptable and what is not.”

2.1.5 Film rating

Film rating categorizes films with regard to suitability for children and adults in terms of issues such as sex, violence and profanity. Such categories for ages do not exist in Cambodia. Som Sokun explains:

“Honestly speaking we can not regulate this because it is too hard to control. Since 1989 we developed a plan to implement a law but we do not think that the cinema owners or the film production companies would respect it. The owners would only care about the money and let everybody in. We decided not to give the permits at all if the movie is not proper for the cinema. Instead of using a rating system, we deny all movies we consider inappropriate for all ages.”¹⁶⁰

158 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

159 Comp. Interview Darren Campbell, August 28, 2007

160 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

Contrary to this, Matthew Robinson is amazed “that families with their children can see the most horrible movies where people are chopped to death.” He complains: “Nobody gives a thought to violence, only consideration for being a virgin and even in all romantic movies no lip kiss can be screened.”¹⁶¹

On the contrary, foreign movies which are screened on TV or at the cinema include lip kisses and sexual scenes, but often they are fast forwarded or even cut out. In order to protect the local culture as well as the film industry it can be assumed that regulation for foreign movies exists. Further explanations will be given in the next chapter.

2.1.6 Quota regulation

To protect local film productions, countries often implement a law which limits the import of films from other countries or sets a quota for local production screened at the cinema or TV. Before the KR time, the Ministry of Information regulated the importation of foreign films. Now this authority moved to the MCFA and there is no quota regulation anymore.¹⁶²

“Before KR there existed a quota that at least some of the screened movies at the cinemas had to be local productions. Today we do not have anything like that. We also can not control the quota of foreign films on TV because it does not belong to our Ministry. The government policy says that the Ministry of Information is responsible for TV and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts is responsible for cinema. As long as the movies are screened on the cable TV we can not introduce a law which regulates the quota of Cambodian leading to foreign films. The lack of regulation is also one factor where the cinema industry breaks down.”¹⁶³

Yvon Hem complains: “It is embarrassing, that we do not have any institution which regulates the income of foreign movies and promotes the Khmer films. The Cinema Department should be responsible for this but they do not do anything to improve the Khmer film industry.”¹⁶⁴

Although there is no quota regulation, the cinema industry effectively regulates itself. Only a few movies from abroad are screened at Cambodian cinemas nowadays, but according to the world wide influence of American

161 Comp. Interview Matthew Robinson, June 07, 2007

162 Comp. Interview Yvon Herm, July 03, 2007

163 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

164 Comp. Interview Yvon Herm, July 03, 2007

movies, this could change in the future and therefore a quota regulation would be necessary. A strong influx of foreign movies could affect local productions. As long as foreign movies are coming to Cambodia, the local products will never be sustained nor developed because many of the foreign films are imported without copyright and therefore cheaply. This again screws down the prices for original Khmer movies. Ung Son San, president of Phnom Pich Movie Production, suggested the government should “increase language translation taxes for foreign films to narrow the cost margin between foreign and local films”¹⁶⁵

2.2. Film associations

So far only a few film associations in Cambodia exist. In the following chapters, they will be explained.

2.2.1 Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts

Before the time of Lon Nol there was no Ministry of Culture and Fine Art and everything was regulated by the Ministry of Information. According to Som Sokun, the MCFA was founded during the Lon Nol time but it was still connected to the Ministry of Information until 1979. At this time both Ministries regulated the cinemas. In 1986, when TV started, the responsibilities of the Ministries were divided. From the elections in 1993 on, the Ministry of Information regulated the TV and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts regulated cinema.¹⁶⁶ The MCFA was formally established by Decree No 62 ANKR-BK in October 1997. It is charged with overall responsibility for the development of culture and fine arts in Cambodia. This means to implement policies for protecting, preserving and heightening the values of the national cultural heritage and other cultural properties of the Kingdom of Cambodia.¹⁶⁷

2.2.2 Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department

The Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department is responsible to the authority of the MCFA and has 52 employees.¹⁶⁸ It is in charge of overseeing the development of the Cambodian film and video industry and the production of educational and documentary films for domestic consumption.

165 Comp. Cambodia Daily, Accessing date September 15, 2007

166 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

167 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October 01, 2007

168 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

Furthermore, all film production companies have to be registrated at the CCDD. The Directorate lacks in financial resources to produce films by itself. Kong Kantara, director of the CCDD, states: "We can only produce two to three documentaries per year for TV because we rely on partnerships with other organisations. We do not produce feature films for cinemas."¹⁶⁹ In recent years Rithy Panh's project *Atelier Varan* was located in the CCDD studio facilities, but this project ended in 2004.¹⁷⁰ The Directorate houses an archive of Cambodian and East European films and is also in charge of organising the annual National Festival of Film and Video (read more in chapter: National Festival of Film and Video). The Cinema Department is also able to help foreign film production companies who are planning to shoot in Cambodia to find a coordinator who organizes all the permits and guides them through the production.¹⁷¹ One coordinator per movie is allowed.¹⁷²

Other tasks of the CCDD include controlling the number and quality of cinemas and VCD/ DVD shops, managing censorship and assigning film shooting permits.¹⁷³ (read more in chapter: Filming permit.)

2.2.3 National Film Archive

The Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department is the proprietor of the National Film Archive. It comprises several "dusty, unclimatised rooms"¹⁷⁴ in the Directorate of Cinema and Cultural Diffusion's studio facility in Phnom Penh. Khmer films are currently stored at Street 200, while a large collection of films from the former Eastern Europe are stored in other buildings. Most films are stored in "rusty cans and several have already been damaged by 'vinegar syndrome'¹⁷⁵." ¹⁷⁶ Under a joint project led by Rithy Panh and funded by the French Government a new building on Street 200 will be renovated and turned into a dedicated National Film Archive.¹⁷⁷ (read more in chapter: Bophana Center)

169 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

170 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October, 01 2007

171 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2006 page 10

172 The Salary of the coordinator amounts to about US\$ 50

173 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

174 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October 01, 2007

175 It is the breakdown of triacetate film base caused by acid vapors.

176 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October 01, 2007

177 Comp. ibidem

2.2.4 Film Cambodia

The mission of FilmCambodia.org is to strengthen the Khmer film industry. Three objectives are defined by director Mariam Arthur: First, providing resources and support training of Khmer filmmakers to produce marketable films. Second, the already trained filmmakers shall act as crew for International productions shot in Cambodia with assistance provided for International filmmakers in Cambodia and third, to promote the Khmer film industry globally.¹⁷⁸

Mariam Arthur's main aim is to set up a film commission in Cambodia. So far there is no institution for filmmakers which regulates for example the minimum of salary, the time of breaks during work or generally the protection of the employees from local film production companies.¹⁷⁹ Mariam Arthur adds. "There is nearly no protection of shooting places, you just need to pay and then you can shoot wherever you want. Furthermore, there are no professional of stuntmen, people who do not know anything about that, just get money and do it. I hope to create a self-governing board for safety rather than new laws."¹⁸⁰

2.2.5 Asian Film Commission Network

Cambodia is one of the eight members of the Asian Film Commission Network. Represented by the MCFA it has no special film commission which promotes Cambodian film culture. With a network of Asian film commissions and organizations ASCNet shares information on related film laws, cultures and costumes. The aim is to pursue film productions in Asia by building a convenient environment for filming. Furthermore, ASCNet wants to contribute to the development of the Asian film industry and promote Asia as the heart of the film culture¹⁸¹ As already mentioned, Mariam Arthur wants to build up a film commission who actively represents Cambodia at the ASCNet. She says:

"So far nobody in the Government is actively in charge for this film commission. They do not have the time to deal with it, instead they have to build up the infrastructure and rebuild Cambodia. But they could just take advantage of it and the Khmer film industry has to show the world, look

178 Comp. Film Cambodia, Accessing date October 15, 2007

179 Comp. Interview Mariam Arthur, June 27, 2007

180 Comp. Interview Mariam Arthur, June 27, 2007

181 Comp. Asian Film Commission Network, Accessing date October 15, 2007

what we can do. So it is necessary to be an active part of the film commission network.”¹⁸²

2.3. Film funding

The national budget for culture and fine arts has shown a steady increase in recent years. But it must be remembered that Cambodia is a developing country with modest funds for the development and promotion of arts and heritage. Accordingly at the present time the national budget for culture and information represents less than 0.5 percent of the national budget. The way in which the budget for culture and fine arts is allocated, varies from year to year, according to the developmental priorities within the Ministry.¹⁸³

So far there is no money for governmental film funding, neither cultural film funds for young filmmaker nor economical film funding for local film production companies. Deependra Gauchan, Executive Producer BBC, explains: “Producers have to spend their money from their own pocket.”¹⁸⁴ According to Kong Kantara from the Cinema Department, there is no film funding planned for the future¹⁸⁵ and Som Sokun from MCFA added:

“We are a very poor country and so our priority is taking care of agriculture and other things like infrastructure. Unfortunately funding for films is only a plan for the future. The short term plan is now to increase the human resources through the new Film School at the Royal University of Fine Arts.”¹⁸⁶

Rithy Panh complains about the attitude of the government.

“The government has also the task to save and strengthen the cultural heritage. People are hungry for two things: one for their stomach and one for their heart. You can not feed only the stomach of the people; you also have to feed people with culture because people need this to survive. The government should take this responsibility and help to create a funding system especially for young filmmakers. I suggested to them already to take a tax of about 10 Riel for each sold DVD and use it for funding, but instead of they use it for buying big cars.”¹⁸⁷

182 Comp. Interview Mariam Arthur, June 27, 2007

183 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile, Accessing date October 01, 2007

184 Comp. Interview Deependra Gauchan, June 06, 2007

185 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

186 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

187 Comp. Interview Rithy Panh, August 22, 2007

2.4. Structures of film production

2.4.1 Script

As already mentioned there is no funding for the film industry and therefore exists no special funding for good film scripts or film script competitions. According to Kao Un, cinema manager of Kirirom, the average salary for a screen writer is US\$ 500 per script.¹⁸⁸ Only screenwriters for big film productions, such as *Tum Teav* by SSB Production¹⁸⁹, get a salary about US\$ 2,000.00.¹⁹⁰ Former filmmaker Mao Ayuth, comments about screenwriter skills as follows:

“Today there are only a few good screenwriters. Apart from them, scriptwriters have no original ideas, no talent and just copy what other people are doing. For screenwriting you have to have talent. That means the feeling for observation and to understand the way people think. Some students only attend class and pass an exam. But if you want to do good movies you have to use your brain and not just copy what other people are doing.”¹⁹¹

Matthew Robinson confirms that: “The ideas do not come out of their own minds and they are not able to reflect their culture and to make movies from it.”¹⁹² During film training for young filmmakers Sylyvann Borei, supervisor of the training at Women Media Center, figured out the biggest problem: “They have no idea how to find and to create a story and the ideas are often banal.”¹⁹³

Ly Bun Yim and Yvon Hem, both famed for their films in the 1960s and 1970s, agreed that a lack of training results in some “stumbling storylines without resolution [...] some main characters are suddenly disappearing from the script”¹⁹⁴ and most of stories are without any content or educational value.¹⁹⁵

188 Comp. Interview Kao Un, June 20, 2007

189 Read more in part: SSB Production

190 Comp. Interview Saray Chantrea, July 14, 2007

191 Comp. Interview Mao Ayuth, June 12, 2007

192 Comp. Interview Matthew Robinson, June 07, 2007

193 Comp. Interview Sylyvann Borei, July 02, 2007

194 Comp. Khmer City, Accessing date October 20, 2007

195 Comp. Interview Ly Bun Yim, July 14, 2007

2.4.2 Shooting in Cambodia

In the following chapter general information will be given, concerning infrastructure, customs as well as immigration and emigration. Common questions by foreigners will be answered.

2.4.2.1 General information

Immigration/Emigration

Each foreigner who wants to immigrate to Cambodia has to have a visa. This will be obtained on presentation of a passport picture and a passport with a validity of at least six months after entering the country. For a stay of maximum one month, a tourist visa¹⁹⁶ is enough, which is available upon arrival, either at the airports or at the borders of Thailand or Vietnam. It is also possible to obtain the visa at the Embassies of each home country, but in general this takes a long time and is expensive.

A business visa¹⁹⁷ is necessary if the film crew stays longer than three months in Cambodia. Later on, it is possible to extend this visa by one month, two months, six months or one year.¹⁹⁸ At each airport in Cambodia foreigners have to pay US\$ 25 airport tax on departure day.

Weather

Cambodia has a warm and humid tropical climate throughout the year with an average temperature of 28.5°C.¹⁹⁹ There are two main seasons: dry season from December to April and rainy season from May to November.²⁰⁰

Travel and Transport

In Cambodia there are two international airports. One is located in Siem Reap and another one in the capital Phnom Penh. There are no direct flights to the national airports from Europe or America. A stop over at one of the airports in the region must be done. (e.g. Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur or Ho Chi Minh City)

The road network keeps evolving in Cambodia. But most of the roads are still very bumpy and not comparable with a structured highway system

196 Price: US\$ 20

197 Price: US\$ 25 per month

198 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2006, page 4

199 Comp. ibidem page 4

200 Comp. World Fact Book 2005, Accessing date October 20, 2007

existing in Europe or America. Although the road network reached a decent level of quality, some places are very hard to access such as Mondulkiri and Rattanakiri. Especially during rainy season some nice shooting regions are not accessible. However, it is improving everyday and it shall not take long before the road network fulfils western standards.

The railway network is very old and totally inefficient. The main line, connecting Battambang and Phnom Penh, takes about 10 hours for 300 kilometers.

Cambodia has only one harbour in Sihanoukville. But many river connections are provided between the three main towns, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Battambang.

Also a bus network connects the main cities. Meanwhile the picking frequency is quite high and there are several departures per day.²⁰¹ To avoid crowded busses, it is also possible to rent a minibus including a driver.²⁰² The busses are only connecting cities but are not driving within cities. There are no official citybusses or citytrains existing and most of the people go by motodops.²⁰³ Another possibility is to go by a rented car or motorbike. The CCDD can help foreign filmmakers to find a rental place or a vehicle.

Medical formalities

In Cambodia are no particular vaccinations needed and no compulsory treatments to follow. Malaria does not exist in large cities but in rural areas. A standby medicine is recommended in case of malaria infection. Outbreak of fever and dengue fever can sometimes occur in cities. Each person of the film crew should consult a doctor before leaving to Cambodia.²⁰⁴

Customs

The customs duties applied in Cambodia are relatively low in regard to those practiced by neighbouring countries. The average rate is about 10.4 percent.²⁰⁵ If the declared value of a consignment to Cambodia goes over US\$ 4,000.00, a control before loading the goods is required in the country

201 Capitol Tours, Sorya Transport and Mekong Tours are the largest bus companies which have a very high picking frequency in Cambodia.

202 The renting price is about US\$ 50 to US\$ 75 including the driver

203 Motorbike drivers, who ride through the town and pick people up and drop them anywhere they want for a about \$US 1

204 Comp. Tropenmedizin, Accessing date November 15, 2007

205 Comp. Ministry of Trade, Accessing date November 01, 2007

of the supplier. This is organized by the Swiss company SGS for the Cambodian government. The fees, 0.8 percent of the price of the goods, are paid by the importer.

Any imported goods must be declared through customs on arrival. During the first five days the storage of the goods waiting for customs is free. Thereafter, the storage costs per day are US\$ 3 for 20 foot containers. For a 20 foot container, the inspection costs is at present US\$ 120,00 and that of the customs clearance about US\$ 300,00. In addition to that, there is the tax of CAMCONTROL, in charge of quality control and fraud repression, which represents 0.1 percent of the CAF value of the goods. The average duration of a customs clearance takes one week.²⁰⁶

Import of film production equipment

For the importation of film equipment and supplies, production companies have to have a temporary import license. In order to get this license, a permit from the MCFA is needed. Then the CCDD can help to obtain the permit from customs. For this the following documents are required:

- Pro forma invoice
- Invoice for air tickets
- Format of the film (e.g. 35mm, 16mm)
- Shooting permit from the Ministry
- Letter of demand for a temporary import license addressed to customs²⁰⁷

According to the Film Production Guide 2006 the authorities recognized the problem of “tea money”, which was required to be paid to the individual custom officers on duty by import and export.

Export of film production equipment

For the export of equipment the necessary documents are the invoice (including name of the equipment, brand and model), a list of inventory and photographs of each item, if the shipment is a temporary export for an overseas project.²⁰⁸

206 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2006, page 36

207 Comp. ididem page 38

208 Comp. ibidem page 39

2.4.2.2 Film stock

Film stock is not available in Cambodia and needs to be bought in Thailand or Hong Kong and then imported to Cambodia. According to Kong Kantara from CCDD “nobody uses film stock in Cambodia, because it is not affordable for local production companies.”²⁰⁹ Darren Campbell from Occelus Production confirms: „We use Mini DV or HDV and we actually think this is the future. Especially commercials will be shot in HDV and production companies will not use film material anymore because we can also gain very nice results with HDV.”²¹⁰

2.4.2.3 Filming permit

The first document filmmakers, who want to shoot in Cambodia must be provided with, is a shooting permit²¹¹ from the CCDD. According to article 13 of the Sub decree on Management and Control on Film and Video “both local and international, aiming to produce film and video, shall submit script in Khmer language including conversation, song or summarized document”.²¹² Apart from that the following documents are needed from foreign shooting crews:

- Official shooting permit application from the foreign production team
- the correctly filled-in-application from the CCDD
- copies of the passport of each member of the foreign production team coming to work in Cambodia
- synopsis in English and Khmer
- final script in English or French, with a Khmer translation
- shooting schedule: date, location, name list of the crew including position and passport number
- details about needs of important special equipment or needs of military weapons or vehicles²¹³

209 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

210 Comp. Interview Darren Campbell, August 28, 2007

211 See appendix II

212 Comp. Sub decree on Management and Control on Film and Video No:63 ANKR/BK, article 13

213 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2006 page 14

Ly Dany, who is in charge of welcoming shooting crews at the CCDD, estimates that the process of script approval takes “one to two weeks in case it [the script] does not contain sensitive topics.” If the script contains sensitive topics, the CCDD might reconsider the complete file and give a second advice. In this case the file has to be sent to the MCFA and the process of issuing a shooting permit takes about one month.²¹⁴ If the script still cannot be corrected or if the project is still rejected, filmmakers will not get permission for producing and screening the film in Cambodia and the shooting permit is not granted. If the permission is granted, the CCDD will issue a letter that film production companies will need for any other request or permit, including requests to official authorities who manage the plots of land and buildings.²¹⁵

The film permit fees are collected by the MCFA²¹⁶ and are about US\$ 50.²¹⁷ After the film is produced a copy needs to be deposited at the CCDD and they will give the final permission to screen it in Cambodia.²¹⁸

This process can be difficult for foreign filmmakers who navigate alone, with no experience of dealing with the local bureaucracy. Nick Ray, line producer and location scout for *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* and *Two Brothers*, explains the difficulties:

“The hardest part in the permission process is the government side. They are focused on promoting the nice things and so human trafficking, drugs and prostitution are sensitive topics. In the future, film crews must understand the Cambodians and the Cambodians must understand the film industry. The government has to understand that movies are movies and not documentations and accept particular or sensitive topics. It is basically a learning process on both sides. Government and film crews should be more flexible.”²¹⁹

Darren Campbell, producer of Ocelus Productions, recommends foreign filmmakers to come to Cambodia “the earlier the better, before you actually start to shoot. You always need a Cambodian coordinator otherwise you are

214 Comp Interview Ly Dany, July 06, 2007

215 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2006 page 14

216 Comp. Newsletter Filmcambodia.org October 2007

217 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

218 Comp. Interview Ly Dany, July 06, 2007

219 Comp. Interview Nick Ray, August 23, 2007

lost. Costs can be much cheaper if you work in the unofficial way but it will take more time.”²²⁰

2.4.2.4 Shooting places

After getting the shooting permission from CCDD or MCFA filmmakers can start their shooting, but there are special cases when a specific permit is needed.

Figure 11: Special permits²²¹

Place	Competent authorities
markets/ public parks/ streets	Governor of the concerned province
streets in Phnom Penh	Governor of the concerned province Department of Public Works and Transport
airports	Manager of the airport
busses/ trains/ boats	Companies in question
along the railway	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
harbours, lakes, island, shores, seas, oceans	Governor of the concerned province
parks, gardens, forests	Governor of the concerned province
private parks	owner
pagodas, wats	Ministry of Cult and Religious Affairs concerned municipality ²²²
public schools, universities, stadiums	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports concerned municipally
private schools, universities, stadiums	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports management
public hospitals, clinics ²²³	Ministry of Health concerned municipally
private hospitals, clinics	Ministry of Health concerned municipally management
governmental orphanages	Ministry of Social Affairs, labour,

220 Comp. Interview Nick Ray, August 23, 2007

221 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2006 page 16- 24

222 Although religious authorities generally do not ask for it, a gift is always welcome, when shooting inside a pagoda or shooting with monks.

223 It is forbidden to shoot AIDs patients.

	Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation
private orphanages	Ministry of Social Affairs, labour, Vocational Training and Youth Rehabilitation management
Royal Palace	municipality in Phnom Penh Ministry of the Royal Palace
National Museum	municipality in Phnom Penh
Wat Phnom	municipality in Phnom Penh
Tuol Sleng, Genocide Museum	Management of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum
Post office	Ministry of Post and Telecommunication

Shooting in prisons or within military bases is generally not allowed in Cambodia. Sensitive locations include parts of the Royal Palace, National Museum and Hun Sen's residences. But filmmakers say that "you can probably shoot everywhere, if you pay more."

Figure 12: Location fees²²⁴

Location	Price per day
Location in the countryside	US\$ 10- 60
Olympic Stadium	US\$ 300
Royal Palace	US\$ 80-100
National Museum	US\$ 80-100
Tuol Sleng, Genocide Museum	US\$ 80-100
Angkor Wat	US\$ 300- 500 for local productions US\$ 5,000 for NGO productions US\$ 50,000.00 for foreign productions ²²⁵
Non-official houses	US\$ 20- 50
Special made houses	US\$ 300
Supermarket	US\$ 400- 600

224 These are not official datas. Comp. Interview Nick Ray, Darren Campbell, Chan Dorm Chun

225 Within the Angkor area all fees are set by the Apsara Authority

According to Kong Kantara from CCDD, "Cambodia is very attractive for the movie going world because it is a new location and not over going. Cambodia has a variety of landscapes and is fresh."²²⁶ So far only a few big film productions have shot in Cambodia. (read more in chapter: foreign feature films shot in Cambodia)

2.4.2.5 Studios

In Cambodia there is no equipped film studio comparable to western standards existing. Film production companies such as FCI have several warehouses which can be used as studios. The costs are about US\$ 600 including DV Cam Cameras.²²⁷ According to Eng Sokly, Head of Video Production for Hang Meas, his company plans to build a film studio for music, video and film production nearby the *Tiger* brewery in Phnom Penh. Seventy-five percent to 80 percent is finished already and can be rented by foreign film production companies in the future.²²⁸

2.4.2.6 Production costs

The production costs are quit lower than in other countries and the transport and accommodation is reasonable cheap. Films in Cambodia are generally produced in video, because producing with expensive film stock is not affordable. Most of the productions cost between US\$ 4,000.00 and US\$ 5,000.00.²²⁹ Due to the lack of governmental financial funding, production companies use their small budget effectively. Nick Ray, Line Producer for Hanuman Films, confirms this:

"Crews here manage to be very creative. Often they do not have a high budget and are very flexible and adoptable. We did a landmine explosion and instead of using expensive makeup, they used bloody meat."²³⁰

Staff costs represent close to 30 percent of the overall budget. The technical team relies on versatile technicians. The cameraman is in charge of the special effects. He also ensures the continuity in the creation process of the work and has an active participation in editing as well as of the calibration. It can be said that he is the most qualified technician of the

226 Comp. The Cambodian Daily Weekend, July 21-22, 2007

227 Interview Korm Chanthy, July 10, 2007

228 Interview Eng Sokly, July 19, 2007

229 According to Interviews with 8 production companies in Cambodia

230 Comp. Interview Nick Ray, August 28, 2007

team. Most of the technical assistants for lighting or scenery are hired day per day and are generally unqualified persons. The average salary is between US\$5 and US\$10 per day each.²³¹

A study made for UNESCO in March 2007 reflects the average productions costs.

Figure 13: Production costs²³²

1. Development	
Screenwriter	US\$50 to US\$100
Fiction script fee (feature film)	Up to US\$5,000
2. Production team	
	(daily-rates) Prices vary according to whether the technician is "local", trained abroad or a foreign professional
Report shooting team (director and cameraman)	between US\$150 and US\$250
Director/Production Manager (often the same)	between US\$150 and US\$350
Assistant Director	US\$30 to US\$100
Script girl	US\$10 to US\$40
Production Assistant/Location Manager/Casting Director	between US\$25 and US\$50
Make-up Artist/Wardrobe Attendant	between US\$10 and US\$30
3. Technical team	
	(daily-rates) Prices vary according to whether the technician is "local", trained abroad or a foreign professional
Cameraman	between US\$40 and US\$100
Assistant Cameraman	US\$10 to US\$40
Head Lighting Engineer/Sound Engineer	US\$30 to US\$40
Lighting/Sound Assistant	US\$10 to US\$20
Electrician/Stage Hand	around US\$10
4. Performance	
	(daily-rates)

231 Comp. Cocq, Emmanuel, 2007 page 69

232 Comp. ibidem page 64-65

Actor (voice)	approx. US\$10
Actor (small role)	US\$10 to US\$30
Actor (leading roles)	US\$2,000 to US\$4,000 up to US\$10,000 for a star
Extras	US\$1 to US\$5 ²³³
5. Equipment	See 2.4.3.3
6. Logistics: transport	daily rate in Phnom Penh
Car rental with driver	US\$20 to US\$35
Motorcycle rental	US\$10 to US\$15
7. Other expenses	daily rate per location
Tips (police, town, competent authorities, etc.) Systematic on all shooting locations	approx. US\$2 to US\$10
8. Post-production	Daily rates
Rental Betacam editing room	US\$150
Rental virtual editing room	US\$50 to US\$100
Sound recording/dubbing	US\$20 to US\$50
Editor (local/simple editing)	US\$40
Editor (foreign professional, directing editor)	US\$250
Editing of a feature film	Approx US\$4,000 for the whole movie
Studio sound engineer	From US\$30 to US\$80
9. Production / post-production special effects	
Special effects technician (compositing, creation and integration of visual effects, objects and virtual scenery)	US\$35/h or US\$300/d
Special effects assistant	US\$25/h or US\$150/d
Creation of animated characters	US\$300 + US\$35/h
10. Fungibles and duplication	
60 min DV tape	US\$3
124 min DVCAM tape	US\$25
DVCAM/DV copying fee	US\$10 to US\$15
VHS copying	US\$2 to US\$3
DVD master	US\$15 to US\$25

233 Comp. Interview Lay Ny, July 25, 2007

Outstanding film production Crocodile

In 2005 the most expensive local film production was made. It required an overall budget of approximately US \$100,000.

Figure 14: Poster *Crocodile*²³⁴



Close to 70 percent of the expenses correspond to wage payment. At this level, the weight of the actors' compensation is considerable, 48.5 percent of the entire budget. This high level can be explained by the fact that the leading role of the film is held by the Cambodian star Preap Sovath. His fee has not been revealed by the production, but it can be estimated at around US\$10,000 which is a record. The other leading roles also got high salaries (US\$3,000 to US\$5,000), which places them nearly at the same compensation level as the director. The compensation for small roles varies between US\$10 and US\$30 per day.²³⁵

2.4.3 Film companies

2.4.3.1 Legal regulations for staffs

In Cambodia there are only a few legal regulations for staff. These are determined in the Labour Law of Cambodia. There is no real social security system in place. The only duty for the employer is to provide the employee with an insurance covering the on-job-accidents.²³⁶ Although there are some legal regulations, people do not care about them. Often it is necessary to work under hard conditions in order to survive.

Labour Code

In force since March 13, 1997, the new Labour code governs "the relationships between employers and workers resulting from work contracts signed in order to be executed on the territory of Cambodia" (article 1).

Employment of child actors

²³⁴ Copyright Hang Meas

²³⁵ Comp. Cocq, Emmanuel, 2007 page 69

²³⁶ Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2005 page 45

The legal working age is fixed to 15 years and older, but the persons from 12 to 15 years old can be hired to do "light work" provided that this does not mean "adverse health effects" and "the school diligence will not be disregarded" (article 177).

Labour contract

The labour contract can be written or verbal (article 65). The temporary contract must be written, in lack of that, it will be qualified as permanent employment contract (article 67).

Work booklet

Every worker of Cambodian nationality must be provided with a work booklet (article 32). This article also points out that an employer can not take on workers who do not have a booklet.²³⁷

Continuation or termination of a labour contract

At the expiration of the term, the temporary employment contract can not be tacitly seen out. If there is tacit renewal, the contract will be a permanent employment contract from then on. At the expiration of the term or if the contract is not renewed, the employer must give an advance notice to the worker. The term of notice will be of 10 days for the contracts of at least six month, and of 15 days for those covering at least a year (article 73). The permanent employment contract can be cancelled by the will of all concerned parties. The party which intends to cancel the contract must give an advance written notice to his or her co-contractor (article 74). According to the number of working years, the article 75 fixes a minimal term of notice from seven days to six months.²³⁸

At the moment, no regulation determines the minimum wage applicable to the private sector.

Working hours

By law, working hours should not exceed 48hours per week, which means eight hours per day.²³⁹ If exceeded, employees are legally entitled to overtime wages. Every extra working hour is overcharged with 50 percent

237 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2005 page 43

238 ibidem page 43

239 According to Cambodian Labour Law, employees are entitled to one resting day for every six days worked.

or 100 percent when accomplished during night time or during the weekly resting day (article 139).²⁴⁰

2.4.3.2 Production companies

There are numerous film production companies in Cambodia. Some of the best known are 9 Star, FCI, Dara Video Kampuchea, Campro Production and Khmer Mekong Films. They all produce similar movies: horror, karate and romance. Some films are exclusively made for TV and never reach the cinemas. In this case the stations finance the movies but there is no co-financing like in other countries existing. Most of the producers and directors work for TV stations to finance their own films. Moth Thary, owner of the production company MTP figured out that there are two kinds of film production companies in the country. In an interview for Globe Magazine he stated 2007:

“The first [kind of filmmaker] makes movies purely for business by producing Khmer versions of popular Thai scripts. The second category stays true to their Khmer heritage by making movies written by Khmers. Cambodia does not have many script writers, the salaries are low, a new writer does not get over US\$ 1000. Even well-known names such as Mao Ayuth get only US\$1500.”²⁴¹

During the first six months in 2007 about 20 feature films were produced. According to Mounk Sokhan, employee at the Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department, there were 116 film production companies registered, but only 74 of them were active. The number of production companies also includes those, which only produce karaoke movies. Production companies have to be registered at the Ministry of Commerce and as mentioned in chapter Cinema and Cultural Diffusion Department, production companies have to request for a license either at the MCFA or CCDD.²⁴²

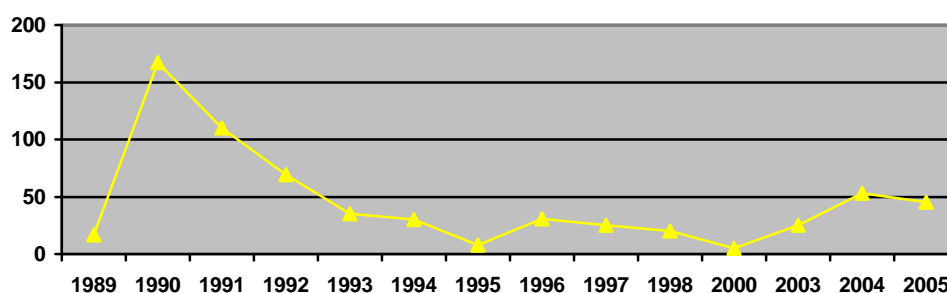
More and more film production companies stopped producing movies because no profit can be made. The lower figure reflects the decrease of local feature films made by production companies.

240 Comp. Cambodia Film Production Guide, 2005 page 44

241 Comp. Globe Magazine, 2007 page 49

242 Comp. Sub decree on Management and Control on Film and Video No:63 ANKR/BK, article 12

Figure 15: Produced feature films per year²⁴³



In the following some of the local film production companies will be introduced in order to get a better understanding about the way of working and what kind of movies are produced.

SSB Production

SSB is one of the few film production companies who produced a movie on film stock. *Tum Teav*, a tragic love story about a talented monk named Tum and a beautiful adolescent girl named Teav was produced in 2003 with a budget about US\$ 20,000.00.

Figure 16: DVD Cover *Tum Teav*²⁴⁴



According to Saray Chantrea, accounting assistant at SSB, the most expensive factor had been the 35mm film material and the salary for the director and script writer (US\$ 2,000). The ticket prices were 6000 R -7000 R higher than others at that time but explainable in consideration of the high production costs. The production time for this movie was one month for preproduction, one month for shooting and ten days for editing as well as postproduction. Although the movie had been an outstanding production characterized by high technical quality,

243 Comp. Interview Mounk Sokhan, July 10, 2007

244 Copyright SSB Productions

it is the only feature film produced by SSB. Usually the production company is specialised in producing karaoke movies, dubbing and sound recording.²⁴⁵

KMF-Khmer Mekong Films

Khmer Mekong Films existing since July 2006 and was founded by Executive Producer Matthew Robinson. It has no fulltime employees in order to “avoid getting bankrupt”, said Robinson. Most of his team used to work for the BBC serial *Taste of Life*²⁴⁶, where the crew was trained in professional working. For the first feature film *Staying Single When*, a romantic comedy, the crew needed four weeks preproduction, 24 shooting days and eight weeks post production. It was the first time in a Khmer feature film, that the real voices of the actors were recorded during shooting. Although it was more difficult and caused a lot of problems ChanDorm Chun, the first assistant director said “we are very proud to do so. Also the actors were very happy and could express their feelings better and explore their inner beauty through their voices.”²⁴⁷

Figure 17: Collage of *Staying Single When*²⁴⁸



Millan Love, head of production is convinced that KMF is totally different than other local film production companies. Within an interview he figures out why:

245 Comp. Interview Saray Chantrea, July 14, 2007

246 *Taste of Life* was Cambodia's first medical TV drama in order to educate and prevent people from becoming infected with HIV or other diseases. It was broadcast twice a week in Cambodia on TV5 and the state broadcaster TVK.

247 Comp. Interview ChanDorm Chun, July 11, 2007

248 Copyright Phom Penh Post

“For us the most important thing is the timing. If we say 7.00am it does not mean 7.15am or 7.05am, it means exactly 7.00am. When I worked for local productions we expected to meet at 8.00am but until 11.00am nothing happened. Then one girl told me to have lunch because shooting would not start before 2.00pm [...] normally locals do not use any scheduling program. Instead they just call the actors on the day or the day before. If they are free and then they shoot.”²⁴⁹

Tom Som, director for *Staying Single When* adds that local production companies have too little staff on the set. “When I got a job offer as a director they also asked me to be the first assistant director as well as the set and costume designer. Thereby local production companies try to save money. Here at KMF we have the whole crew when we are shooting a feature film”²⁵⁰ Even though there was higher technical and scenary quality and *SSW* was produced by well-trained staff, KMF lost a lot of money with their first feature film. Matthew Robinson considered especially one main mistake “the audience is not yet willing to pay more²⁵¹ for higher quality.”²⁵².

Campro Production

In 2002, Campro Production was founded by Heng Tola. It has 12-fulltime employees and 13 movies produced; most of them have been ghost stories. Kao Un, the assistant general manager explains: “Most of the young people like to watch ghost movies. So we have to fulfil the demands of the audience and produce ghost stories. These are more preferred than romance stories.”²⁵³

Figure 18: Overview about the movies produced by Campro Production

Prod. Year	Name	Genre	Budget	Profit
2003	Katanho	Folkstory	US\$20,000	Yes
2004	Neang Neath	Ghost	US\$20,000	Yes
2004	The Forest	Ghost	US\$30,000	No
2005	Motherless	Family Drama	US\$17,000	No
2005	The Haunted House	Ghost	US\$20,000	Yes
2005	Ghost In The Banana Tree	Ghost		Yes

249 Comp. Interview Millan Love, July 17, 2007

250 Comp. Interview Tom Som, July 12, 2007

251 Ticket price for *SSW* was 7000 R

252 Comp. Interview Matthew Robinson, June 07, 2007

253 Comp. Interview Kao Un, June 20, 2007

2005	Mr. Mao	Comedy		No
2006	The Villa Horror	Ghost		No
2006	The Game	Ghost		No
2006	Preay Kontong Khiev	Ghost		Yes
2006	The Wall Of Love	Romance	US\$20,000	No
2006	Shock 24Hours	Ghost		No
2006	Khlach Ey Nhom	Ghost		No
2007	The Painter	Drama		No

The above figure shows that at the beginning Campro Production could earn money with horror movies, but in the last years they could not produce a profit anymore. Kao Un is concerned about this: "I think the future of the cinema in Cambodia is not so good. The last years were very profitable. However, this year we lose audience members day-to-day. I hope the audiences will increase again, but so far we do not have plans to do another movie."

According to Kao Un, the average production time for a feature film with about 110 min is 40 days, including one week preproduction, 21 to 24 shooting days and six days editing as well as two for dubbing. Like most of local film production companies Campro Production does not record the real sound. Kao Un is convinced: "If you capture the real sound, it will take longer to produce. It is nearly impossible, because it is so crowded at the shooting places. If we dub it later, it takes us only two days. [...] The audience does not like the real sound, because they say that the voices from the actors are not so good."²⁵⁴

FCI

FCI, French Cambodian International, existing since 2000, started to produce movies in 2003. Korm Chanthy is the director of 12 permanent staff, including technical assistants, electricians, dubbers and cameramen as well as one director. FCI has produced 11 feature films for cinema and four films for TV. The following list shows what kind of films FCI produced in the past.

²⁵⁴ Comp. Interview Kao Un, June 20, 2007

Figure 19: Overview about the movies produced by FCI

Prod. Year	Name	Genre	Audience	Profit
2000	King of White Elephant	Folkstory	60.000 in Cambodia; screened 1month	Yes
2001	Adam	Folktale		Yes
2001	Ko and Keo	Historical Epic	30.000 in Phnom Penh; screened 3 months	Yes
2002	The Flower on the Rock	Romance	50.000; screened 1 month at 4 cinemas	
2002	Abb	Ghost	100.000; screened 1 month at 4 cinemas	
2003	Spirit	Ghost	50.000; screened 1 month at 4 cinemas	
2005	Owner of the Mekong	Folktale	150.000; screened 1 month	
2006	Queen of Cobra	Action	50.000; screened 1 month at 3 cinemas	
2006	Haunt Me	Ghost	40.000; screened 1 month at 2 cinemas	
2007	Lizzard	Ghost	60.000; screened 1 month at 4 cinemas	

In mid 2007 two more ghost stories were in the preproduction stage. According to Korm Chanthy, *Owner of the Mekong River* and *Ko and Keo* were the most successul movies and he emphasizes during the interview that FCI "never loses any money with their movies."

Figure 20: Poster *Queen of Cobra*



The average budget for each film is approximately US\$ 30,000 to 50,000 and the production period is about five months, including pre production of 48 days to 12 weeks shooting and two months editing and dubbing. Korm Chanthy is also convinced that "Cambodians do not like the real voices" and adds that "it would take much longer to shoot and costs money."²⁵⁵

Hang Meas

One of the most outstanding film productions was made in 2005 by Hang Meas. Existing since 1991 it employs more than 100 people, 50 of the full-time and 50 part-time. Hang Meas is specialized in TV production and very well known for their high standard karaoke productions. Their first feature film production, *Crocodile*, is one of the most successful movies ever made in Cambodia and about 200,000 people came to watch it within one month. After a production time of two years, including 50 shooting days, a big promotion and advertisement tour started nearly one month before the movie was screened at the cinemas and several spots could be seen on TVK, Apsara, Bayon and CTN. Furthermore, all magazines wrote about the story and leaflets and posters were everywhere around Phnom Penh. The well-known singer and actor Preap Sovath and the director Mao Ayuth were only two of several reasons why *Crocodile* was so popular among the audience. Eng Sokly, Head of Video Production is convinced that "main actors are the most important thing in order to increase the popularity and attract a large audience." Another feature film is planned in 2008.

255 Comp. Interview Korm Chanthy, July 10, 2007

Thoung Daravann Production

The son of the famous actor Chea Yuthon who was killed by KR, founded Thoung Daravann Production in May 2006. His aim is “to educate and advise people to forgive their enemies or people who did something wrong” by means of his movies.

Figure 21: Poster *My beloved Grand Daughter*



The first film *My Beloved Grand Daughter*, which is based on a true love story, was very popular among the audience and within a week about 40.000 people came to watch the movie. People especially appreciated that the story reflects the problems of Cambodian society nowadays. The low budget movie (US\$ 4,000) had a production time of eight months, including six months preproduction, one month for shooting and one month for editing. All profit was used for the *Orphan Education and Care Association* and other orphanage associations in the countryside.²⁵⁶

Visnu Film

Visnu Film existing since 2004 was founded by producer Lay Ny. Over 20 people, including director, editor, technicians and cameraman are working full-time for Visnu Film. In contrast to other film production companies, they do produce traditional and historical rather than ghost stories movies. The following is an overview.

Figure 22: Overview about films produced by Visnu Film

Prod. Year	Name	Genre	Audience	Profit
2004	Seida Shadow	historical folk story	12.000 in Cambodia; screened 1	US\$30,000.00 Budget (profit, but

256 Comp. Interview Than Tharith, July 19, 2007

			month at Vimeantip and Bokor	little)
2005	Stress of a Man	Historical movie	12.000 in Cambodian, screened 1 month at Kirirom and Lux	US\$30,000.00 Budget (profit, but little)
2005	The Venture of Dragon	Historical movie	70.000 in Cambodia; screened 2 months at Kirirom and Lux	US\$70,000.00 (profit)

This figure shows that there is a demand for historical movies because all three movies attracted a large audience and therefore could produce profit. But as many other production companies, also Visnu has to struggle and the producer Lay Ny explains that he “can not make a big profit” and he even sold his land in Siem Riep to produce a new movie next year. The average production time is five months, including one to two months preproduction, 14 days to one month shooting and one to two months post production. The director, Chey Rithie, hopes that in the future Visnu Film will produce movies which attract a larger audience. He adds “We have to produce movies, to survive, to eat and to feed our families. The heaven provides grass for the elephant to eat I hope he also provides us money to produce movies.”²⁵⁷

Chakraval Production

You Kosal, founded Chakraval Production in 2006. Her aim is to teach actors in performing and wants to “give a chance to all unexperienced but passionate people in order to develop the film industry.” All her movies have a small buget, below US\$10,000 and the production time is about seven months, including four to five months preproduction, two to three months shooting and 15 days dubbing as well as editing. The shooting is not comparable to western standards and is interrupted by weekdays.

257 Comp. Interview Lay Ny, July 25, 2007

Normally the shootings are during the weekend. About 10 people are on set, which means two directors, one cameraman and about six technicians. The actual scary comedy, *Mon Sne Mekhom Srok Sre* was very successful in the cinemas of Phnom Penh. You Kosal is convinced, that people want to see "scary movies, but they should include historical parts in order to educate the audience."²⁵⁸

Figure 23: Poster *Mon Sne Mekhom Srok*



2.4.3.3 Equipment

Films are shot on video and therefore no cameras for film stock are available in Cambodia. It is not possible to rent shooting equipment for feature film productions in Cambodia. The equipment must be rented in Thailand including the crew which is able to handle the equipment. Therefore film production companies from abroad can write a request to CCDD and the staff can provide them with addresses of rental stations in Bangkok.²⁵⁹ The equipment can be either brought by ship or by train. Production companies do not have to pay taxes for the import of the equipment, because it is only temporary in the country.²⁶⁰

Local film production companies mostly have a low technical standard and their movies are shot on MiniDV or HDV. Often they use their own equipment for shooting movies, but some production companies such as SSB Production and Campro Production also rent their equipment for people

258 Comp. Interview You Kosal, August 23, 2007

259 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

260 Comp. Interview Ly Dany, July 06, 2007

who come from abroad. An overview about the technical standard can be found in appendix III.²⁶¹

2.4.3.4 Post production

During the post-production stage, two things need to be considered: editing and advertising. Compared to other countries the editing level is very low and most high quality post production jobs such as color correction need to be done in Bangkok. Local editors use Adobe, Avid or Final Cut but there are only a few good facilities in Cambodia and most of the editors have only hands-on experience and are not experts. Mostly people from abroad were called to help with the graphic design or for animations because no one in Cambodia can handle it.²⁶² The editing process is divided into two parts. By result of not recording the sound while shooting, the movie must be edited and later on dubbed. Usually, this process takes about two weeks to one month, depending on the quality and technical efforts.²⁶³ Right now are nine more or less equipped sound and ten editing studios existing.²⁶⁴

When it comes to advertising for the film, Cambodians do not do very skillful marketing campaigns. There are several common ways that each filmmaker follows; some companies have done much better than the others and so attract many more audiences. Typical advertisement tools are, first to inform the TV channel about their activity in the production field. By doing this each producer hopes to inform audiences for the coming release of the films and it is also a way to relate the actors and actresses to the audience through field interviews and to let audiences see the difficulty and enthusiastic effort of the film crew. This is done during the production time.²⁶⁵ Second, during the post-production stage, trailers are shown in the cinemas and on television by buying airtime from each channel. Also per leaflets, banners and advertisement in newspapers or magazines, producers want to attract audiences. Sometimes, radio advertising is also used.²⁶⁶ Most of the local production companies do not have a special marketing or promotion person. Usually the budget for advertisement is not very high

261 See appendix III

262 Comp. Interview Nico Mesterharm, June 27, 2007

263 Comp. Interview Kao Un, Korn Chanthy, Lay Ny, You Kosal

264 Comp. Interview MOUNG Sokhan, July 10, 2007

265 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 27

266 ibidem page 27

because the money is already spent during the production and post production stages. On average, production companies spend about US\$1,000 to US\$ 2,000²⁶⁷ for advertising and only on rare occasions the budget is higher than US\$7,000. Bassac Orchid Pte., Ltd., an advertisement company offers the following prices for filmmakers to promote their films.

Figure 24: Advertisement prices²⁶⁸

TV advertisement		
CTN		
the price is differed by the timeslots	06.00-11.00	US\$ 40/30sec
	11.00-17.00	US\$ 91/30sec
	17.00-19.30	US\$ 140/0sec
	19.30-22.00	US\$ 150/30sec
	22.00-23.00	US\$ 91/30sec
	23.00-24.00	US\$ 45/30sec
TV5		
the price of this station varies by the program, following the prime time price	Chinese Series (Mon-Fri)	US\$ 11.00-12.30: 180/60sec
	Concert (Sat & Sun)	US\$ 11.00-13.30 : 540/60sec
	News program (Daily)	US\$ 18.45-19.30: 600/60sec
	Chinese Series/Korean Series (Daily)	US\$ 19.30-21.30: 720/60sec
TV3		
the price is also different by the program	Chinese Series (Mon-Fri)	US\$ 11.58-12.57: 170/30sec
	Concert (Sun)	US\$ 15.00-17.00: 240/30sec
	Chinese Series (Mon-Fri)	US\$ 19.35-21.35: 240/30sec

267 Comp. Interview Kao Un, Korn Chanthy, Lay Ny

268 Comp. Email Makara Lim, September 29, 2007

Current issues of Cambodian film industry

	Concert (Sat)	US\$ 19.35-21.35: 240/30sec
TV9		
The price varies by the	Chinese Series (Mon-Fri)	US\$ 11.45-13.00: 120/30sec
program	Chinese Movie (Mon-Fri)	US\$ 14.40-16.00: 120/30sec
	Chinese Series (Daily)	US\$ 19.30-20.30: 245/30sec
Bayon TV		
the price depends	07.00-11.00	US\$ 40/30sec
on the timeslot.	11.00-14.00	US\$ 50/30sec
	14.00-17.00	US\$ 40/30sec
	17.00-19.30	US\$ 60/30sec
	19.30-21.30	US\$ 75/30sec
	21.30-23.00	US\$ 40/30sec
Radio		
FM 103	06.00-18.00	US\$ 10/60sec
	18.00-23.00	US\$ 7/60sec
FM 98	every timeslot	US\$ 6/60sec
FM 88	every timeslot	US\$ 2/60sec
FM 107	every timeslot	US\$ 4/60sec
FM 105	every timeslot	US\$ 8/60sec
Newspaper		
Rasmei Kampuchea	Back Page Section A, Full page and Full color	US\$ 1,407.60
	Front Page Section B, Full page and Full color	US\$ 1,759.50
	Back Page Section B, Full page and Full color	US\$ 1,231.65
	Inside Page 3 Section A, Full page and Black & White	US\$ 1,076.40
Koh Santepheap	Back Page Section A, Full page and Full color	US\$ 1,836
	Front Page Section B, Full page and Full color	US\$ 2,264.40
	Back Page Section B, Full page and Full color	US\$ 1,698.30
	Inside Page 3 Section A, Full	US\$ 943.50

	page and Black & White	
Kampuchea Thmey	Back Page Section A, Full page and Full color	US\$ 2,542
	Front Page Section B, Full page and Full color	US\$ 2,542
	Back Page Section B, Full page and Full color	US\$ 2,150
	Inside Page 2&7 Section A, Full page and Black & White	US\$ 1,466
	Inside Page 5&8 Section B, Full page and Black & White	US\$ 1,271
Cambodia Daily	Inside page Full Page Full color Reserved	US\$ 890
	Inside page Full Page Black & White Reserved	US\$ 378
	Inside page Full Page Full Color non-Reserved	US\$ 690
	Inside page Full Page Black & White non-Reserved	US\$ 285
	Inside Page Strip Ad Full Page Full color non-Reserved	US\$ 75

The above figure demonstrates that advertising is not as cheap as someone would expect in Cambodia. The description about the common marketing tools is all that is happening inside the film industry nowadays. It shows that most of the production companies are doing the business by just following what has been done or is being done by other producers. Nobody is thinking about a special advertisement tool to attract more audience in order to earn more money.²⁶⁹

2.4.3.5 Artist agencies

In Cambodia there is no artist agency compared to western standards. Normally actors are selected by castings or calling ups in newspapers. Production companies also choose their actors from the National University of Fine Arts, because they are "well trained and can perform naturally."²⁷⁰ The faculty of Choreography at Royal University of Fine Arts (RUFA) trains actors, mostly coming from the National School of Fine Arts, four years in

269 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 28

270 Comp. Interview ChanDorm Chun, July 11, 2007

modern and traditional drama including acting, singing, directing and dancing.²⁷¹ Kim Pich Pinun, Dean of the Faculty of Choreography is proud of his students:

“Film production companies come to our department and look for new actors. They know that they are well trained and can perform well. Actors who have not studied act like marionettes, unable to show feelings and facial expressions. There is currently a demand for actors and it is easy for good ones to get a job on TV or in movies for cinema.”²⁷²

Well known actors clubs are *Amrita*, coordinated by Fred Frumberg,²⁷³ *Thavi Cheat* and *National Action Culture Association - Naca Orphanage*, coordinated by Son Savany.

At *Thavi Cheat* actors and actress are trained everyday in performing, especially in traditionally dancing and acting. Members have to pay US\$ 5 a month.²⁷⁴

The 30 orphan children who live at *National Action Culture Association - Naca Orphanage* are between 8 and 15 years old. They are trained in traditional dancing, music, performance and how to memorize lines. A lot of movie production companies are selecting especially young kids from this club.²⁷⁵

Dy Saveth, Cambodia's leading performer opened a club, which provides free training in performing arts such as acting, singing, presentation and some traditional dancing.²⁷⁶

Although there are a lot of so called “clubs” there is still a lack of persons who can perform very well. Without a particular acting school or university it is difficult for actors to learn how to perform in a natural manner.²⁷⁷ Normally local production companies, except KMF, do no record the real voices of the actors and actresses and the director reads out the script for them while shooting and consequently feeds the line for the actors.²⁷⁸ As a result “they can not perform well, can not express their

271 Comp. Royal University of Fine Arts Academic catalogue for Undergraduates, 2006

272 Comp. Interview Kim Pich Pinun, July 04, 2007

273 Comp. Interview Darren Campbell, August 28, 2007

274 Comp. Interview Lay Ny, July 25, 2007

275 Comp. Interview Chan Raksmei, July 12, 2007

276 Comp. Touchstone Magazine, 2007 page 42

277 Comp. The Cambodian daily weekend, 2007

278 Comp. Khmer City, Accessing date October 15, 2007

feelings and just repeat what the director is saying and act like robots."²⁷⁹ Tom Som, director for KMF adds: "this makes the acting very rigid as there is always a prompt: 'Stop!' 'Turn!' 'Smile!' ".²⁸⁰ That actors perform for directors becomes a very unprofessional norm in the industry. According to Chea Chou, Pal Vannaryreak describes the situation as followed:

"It's hard to ask either the actors or actresses to remember the script. I have my director shouting the script to them line by line to repeat. For some famous actors or actresses sometimes they are somewhat arrogant; they signed contracts with many production companies and so have no time to read the script at all. Most of the time they just come and don't even know what character they should play or what they should talk about. I don't want to lose the time, and so we let them play on the spot by telling them what to say and how to act. That's a tiring experience but that's what is common in Cambodia's film industry."²⁸¹

Khmer Mekong Films, was the first local production company which recorded the real sound during shooting. Therefore the actors and actresses had to learn the text and director Tom Som did not feed the lines while shooting. Matthew Robinson, Executive Producer for KMF, was amazed about the acting skills. "It seems that all their hidden expressions came out. The actors read the script and were able to feel it and so they showed an amazing instinct for performing."²⁸²

2.5. Film distribution

In order to earn profit it is necessary to distribute the movie. The way this is done in Cambodia, is described as follows.

2.5.1 Distributors

In Cambodia there is no film distribution existing like known in western countries. Film producers do not sell their movies to film distributors and instead earn money through ticket incomes. Therefore they have to rent the cinema per day and get all incomes of the sold tickets. Khmer communities all over the world like in Cambodia Town in Los Long Beach get Khmer films through the Khmer Long Beach distribution. Cambodian film production

279 Comp. Interview ChanDorm Chun, July 11, 2007

280 Comp. Phnom Penh Post, 2007

281 Comp. Chou, Chea, 2005 page 26

282 Comp. Interview Matthew Robinson, June 07, 2007

companies sell the rights to them and they distribute it to the video stores within the largest Khmer communities in the USA. Due to the lack of local film distributors in Cambodia, the revenues of production companies depend on cinema audiences.

2.5.2 Film exhibition venues in Phnom Penh

More and more cinemas stopped screening movies as a result of less ticket incomes. The following list shows the cinemas in Cambodia and also their status. Unfortunately the exact shut down dates could not be provided.

Figure 25: Cinemas in Cambodia in 2007²⁸³

Name	Seats	Location	Status
Vimeantip	800	Phnom Penh	Running
Kapul Pich	485	Phnom Penh	Stopped screening
Bokor Cinema	800	Phnom Penh	Running
Kirirom	789	Phnom Penh	Running
Cine Lux	650	Phnom Penh	Running
Chenla	600	Phnom Penh	Stopped screening
Kemarin	100	Phnom Penh	Stopped screening
Prom Bayon	550	Phnom Penh	Running
Prasat Meas	850	Phnom Penh	Stopped screening
Sorya I	324	Phnom Penh	Running
Sorya II	340	Phnom Penh	Running
Baraikanadiya City	750	Phnom Penh	Stopped screening
Prasat Meas	320	Phnom Penh	Stopped screening
Baray Ondeit		Siem Reap	Running
Spain Nek		Siem Reap	Running
Battambang		Battambang	Running
Mohorsroprasat Meas		Battambang	Stopped screening
Mohorsrosihakmony		Kampong Cham	Running
Takmao		Kandal Province	Running
7 Makara		Kampot	Running
Kampongtralach District		Kampot	Stopped screening
Prasat Sor		Banteay-	Running

283 Provided by Cinema and Cultural Diffussion Department, 2007

		meanchey	
Moharsrop		Kampong Som	Stopped screening
Hang Meas		Strung Treng	Stopped screening

According to article 17 cinema owners must request a permission at MCFA in order to run the cinema. Safety and technical standards must be fulfilled for example, being prepared for fire and unrest or providing seats and a proper projecting room in accordance with the requirements of MCFA.²⁸⁴

Bokor Cinema

Bokor cinema was refurbished and reopened on April 9, 2003 by owner Toung Seng. It offers a range of first-run films including Cambodian and international products. It has one room with 800 seats and is located on Mao Tse Toung Boulevard No. 39. The average price for a Khmer movie is 5000 R²⁸⁵ and the renting price for one day for all four screenings is about US\$ 270. The producer gets the income of the sold tickets but has to bring their own staff to sell the tickets. At 2pm most of the people, especially students come to watch the movies.²⁸⁶

Figure 26: Bokor Cinema²⁸⁷



Cinema Sorya

This cinema with two rooms was opened in 2002. It is run by the Phnom Penh Cultural Centre and located on Street 63 at Sorya Center. Only Khmer

284 comp. Sub decree on Management and Control on Film and Video No:63 ANKR/BK, article 17

285 US\$ 1.25

286 Comp. Interview Toung Seng, June 20, 2007

287 Comp. Cambodia Cultural Profile. Accessing date October 01, 2007

movies are screened for about 6000R. Forty percent of the ticket incomes go to the production company and 60 percent to Sorya cinema. Advertising for the movie must be done by the production company. If the cinema I with 340 seats is full the same movie will be shown in cinema II with 324 seats. Mostly young people come to watch the movies at 9am and 2pm screenings and adults and families at 4:30pm and 7pm screenings.

Figure 27: Average moviegoers per each shift²⁸⁸

Time	Average sold tickets
9am	50
2pm	100-150
4.30pm	80-100
7pm	50-80

Most the films, which are screened at the Sorya cinema, are ghost movies, "because they bring the most of income".²⁸⁹ Normally they are running from 20 to 30 days. Haing Sopisey, Assistant general manger at Sorya Center, explains why almost exclusively ghost movies are screened:

"People do not want to see movies about real social life. If the movie just shows the everyday life of someone nobody wants to see it. These kinds of movies are not really successful. Just elderly people want to see such kind of movies, but they are not the target group".²⁹⁰

Cine-Theatre Lux

Originally constructed in 1938, this cinema was in use until the early 1990s for a variety of activities including stage shows. Recently refurbished, it is now fully operational as a cinema. It has one room with 650 seats in total (400 stalls and 250 circle), and is located on Norodom Boulevard. Cine-Theatre Lux is the only cinema in Phnom Penh which has the license to screen Thai movies, which represents 80 percent of the total screenings at Cine Lux. The other 20 percent are Khmer movies which are screened in average about 20 to 30 days. The normal ticket price for Thai movies are 4500 R and for Khmer movies 4500 R to 6000 R. The ticket incomes go to

288 Comp. Interview Haing Sopisey, July 03, 2007

289 Comp. Interview Haing Sopisey, July 03, 2007

290 Comp. Interview Haing Sopisey, July 03, 2007

the production company which had produced the film. Therefore they have to rent the cinema for US\$ 300 for the whole day.

Figure 28: Average moviegoers per each shift²⁹¹

Time	Average sold tickets
9am	100
2pm	200-300
4pm	80
7pm	100

At 2pm most of the people, especially high school students and young people below 20 years come to watch the movies. But the cinema manager complains that "ticket prices are getting lower in the last five years because audiences are getting less."²⁹²

Prom Bayon Cinema

Prom Bayon Cinema has one room with 550 seats and has the same owner as Bokor and Vimeantip. It is located on Street 154 but did not screen movies during the research time for this thesis. Usually Prom Bayon is screening only Khmer movies, which run in average one month. The ticket prices are between 6000 R and 8000 R. Mostly (90 percent) of the screened films are made by Prasad Pich Film Production. This production company is managed by cinema owner Toung Seng and therefore does not need to pay rental fees. Other production companies have to pay US\$ 200 per day.²⁹³

Figure 29: Average moviegoers per each shift²⁹⁴

Time	Average sold tickets
9am	20-30
2pm	50-200
4.30pm	20-50
7pm	50-100

291 Comp. Interview Toma Pov, June 20, 2007

292 Comp. Interview Toma Pov, June 20, 2007

293 Comp. Interview Top Phat, June 25, 2007

294 Comp. Interview Top Phat, June 25, 2007

According to Top Phat, cinema manager at Prom Bayon the cinema will be shut down because “audience is getting less.”

Kirirom Cinema

Kirirom, one of the most popular cinemas in 2007, is located on Preah Sihanouk Boulevard. It has one room, with 789 seats, 582 at the ground floor and 207 at the first VIP floor. Ninety percent of the screened movies are local productions and 10 percent are films from the US. The average ticket price is 6000 R. Film production companies who want to rent the cinema have to pay US\$ 270 for all four screenings per day. The producer gets all the ticket incomes but has to bring his own ticket sellers and is responsible for advertising. According to Kao Un, cinema manager of Kirirom, the approximate age of the moviegoers is 17 to 18 years and most of them are high school students.²⁹⁵

Figure 30: Average moviegoers per each shift²⁹⁶

Time	Average sold tickets
9am	50
2pm	300
4.30pm	50
7pm	150

Vimeantip Cinema

Vimeantip Cinema was originally built in the early 1970s on Monivong Boulevard in Phnom Penh. After the liberation in 1979 it was reopened by the CCDD, but in subsequent years with the growth of the home video market it declined in popularity and was finally closed to the public in 1986. After extensive renovations, the cinema was reopened with one room including 800 seats in February 2001 by Korean entertainment company Korean Kingu BV and is now owned by Toung Seng.²⁹⁷ Most of the movies screened at Vimeantip are made by Prasad Pich Film Production Films and are running in average for three months. The ticket price is about 6000 R. Other Khmer production companies have to rent the cinema for US\$ 270

295 Comp. Interview Kao Un, June 25, 2007

296 Comp. Interview Kao Un, June 25, 2007

297 Comp. Cambodian Cultural Profile, Accessing date 01. October 2007

per day. It includes all four screenings but the production company has to bring their own staff.²⁹⁸

Figure 31: Average moviegoers per each shift²⁹⁹

Time	Average sold tickets
9am	10-50
2pm	20-100
4.30pm	10-100
7pm	5-20

According to Thour Vichet, film operator at Vimeantip, the majority of the audience are young people; a few are middle aged.

2.5.3 Film awards and competitions

Film Awards and national competitions are another way to distribute movies and show them to the public. The following chapters help to get an idea about the structure of the audience and what kinds of movies are desired during these festivals.

2.5.3.1 National Festival of Film and Video

In 1990 the first National Festival of Film and Video after KR was held, where 16 Khmer movies were screened. The second local film festival was held in 2005 where 22 movies were screened. The next was planned in December 2007 but it did not happen and is now planned in February 2008. A two year period is planned. "The aim of the film festival is to promote Cambodia's film industry to a new high level through exchanges and learning from each other," said Khim Sarith, Secretary of State of MCFA.³⁰⁰ In 2007, every local production company could send their more than 90-minute long feature films, produced in 2006 and 2007 to the Cinema and Cultural Diffussion Department where seven jury members decided if the movie would run at the competition. So far there is no competition for animations, short films or documentaries.³⁰¹

298 Comp. Interview Thour Vichet, June 25, 2007

299 Comp. Interview Thour Vichet, June 25, 2007

300 Comp. English people, Accessing November 01, 2007

301 Comp. Interview Kong Kantara, June 19, 2007

Film awards are handed out in the following categories; Best actor, Best actress, Best picture, Best cameraman, Best sound, Best editing, Best script and Best production designer. The outstanding winner in 2005 was *The Crocodile* - a tale of the heroism of a man who killed the beast responsible for the deaths of several people in his village. As already mentioned it was produced by Hang Meas Video Production and directed and written by Mao Ayuth. Three Million Riel³⁰² and the golden trophy for Sound, Actors, Script and Production Designer were handed out in order to honor this production³⁰³

In 2005, most of the screened movies were low-budget horror films, such as *Nieng Arp*, or *Lady Vampire*, a ghostly flying female head with internal organs dangling beneath it. Nine of the festival's 22 entries were in a similar vein. Korm Chanthy, the manager of FCI Productions, which made *Nieng Arp* explains: "We make movies to suit the domestic market and the demand of our youths. They like to watch horror movies because they make them feel excited, thrilled and terrified."³⁰⁴

Therefore the National Festival of Film and Video reflects the standard of the Cambodian film industry very well; low budget ghost movies with superstitious content.

Cine Mekong

Organised since 2004 by the French Cultural Center and the French Embassy in Cambodia, the CineMekong Film festival wants to honor films which were produced in the Mekong Region, such as Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia. In cooperation with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, Canadian Embassy in Cambodia, Swiss Embassy in Bangkok and Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center films from Canada and Switzerland were also screened which reflects the vitality of these countries.³⁰⁵ The aim of Cine Mekong explains Borin Kor, employee at the French Cultural Center, as follows, "we want Cambodians to understand foreign films and also show Cambodian films to foreigners. It is a kind of exchange of knowledge and ideas."³⁰⁶

302 Comp. Interview Som Sokun, July 17, 2007

303 Comp. Interview Eng Sokly, July 19, 2007

304 Comp. Taipei Times, Accessing date November 01, 2007

305 Comp. Programm Cinémekong, 2007

306 Comp. Interview Borin Kor, June 14, 2007

It is a mixed program of all genres of feature, documentary and short films focusing on a special topic each year, sometimes required for young filmmakers and some to documentary filmmakers. With approximate 4500 visitors each year, the festival is very well accepted by the Cambodian audience and 90 percent of the visitors are Khmer. "All films are dubbed in Khmer, that's why they were so interested in them", so Borin Kor.³⁰⁷ Films are screened at the French Cultural Center, Kirirom Cinema and public parks.

CamboFest

CamboFest is the first annual independent global film festival in Cambodia, organised by Jason Rosette since 2007. Movies produced in and for the private sector are screened in Phnom Penh and Siem Riep. With no financial backing, the revenues were made through entry fees. Any filmmaker could submit movies, although CamboFest states it looks for independent films made after 2005, not commercials or overt NGO awareness videos. In five categories, Best Short, Best Short documentary, Best Local Showcase (by a Cambodian national), Best Feature, and Best Feature Documentary movies were awarded with a Golden Water Buffalo Trophy. The winners were determined and judged by the audience opinion and viewing staff. A couple of hundred to 500 people attended Cambofest over the first three-day event in 2007. Sixty percent were foreigners and 40 percent Khmer. Jason Rosette wants to hold this balance or even "swing more towards Khmer though, as we venture further and further out into the countryside."³⁰⁸ Another aim of Rosette is "to screen only movies with public performance permissions in place and with the permission of the copyright holders."³⁰⁹ The organizer stated in his program:

"Obviously, this is a sticky issue in Cambodia where intellectual property rights are often disregarded. But it is our belief that public performance of motion pictures, without securing performance rights from the copyright holder, is a bogus approach: it is unethical and does not support the arts."³¹⁰

307 Comp. Interview Borin Kor, June 14, 2007

308 Comp. Email Jason Rosette, September 06, 2007

309 Comp. Email Jason Rosette, September 06, 2007

310 Comp. program Cambofest Film and Video Festival of Cambodia, 2007

According to Rosette, the audience was interested in seeking anything entertaining, including independent movies. "They want love stories, horror, action, physical comedy and these movies fared well at CamboFest. Khmer audiences don't want art films and did not like the long, talking head driven documentaries as much as the dramas at Cambofest."³¹¹

The most popular movie at Cambofest was *The Golden Voice*, a dramatic short about the life of Ros Sereysothea, a noted singer from the Lon Nol days who was forced into labor camps during the KR regime. "The Khmers especially liked it because it was made by a foreigner who had never even set foot in Cambodia prior to making the movie—but his devotion to Khmer history and details of that period were an honor for them."³¹²

2.5.3.2 European Film Festival

Organised by the Embassies of the European Union Members States and the Delegation of European Commission of the Kingdom of Cambodia in collaboration with the French Cultural Centre the European Film Festival has existed since 2001. Movies of different genres and from different countries such as Germany, Belgium, Czech Republik, Finland, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK were screened at the French Cultural Center and at the Department of Media and Communication at the Royal University of Phnom Penh.³¹³

About 1500 people, 50 percent Cambodian and 50 percent foreigner, joined the festival at the French Cultural Center in 2007.³¹⁴ At the department of Media and Communication about 150 Cambodian students came to watch the screenings.³¹⁵ According to Oum Savann, assistant broadcasting lecturer at the department, romantic movies, like *Shakespeare in Love* and comedies were the most desired ones.

"Generally this European Film Festival was well accepted at the Department and Cambodian students are interested in movies from Europe, but if the movies are not dubbed into Kmehr it is difficult for the people to see."³¹⁶

311 Comp. Email Jason Rosette, September 06, 2007

312 Comp. Email Jason Rosette, September 06, 2007

313 Comp. Program The European Union Film Festival, 2007

314 Comp. Interview Borin Kor, June 14, 2007

315 Comp. Participant Student List at European Film Festival, 2007

316 Comp. Interview Oum Savann, July 02, 2007

2.5.3.3 German Film Festival

The German Film festival is organized by Meta House in cooperation with the Goethe Institute in Jakarta as well as GTZ. It was officially opened by the German Embassy. Within the 10 days of the festival several German movies of different genres were screened. Five hundred to Six hundred people came to watch the movies but only small percentages (10 percent) were Cambodian and the rest were foreigner.³¹⁷ Nico Mesterharm, the owner of Meta House, tries to explain this huge gap:

“Probably the reason is that Cambodians do not like to read subtitle and the movies generally attracted more the German community in Phnom Penh. If the movies would have been dubbed into Khmer probably more people would have come. In a culture where people are not used to read, subtitles are not desired. About 20 percent to 30 percent of the content will get lost during the reading process.”³¹⁸

Furthermore he stated that “there is nearly no place in Phnom Penh where Cambodians and foreigners come together in a well balanced mix. Either there is a majority of Cambodian or a majority of foreigners.”³¹⁹ Although no Khmer films can be handed in, the German Film Festival is important for Cambodia. Thus the aim of the festival is to inspire the debate of culture after each screening about the content and technical standard of the movies. This is an untypical behaviour for Cambodians. “They generally do not like to discuss about movies and prefer no comment. Discussing or criticizing is not usual for the Cambodian culture”, said Nico Mesterharm.³²⁰

Other NGO film festivals in Cambodia are the Refugee Film Festival with films related to refugees from all over the world and the Environmental Festival where Cambodians can hand in movies concerning environmental topics.

2.6. Film training and workshops

In the last chapters the lack of human resources and below the line talent in the production field is criticized. Reasons for this situation are given in the following chapters.

317 Comp. Interview Nico Mesterharm. September 01, 2007

318 Comp. Interview Nico Mesterharm. September 01, 2007

319 Comp. Interview Nico Mesterharm. September 01, 2007

320 Comp. Interview Nico Mesterharm. September 01, 2007

2.6.1 Film school

There is no film school in Cambodia. But the MCFA and the South Korean government plan to create a film school which probably will be constructed in 2008.³²¹ The film school would be a part of the Royal University of Fine Arts in cooperation with the Korean National University of Arts (KNUA) School of Film, TV and Multimedia.³²² Majors such as directing, shooting, editing, sound effects, scenario writing and producing should be taught in four years. Yvon Herm, one of the founders complains that the governments are already talking two years about these plans, but nothing has happened so far.

"The government always looks for money and it is hard to open the school if you do not pay the government. The Koreans have spent a lot of effort to develop this proposal. Now the Cambodian government also needs to give attention to this project."³²³

Neither Kim Pich Pinun, Dean of Faculty of Choreographic Arts at RUFA nor Mao Ngyhong, Vice Director of RUFA, know exactly when the film school can be finally opened. Kim Pich Pinun explains: "We are waiting for Cambodian students who will finish their studies in the fields of directing, editing, producing and film making from Korea. We need human resources in the field of cinema who are able to teach." According to the Basic Plan proposal, in the early setting up period, faculty members should be composed of human resources who are working in each field after graduating from the bachelor and master program at the Department of Film Making at KNUA. Additionally, in the early years of establishment, faculty members from the school of film at KNUA teach majors such as directing, shooting, editing, sound effects, scenario writing and computer graphics. Subsequently, the number of KNUA professors should be reduced while RUFA professors will be increased.³²⁴ Rithy Panh complains about the plan to set up a film school now, especially by foreigners.

"It is too early to set up a cinema school. First you need a place, technical equipment, money and very important: good teachers. As long as people

321 Comp. The Cambodian Daily weekend, 2007

322 Comp. Email Mao Ngyhong, September 29, 2007

323 Comp. Interview Yvon Herm, July 03, 2007

324 Comp. Basic Plan proposal, 2007

still watch ghost movies you can not set up a film school. Cambodian people first should learn about analyzing and appreciating good movies and join short term trainings. You can not set up a school with only foreign teachers, as long as there are no experts in Cambodia. Or do you think we should send 1000 Koreans to teach here script, camera etc.? This is not necessary if we start with intensive short term trainings to create our own human resources."³²⁵

His plans to set up a film school are explained in the next chapter. Contrary to Rithy Panh's opinion, Yvon Hem, is convinced that the cinema school would improve and help the whole film industry in Cambodia:

"With this school we really want to train and provide filmmakers. They also should learn how to work with 35mm film material and be human resources for foreign filmmakers shooting in Cambodia. Currently film production companies come to Cambodia but hire their production crews from Thailand. If we could provide high quality trained crews we could also make a profit. More and more countries would come to shoot in Cambodia and we could rebuild a profitable film industry."³²⁶

2.6.2 Bophana Center

Two associations, Association for Cambodian Audiovisual Resource Center (AADAC) and Association for Research, Production and Archiving of Audiovisual Documents (ARPAA), undertook together the implementation of the Bophana Audiovisual Resource Center. The main aim is to collect archives and a variety of documentary material in Cambodia and abroad which plays a key role in the expression of the nation's identity and in the constitution of its heritage.³²⁷

Another aim is to train Cambodians during workshops in the audiovisual arts to provide good technicians in order to film its own subjects and to assist foreign filmmaking.³²⁸ This will be accomplished by a professional team of Cambodians and foreigners. In the first instance about 15 audiovisual technicians such as electricians, editors, sound engineers and best boys are trained one year theoretically combined with on set experience. Afterwards also training for directors and cameramen will be provided, but this will take time, like Than Thanaren, Research Analyst of Bophana Center, explains. "We know that every film team from abroad will

325 Comp. Interview Rithy Panh, August 22, 2007

326 Comp. Interview Yvon Herm, July 03, 2007

327 Comp. Andy's open door, Accessing date October 01, 2007

328 Comp. Bophana Center, Accessing date October 01, 2007

always bring their director of photography or their director, but we want to provide and train very good technicians.”³²⁹

If donors support these plans, a cinema school, housed at Bophana Center, is planned for the future, using the human resources who are already trained at Bophana Center as lecturers.³³⁰

Workshops

Meta House, Cambodian Women Media Center and the Media Department of the Royal University of Phnom Penh are also doing workshops in order to train young filmmakers. Mostly these trainings are more focused on creating documentaries and art films. Topics like HIV, human trafficking and land issues are thematized in short movies. Subjects such as script writing, camera, editing and research are taught during the workshops. All these trainings are not comparable with a study at a real film school but are small steps in order to train young Cambodian filmmakers. Subjects such as lighting and sound are mostly disregarded during these trainings and so it comes to a lack of good electricians and sound engineers.³³¹

2.7. Summary framework conditions

The framework conditions in Cambodia need to be changed in order to built up a prosperous filmindustry. First of all there must be a stronger statepolicy, which means protection and investment through to the state. Even though the copyright law was signed in 2003 and a Sub Decree has been passed, it takes time for it to become enforced and be seriously applied. DVD piracy remains rampant, discouraging many filmmakers from investing in new productions because they do not gain any incomes through to DVD sales or cinema tickets. This means the Copyright Treaty must be followed and sanctioned if not. Also foreign production should be taxed and a minimum number of Cambodian productions for television and cinema must be stated. Although there is less national budget, there should be more invention into film funding, in order to support and encourage especially young filmmakers.

329 Comp. Interview Than Thanaren, June 20, 2007

330 Comp. Interview Rithy Panh, August 22, 2007

331 Comp. Interview Sylyvann Borei/ Nico Mesterharm, July 02, 2007/ June 27, 2007

The second point which needs to be changed is the industrial support. This means a film- and actors' school must be built up to create well trained filmmakers.

Furthermore until now there are no state regulations concerning to film ratings or a law for the protection of children and youth, which urgently need to be changed. Although there are some moral taboos, which filmmakers know and observe, but bloody beaten boobies and violent scenes can still be seen by old and young.

The fourth point is the cooperation with other states which need to be changed. Cambodia must have an own active filmcommission, which promotes economic development, preserves cultural heritage and promotes the Khmer film industry globally.

But there are not only negative impacts; instead also a progress can be seen. For example there are a lot of young and encouraged filmmakers, who just need to be trained, wonderful and exotic shooting places, which just need be used for film sets and insitutions like Bophana Center, Meta House and many more, which just need to use their synergies and work together in order to strength the film industry.

If this frame work conditions would change and skillfull marketing campaigns created, including a deep anaylse of the demands of the cinema goers, the Cambodian film industry could link to former flourish times. Following a detailed analyse of the demands of the Cambodian cinema goers will be represented.

3. Survey

In order to understand the specifics of the Cambodian film industry a survey has been done. The common success parameters and psychological and sociological motives for going to cinema are explained in the following chapters and afterwards the survey results will be presented.

3.1. Theory

3.1.1 Importance and effect of films and cinema

Despite their specific nature as a cultural experience, contemporary feature films had to face a competition from other medias, and other sources of entertainment. Over the last few decades, the growth of cable TV, the development of the VCR and the DVD, the adaptation of the computer to home leisure use, and the expansion of the attractions available via the Internet have exposed the feature film to a highly competitive multimedia marketplace.³³²

But cinema is still a form of popular culture and an important branch of the economy. Seen as business management the conception and the commercial launch of movies is a complex management task. Normally movies have a short market presence. They only run for about eight weeks until a new movie displaces the old one. This makes each movie into a product innovation. This fact confirms that consumers have no or only some knowledge about the product. Different from repeated purchase decisions for example, buying food, the decision for going to a movie is made only by external information. This point of view accents the importance of external sources of information.³³³

Motion pictures are a representative part and element of the society and articulate actual discourse within a social context. With the aid of movies audiences gain an insight into social and cultural realities of western and non western societies.³³⁴ If intended or not, movies have an influence of social integration. Due to consumption of the same movies in different cultures they are culturally and sociologically relevant. The social connection is based on the possibility to find collective themes and to talk and discuss

332 Comp. Turner, Gramer, 2006 page 8

333 Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck 2000 page 4

334 Comp. Mai, Manfred/ Winter, Rainer, 2006 page 10-13

about them. There are only a few occasions which can be discussed across-the-generations, but movies are a part of these, despite the fact that each country has a specific national history and identity.³³⁵

The reason why film marketing and market research often fail their aim, namely place movies successful in the cinemas, is due to incalculability of the audience acceptance. This separates movies from other assets. Sometimes even the biggest marketing campaign can not avoid a flop and some movies can be an unexpected hit.³³⁶

The film industry has no clear idea about what kind of topics and which stories are demanded by the audience in the future. Worldwide is a lack of knowledge which categories permanently influence the commercial success of motion pictures.³³⁷

3.1.2 Definition 'Genre'

Genres are used as a system for categorization by the audience, film critics and the film industry. It describes normally a group of movies, which share certain attributes. Genre dictates, more or less stringently, recurrent themes, situations and story lines in movies. Therefore genre must have parts of the original to elate the audience otherwise it should not be a complete copy or replication of characters and former story lines. The systems of genre offer comfort and confidence of the acceptance by the audience. Genres build a network of industrial, ideological and institutional conventions, which are known and accepted by the producers as well as the audiences. Genres develop and get popular and successful because they find the adequate answer of interests, requirements and even problems of the viewers.

The genre is also seen as a convention to be challenged by many directors. Inevitably, work had to be done on defining the genre in order to understand its variations. Such work revealed how dynamic genres are, how they continually change, modulate, and redefine themselves; "genre emerges as the product of a three-way negotiation between audiences, filmmakers and the film producers."³³⁸

335 Comp. Mai, Manfred/ Winter, Rainer, 2006 page 30-33

336 Comp. ibidem page 36

337 Comp. Baum, Helmar, 2003 page 7

338 Comp. Turner, Gramer, 2006 page 56

In film, genre is a system of codes, conventions, and visual styles which enables an audience to determine rapidly and with some complexity the kind of narrative they are viewing. Due to this audiences watch one film within a context of other films, either those they have personally seen or those they have heard about or seen represented in other media outlets. This aspect of genre, *intertextuality*, polices the boundaries of an audience's expectations. In general, the function of genre is to make films comprehensible and more or less familiar. Even parodies or criticisms of a genre depend on the audience's recognition of and familiarity with the target.³³⁹

A genre often includes specific narrative expectations, for example recurrent settings and set-piece sequences of actions and therefore depends on the audience's competences and experiences. That means that the audience can draw upon the skills they have developed in understanding films and the body of similar experience. Although many films fail because they are too predictable and too much bound by the limits of genre, many others fail because they are simply not comprehensible. Films need to encourage expectations that they can satisfy or if they fail to satisfy, there must be a plausible reason and a reward for the audience in the final denouement. A mystery thriller, for instance, will offer many possible resolutions to the problem it sets up as a way of misleading audience until the appropriate moment to reveal the killer. Audiences accept this. As long as the real culprit is revealed in a satisfying and convincing manner, the audience can forgive the deception. But a film which arbitrarily ushers in a solution without the support of a generic convention or without foreshadowing is in danger of offending and irritating audiences. Producers of popular film know that each genre film has to do two apparently conflicting things: to confirm the existing expectation of the genre, and to alter them slightly. It is the variation from the expectation, the innovation in how a familiar scenario is played out, that offers the audience the pleasure of the recognition of the familiar, as well as the thrill of the new.³⁴⁰

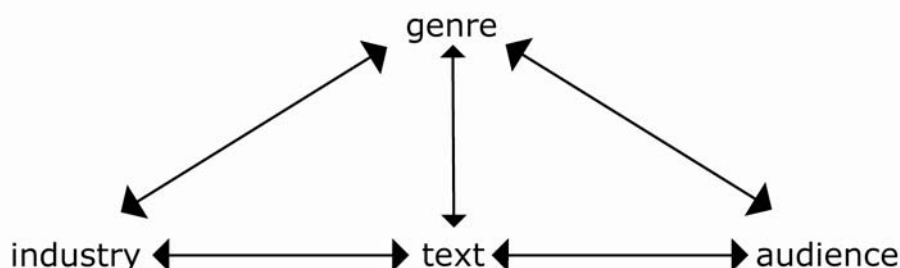
Finally, to bring this discussion of genre to a close, it is important to emphasize that genre is the product of at least three groups of forces: the

339 Comp. Turner, Gramer, 2006 page 119

340 Comp. ibidem page 120

industry and its production practices; the audience and their expectations and competences; and the text in its contribution to the genre as a whole.³⁴¹

Figure 32: Connection genre, industry, audience and text



In summary it can be said, that genre is what the audience collectively believes it to be. It is for precisely this reason that genre notions are so potentially interesting; more for the exploration of the psychological and sociological interplay between filmmaker, film, and audience, than for the immediate purposes of film criticism.³⁴²

3.1.3 Audience

Audiences are not homogenous groups but different positioned persons, whose common grounds are to watch the same movies. Within the different film genres different questions are focused. Thriller or criminal movies focus positions of identities, which are beyond the social and legally accepted frame work. Comedies, however, contains often positions of identities which are accepted by a large audience. But each single viewer attaches different importance towards single positions.³⁴³

Movies might be made by actors, directors, and producers, but they are ultimately made successful by audiences. Promotions of various kinds intervene in the process, but why one film will catch an audience's imagination while another will not is still a mystery to the industry, to audiences, and to theorists alike.

Audiences choose movies through their representations in the press and on television, and through conversations and other social contacts. These

341 Comp. Turner, Gramer, 2006 page 123

342 Comp. Mai, Manfred/ Winter, Rainer, 2006 page 276-329

343 Comp. ibidem page 166

representations are understood in terms of genre or stars, where they are not already enclosed by genre. There is, maybe, a third set of determinants: the broad cultural context in which the audience and the film are situated.³⁴⁴ Gramer Turner describes the audience identification as followed:

"We have always been told that we 'identify with' or see ourselves in characters on the screen. Screen heroes and heroines are widely held to offer some kind of wish fulfilment, and our admiration for one or other of them is assumed to be the expression of a wish we might want fulfilled. We also know that we do not only enjoy movies which invite this kind of identification. [...] Psychoanalysis has revealed two main categories of audience identification; and neither of them has much to do with conventional identification with the hero or heroine. [...] When the camera is received as the viewing perspective on a series of projected images, it becomes a proxy for our eyes. Although there are such things as 'point-of-view' shots, where the camera is clearly presenting a series of images from the point of view of a specific character within the film, in most cases it takes the point of view of the narrating authority, which we identify as that of the audience [us]. If we wish to make sense of the film, it is this point of view which we must identify ourselves. The camera and by extension the projector becomes our eyes, and when we wish not to see what it shows us, we shut our eyes and turn our heads."³⁴⁵

The second category of spectator identification with narrative film is more difficult to simplify. This is the spectator's identification with more or less everything that he or she sees on the screen. The audience does not only identify with the heroes and heroines, but with all the characters at various points in the narrative. This is a consequence of seeing the screen as a mirror of them and of their world. The post-Freudian theorist Jacques Lacan developed a most influential description of an aspect of childhood development which he called the 'mirror stage'. This is the point when a young child first recognizes itself in the mirror and realizes it has an identity separate from that of a mother. In recognizing an image of itself, and in forming a fascination for that image, the child begins to construct an identity. The fascination with films is not with particular characters and intrigues so much as a fascination with the image itself, based on a primal

344 Comp. Turner, Gramer, 2006 page 130-135

345 comp. ibidem page 151

'mirror stage' in the psychic growth.³⁴⁶ Gramer Turner criticizes the second aspect of audience identification as followed:

"The idea of the mirror stage might seem a little far-fetched, but there are many strong arguments for relating the pleasure derived from film to that primitive pleasure felt in the mirror stage. Of course, the analogy does have its limits; it could be argued that in the cinema one sees everything *but* oneself. Perhaps the real benefit of this analogy is its highlighting of the confusion between perception and reality that is common to the construction of the self and to our understanding of the narrative film. In this commonality we can see an ancient psychic root beneath this most modern of narrative systems."³⁴⁷

3.1.4 Sociological and psychological motives behind going to cinema

Usually scientists assume that people choose the film they want to see. It is also assumed that they will go out of their homes to see it, despite the fact that electronics can provide for a viewing at home. And it is assumed that some films have more of a public pull than others. But the assumption film scientist never question, is when and why do people go out of their homes for a cinematic experience? Is it the film that makes them do so? So it needs to be understood, why people go to the movies.

Even when television first began draining viewers from cinemas, the cinema offered a social experience which the home showcase does not. And people still go to cinemas. Less of them go, but they go. Globally the reason is called "social experience".³⁴⁸ Gideon Bachmann describes it ethologically: „the human being is a tribal animal, depending not only for his subsistence on others, but psychologically dependent on his reflection in the eyes of others for his own sense of identity. In order to survive, physically and mentally, we cannot remain alone. We simply need each other [...] we will do anything in order not to be alone."³⁴⁹ This need is our major instinct. Despite Freud, the need to belong is stronger than the need to survive (we go to war, ready to die, in order to be part of our group's sense of identity).³⁵⁰

346 comp. ibidem page 152

347 comp. Turner, Gramer, 2006 page 153

348 Comp. Kinema, Accessing date November 15, 2007

349 Comp. ibidem

350 Comp. ibidem

But this is not the only reason. Research conducted recently in Germany by the European Institute of Cinema in Karlsruhe seems to indicate that people choose a film on the basis of the situation in which it is presented, not on the basis of what film it is. In Locarno, Switzerland, the yearly film festival shows films on an immense public square. People go to this Piazza to see their friends, to have a meal, to gossip, to be part of the tremendous impact this public screening entails. And they will go every night, never mind what film is showing.³⁵¹ Gideon Bachmann explains: "In the phrase "let's go see a movie," the stress is on "let's go!" not on "see a movie." It is therefore a useless calculation to say that people don't like a certain film. In fact, what they don't like is a certain situation. Box office results do not represent an accurate measure for the quality of a film, only an accurate measure for the way it is being presented."³⁵²

According to film scientist A. Tesser there are three more psychological factors behind going to cinema: self-escape, self-development and entertainment. In 1984 he analyzed why people go cinema and asked 58 female and 43 male students at a US university. *Self-escape* summarizes all statements, which describe cinema as escape from everyday life. Answers of the respondents have been: "the movie let me forget my problems" or "I go to cinema when I am in a bad or good mood". The second factor *self-development* summarizes all variables, where the respondents get to know deep emotions through movies. Therefore movies seem to be a model for our emotions. Frequent answers have been: "I like movies, which show how other people think, behave and feel." The third factor *entertainment* describes the cinema visit only as a form of amusement. Therefore the respondents named advertisement, personal recommendation and free time as reason for the cinema visit.³⁵³

Due to the analysis of A. Tesser further research has been done which describes the cinema visit as leisure activity. Usually people do not go alone to the cinema but rather in groups. Especially among young people cinema visits play an important role in the personal evolution and they are a first step of separation from the family.³⁵⁴ Due to the group experience cinema visits are often process of coordination among different preferences of each

351 Comp. Kinema, Accessing date November 15, 2007

352 Comp. ibidem

353 Comp. Baum, Helmar, 2006 page 17-20

354 Comp. ibidem page 30-37

single part of the group. It is expected that the opinion leader plays an important role.³⁵⁵ Typical attributes of them are social, active, a high knowledge in their certain field and talkative.³⁵⁶

The act of 'going out' is itself intrinsic to the event of cinema-going. A sense of release and the separation from the world is provided even by films which the audience does not like. The possibility to escape which is often levelled with watching films is probably based on the sense of separation from reality.

Recapitulatory, a cinema visit meets social, communicative and psychologically oriented demands.³⁵⁷

3.1.5 Product relevant parameter for choosing films

The decision for watching a movie in a cinema depends on the expectance of the consumer towards each movie. Other criterias which influence the decision parameter are the quality of the cinema (e.g. sound and picture), image of the cinema, structure of audience and availability of the movie in the cinema. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the social and cultural environment of each viewer can determine the decision.³⁵⁸ In the following these criterias will be disregarded and only the product relevant parameters discussed.

Capability characteristics of movies are divided into two groups: product intrinsic criterias and product induced criterias. Product intrinsic criterias describe those which form the appearance of the movie. However, product induced criterias are the results of different motivation examinations from various interest groups with the movies and their elements.³⁵⁹

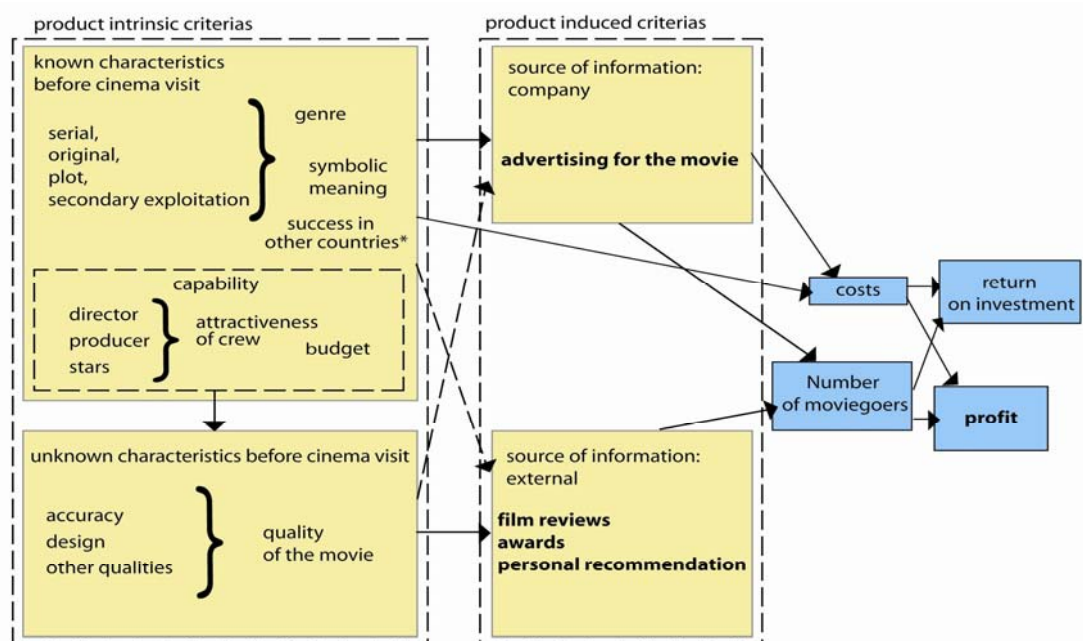
355 Comp. Baum, Helmar, 2006 page 70

356 Comp. ibidem page 46-47

357 Comp. ibidem page 55

358 Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck, 2000 page 4

359 Comp. idem page 5

Figure 33: Success decision parameters for moviegoers³⁶⁰

The figure displays success parameters of movies. The single elements and their cooperation will be discussed now.

3.1.5.1 Product intrinsic criterias

Product intrinsic criterias can be divided into known and unknown criterias before the cinema visit.

Film genre

As already mentioned film genres give the consumer a first orientation within the variety of possible contents. They categorize movies by means of elementary dramaturgical and aesthetic samples. Typical film genres are action, drama, comedy and horror. Based on expectations of the several genres the viewer already gets an idea of what the film will be about without having seen it. Concerning the success of the movie, it can be said that certain genres attract a larger audience than others and therefore the choice of a genre is a basic decision.

³⁶⁰ Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck, 2000 page 9

Symbolic meaning

The symbolic meaning of a movie is one factor for the classification in already existing cognitive categories. Difficulties result if the film related informations are too complex and if the viewer has no idea about the movie.

Original

If social or historical events are content of movies, they are based on originals. Also books, fairy tales, stage plays, TV series or myths can be topics of a movie. Therefore the audience has a concrete imagination of the possible content of the movie, provided that they are familiar with the original.³⁶¹

Film serial

If the movie belongs to a film serial (e.g. James Bond) the audience already has an informative basis for the film perception and judgement. Contrary to the original the consumer needs less cognitive efforts because no transmission from another medium is necessary. Similary it is with film remakes or a parody of a movie.

Plot

Due to a concise plot a larger audience can be attracted. This is possible if the movie could be reduced to a key scene, which can be used within the advertisement for the movie. These key scences can be impressive pictures or special extensive animated pictures.

Secondary exploitation

With a secondary exploitation of certain film elements a large public can be reached and helps them to categorize the movie. These elements can be symbols, emblems or songs. Cross selling articles such as books, soundtracks, posters or toys increase the popularity.

Success in other countries

Another influencing factor in view of the audience behaviour is the information about previous success or failure in other countries. Due to a worldwide dominance of US American feature films the box office incomes in

361 Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck, 2000 page 7

the US are important. If the movie fails it will be easily stigmatized. If this happens even advertising and certain means of communication can not change already made opinion.³⁶²

Attractiveness of crew

Movies are the result of a cooperation between numerous persons. Only some of them are visible for the audience. It is divided into "onstage-personnel" or "boundary personnel" like actors and "backstage personnel" like directors, producers or cameramen. The attractiveness of crew is based on high publicity and popularity, especially of the stars, directors and producers. Stars influence the film in two ways. First the audience assigns the movie a higher quality if a star performs in it, and second it helps to reduce uncertainties of the consumer in terms of the movie. Similar to brand names, the fact that a star acts in a movie, allows the film to reach a higher standard and acceptance.

The director is generally seen as the most important person on set and is responsible for the complete work. Accordingly in advertisements often previously successful movies of the director are mentioned.

Producers are financing the project and have therefore a high responsibility for the success of the movie and a far-ranging control about all aspects of the production. Even the final cut of the film will be confirmed by the producer. If the producer is well known and stamps a certain genre, he will be used for advertisement.³⁶³

Budget

The budget as a factor of success has two different effects. First it is an indicator of quality for the consumer and gives information about the high quality "ingredients". Furthermore production costs signal the commercial potential of a movie. An investment of more than US \$100,000.00 conveys that the film must be attractive enough to earn the necessary incomes. In consideration of the return of investment the incomes must be set according to the budget.³⁶⁴

362 Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck, 2000 page 8

363 Comp. ibidem page 9-10

364 Comp. ibidem page 10-11

Quality of the movie

The box office earnings are not the only indicator. Numerous dissertations figured out that also the quality of the movie is an important decision criterion. The quality of a movie is based on transformation of other potential qualities such as attractiveness of crew and budget. The success of this transformation process is determined by two aspects. First, through the accuracy and adequacy of work by crew members and second, through psychological composition of all parts and numerous single elements.³⁶⁵

3.1.5.2 Product induced criterias

Product intrinsic criterias have to be known by the audience in order to be appreciated. Therefore certain product induced criterias are necessary in order to be a mediator between product intrinsic criterias and film related knowledge of the audience. Product induced criterias inform the audience about the potential qualities of the film.

Advertising for the movie

Advertisements are mostly focused on the mediation of the potential qualities. As already mentioned, the film has a potential quality if stars are acting in the film. Advertising for movies is similar to advertising for other products but it also uses "making-of" features within the trailers. Film trailers are often considered as information about the movie instead of advertisements. With the increasing influence of the Internet there is an increasing demand for Internet advertising. Furthermore this is an opportunity for additional innovative marketing tools like screen savers and the supply of downloads for film trailers.

Film reviews

Film reviews are normally done by independent journalists and academic writers of magazines, newspapers or electronic sources. These judgements are done immediately before or after the film release and function as a gate keeper role. The importance of film reviews are minimized through the fact that numerous moviegoers do not believe in the independency of these experts and therefore they are seen as predictors rather than as influences.³⁶⁶

365 Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck, 2000 page 11

366 Comp. Ibidem, page 11

Awards

Awards are independent indicators for the quality of the movie. Resulting through a comparison of several movies per year they are seen as an outstanding achievement by the institution which hands out the awards. They implicate a very high quality in several aspects of the movie. Within the numbers of awards the Academy Awards³⁶⁷ have the highest public attractiveness and the biggest influence of the audience.

Personal recommendation

It can be expected that the success of movies is strongly influenced by personal recommendations, positive and negative. Generally these are based on personal experiences from other viewers. Mostly these recommendations have a high credibility based on the perceived neutrality of the communicators.³⁶⁸

All these elements are affecting directly or indirectly the number of viewers and therefore the incomes. Cost could be minimized through more incomes and finally result in a positive return on investment. The knowledge about these elements causes a better understanding of the demands of the audience and gives an idea about how more people can be attracted. Each single element has a different importance in different countries and is country specific. Sometimes stars are more important than genres, sometimes it is the other way round. The most significant value and influencing element in Cambodia needs to be found out.

3.1.6 Cultural bounded demands

The Big Screen has touched most of the lives on earth. In all film-watching societies it has created pop heros and slang, styles of dress and behaviour, images of peoples and places – in short, it has molded while it has reflected contemporary culture. It has done so in ways at once quite broad and infinitely personal. Beyond entertainment, films are always reflecting many of the social, cultural and political developments of each country.

A list of culturally bounded elements and contents of movies shows that movies from different parts of the world can not be understood or adopted easily if there is no knowledge about certain traditions or way of living.

367 The annual Academy Awards, known as the Oscars, has been held since 1929 and trophies for movies were handed out in up to 25 categories.

368 Comp. Henning Thureau, Thorsten/ Wuck, 2000 page 12-14

Therefore people often prefer movies of their homeland because it can be understood easily.

Figure 34: Cultural bounded elements³⁶⁹

History	buildings	monuments, castles etc.
	events	wars, revolution, flag days
	people	well-known historical persons
Society	industrial level (economy)	trade and industry energy supply etc.
	social organisations	defense, judicial system, police, prisons, local and central authorities
	politics	state management, ministries, electoral system, political parties, politicians, political organisations
	social conditions	groups, subcultures, living conditions, problems
	ways of life, costumes	housing, transport, food, meals, clothing, article for everyday use, family relations
Culture	religion	churches, rituals, morals, ministers, bishops, religious holidays, saints
	media	TV, radio, newspapers, magazines
	culture, leisure activities	museums, work of art, literature, authors, theatres, cinemas, actors, musicians, idols, restaurants, hotels, nightclubs, cafés, sports, athletes

Recent national cinema studies emphasize that national identity is not a fixed and unchanging essence but is actively constructed in films, which projects national images and creates imaginary bonds holding the nation together. Films are frequently produced in national languages, drawing on national situations, literature and folklore. In all these respects, films are undoubtedly often national.³⁷⁰ Typical regions which are determined by national unique cinema are European Cinema, Scandinavian Cinema, Middle

369 Döring, Siegrid, 2006 page 25

370 Comp. Chaudhuri, Shohini, 2007 page 2

Eastern Cinema, Iranian Cinema, East Asian Cinema, Hong Kong Cinema, South Asian Cinema, US Cinema and Indian Cinema. For example Bollywood in India, Dogme95 from Denmark, Martial Arts from Hong Kong and Hollywood Blockbusters.

3.2. Method

In the following chapter the concept of the survey will be explained. Particularly the hypotheses for the entire analysis will be figured out and reasoned. After giving an overview about underlying dates the method will be described. To examine the hypotheses why people go to cinema in Cambodia and what are the influencing parameters for successful Cambodian movies, two case studies have been done in summer 2007 in Phnom Penh.

Within face-to-face interviews outside selected cinemas in Phnom Penh, general dates and demands of the audience were found out. Within a focus group survey of a selected Khmer film, demands and desires were re-checked and finally a checklist for a successful Khmer movie created.

Due to economical research reasons, the survey was done in Phnom Penh. Sozio demographic structures in Phnom Penh comply about the age and gender pattern of the Cambodian population. Concerning education, Phnom Penh has a higher level than other large cities. However, it is a good place for the pilot study because nearly 50 percent of the cinemas in Cambodia are located in Phnom Penh. The study will not or only in a limited way explain the behaviour of cinemagoers in the countryside, where particular reasons for cinema-going can not be found out. The aim of the research is to (1) evaluate the current status of present Khmer moviegoers; (2) to identify the consumption of Khmer movies due to hypotheses and (3) to create a checklist for local film production companies. Ideally, the survey result could help the present filmmakers to understand their audiences, in order to make better decisions concerning their business. What type of stories should be produced is the main concern that every filmmaker must look into detail. This must be done with regard to the moviegoers' real perception and not just by their own observation.

According to the present situation of the Cambodian film industry, hypotheses had been figured out, in order to find out the moviegoers perception. These hypotheses include the following questions.

(A) Cinema goer survey

- **Hypothesis A1:** According to the socio-demographic structure in Cambodia, students from middle or high class families are the most common audience at the cinema!
 - Who is the audience? (income, age, occupation)
- **Hypothesis A2:** Horror and Ghost stories are not the demanded genres!
 - Which genre do they like most?
 - Which genre is rejected?
- **Hypothesis A3:** Advertisement and “cinema becoming event” is the only possibility to attract audience again!
 - Which media do influence the audience?
 - How important are personal recommendations?
- **Hypothesis A4:** Stars are more important than the content of the movie!
 - What are the product relevant parameters for choosing a movie?
- **Hypothesis A5:** Cambodians use cinema as self-escape from struggles of every day life!
 - What are the psychological and sociological reasons for going to cinema?

(B) Focus Group Survey

- **Hypothesis B1:** *Staying Single When* could be more successful if it would be cheaper and more advertisement would have been done!

Staying Single When is a romantic comedy about a young Cambodian man who sets out to find a suitable wife. Made by Khmer Mekong Films, it is Cambodia's first-ever feature film with actor's voices recorded during filming, rather than being added later. The movie ran at the Kirirom cinema in the centre of Phnom Penh for four weeks, twice as long as Matthew Robinson, KMF's Executive Producer, expected. Though the paying audience seemed to greatly appreciate and enjoy the film, KMF did not earn its money back, still less, make a profit. Matthew Robinson calculates that to break even the film needed to attract an audience of at least twice the size

as the one achieved. With the following survey, I want to set out the strengths and faults of *Staying Single When*. The survey's aim is to discover what movie-buffs *really* think about the film.

- Why people liked/ disliked *SSW*?
- Does the audience prefer the genre "romantic comedy"?
- Which characters are preferred/ rejected?
- Judgement of technical realization?
- Judgement of content?
- Judgement of ticket prices?

Underlying dates for cinema-goer survey

Cambodia does not play a role in the international market of feature films. Six of Cambodia's 12 cinemas are located in Phnom Penh. There is a potentially large cinema audience within the capital city's 1.5 million inhabitants where thousands of students aged 16 to 25 are living. The ticket sales did not increase in the last years. Compared to neighbouring countries, especially Thailand, Khmer movies have a lower technical and content level. In the first six months of 2007 only 20³⁷¹ feature films have been produced in Cambodia, mainly horror and ghost stories.

Sampling fraction and realization

(A) Survey among cinemagoers

The survey had been done within a period of a week, July 01, 2007 to July 08, 2007. Eight students, who are second year students of Media Management at the Department of Media and Communication, had come to help with field interviews. Each of them needed to stay outside of the chosen cinemas and do the interviews when the moviegoers came out. The questionnaire ran as a face-to-face interview of approximately 20 minutes each at three selected cinemas in Phnom Penh: Lux, Sorya, and Kirirom in accordance with each of the four movie time shifts; shift 1 (9:00am), shift 2 (2:00pm), shift 3 (4:30pm), and shift 4 (7:00pm) and one time during the week and one time at the weekend. One hundred twenty moviegoers were interviewed on different shifts of the day in order to collect the data.

371 Comp. Interview Mounk Sokhan, July 10, 2007

Figure 35: Sample fraction

Cine Lux	Weekday	Weekend
Shift 1	5	5
Shift 2	5	5
Shift 3	5	5
Shift 4	5	5
Sorya Cinema	Weekday	Weekend
Shift 1	5	5
Shift 2	5	5
Shift 3	5	5
Shift 4	5	5
Kirirom Cinema	Weekday	Weekend
Shift 1	5	5
Shift 2	5	5
Shift 3	5	5
Shift 4	5	5

(B) Focus Group Survey

The focus group survey had been done among a family and a student group; varied education, occupations, mixed gender and aged from eight to 70. The primary target for *Staying Single When* was indeed the student audience. After getting the results from the first survey it could be stated that in Cambodia, many young people go to cinemas and the places become the meeting points for them either to socialize or to escape every day's boring existence. However a secondary target was the family audience. In Cambodia, families like to go to cinema together as an occasional outing. The survey had been done at the July 27, 2007 within a Khmer Family and on the July 28, 2007 with the student group. After a short introduction and brief explanation about the purpose of the sessions I showed the film to the participants. After the film screening the participants got the questionnaires. The questionnaire was conducted as face-to-face interviews of about 15 minutes.

Questionnaire

(A) The questionnaire consists of 30 questions; five of them are open-ended concerning:

- Demographic information of the respondents (Questions 1-6)
- Watching movies generally (Questions 7-10)
- Watching movie in cinema (Questions 11-15)
- Film Content and Genre (Questions 16-22)

- Analyse movie (Questions 23-26)
 - Demand for Khmer Rouge film (Questions 27-28)
 - Social study (Questions 29-30)
- (B) The questionnaire consists of 33 questions concerning to:
- Socio-demographic/ general information of the respondents (Questions 1-6)
 - Quality of Staying Single When (Questions 7-14)
 - Content of Staying Single When (Questions 15-21)
 - Characters in Staying Single When (Questions 22-28)
 - Demand for DVD Staying Single When (Questions 29-30)
 - Demand for further movies (Questions 31-33)

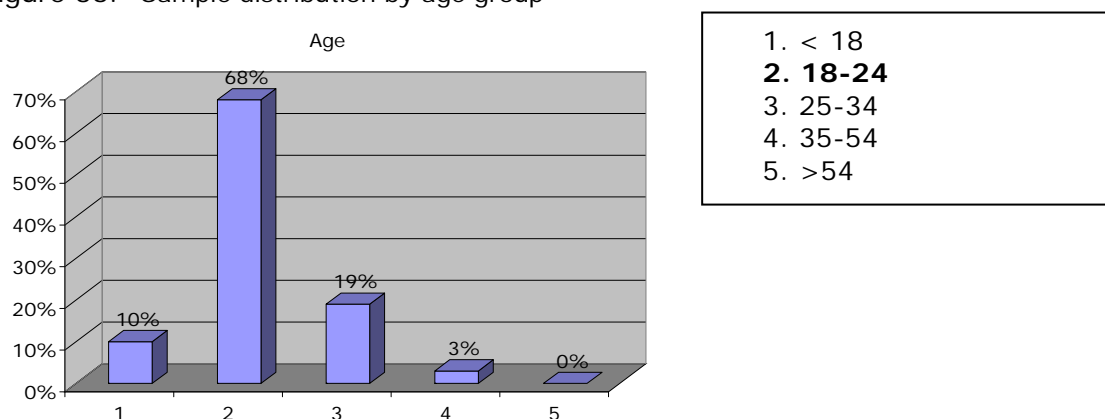
3.3. Analysis

"Before I am told a romantic story would be a hit. I produced several but I saw only loss of profit. Now I start to produce horror story hoping to gain back some audiences. But I am not sure of what I am doing. Cambodian market is very difficult to understand." ³⁷²

The above mentioned quote is common among film producers. The inability of most of them to understand the market or their audience has put them at risk of not knowing what to do with their film product. Within the following survey I want to find out the answers.

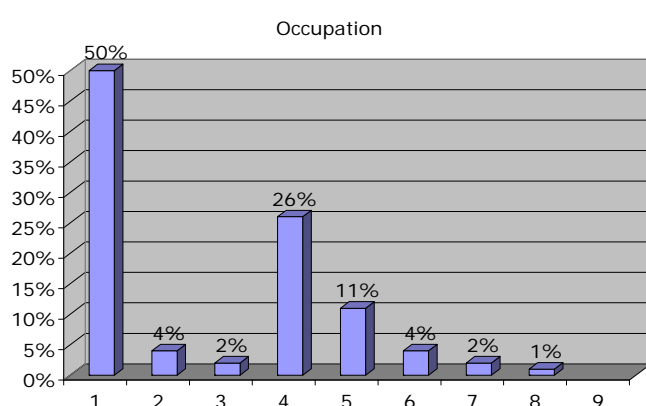
3.3.1 Demographic information of the respondents

Figure 36: Sample distribution by age group



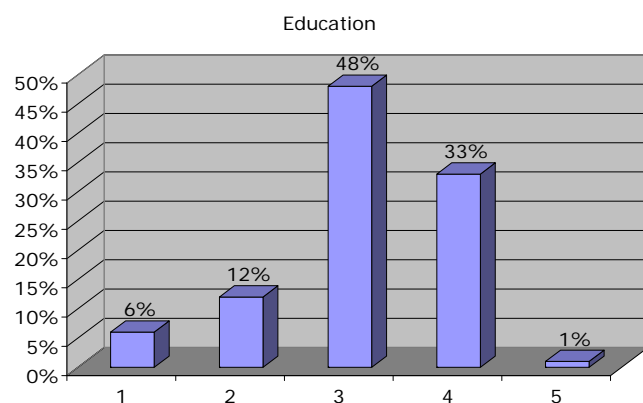
Among the respondents were 49 percent female and 51 percent male. Among all, the young, between 18 and 24 make up the top majority of moviegoers. This represents more than two thirds of the moviegoers. Middle aged people (25-34) come second (nearly one third of the sample) and third rank people less than 18 years. In Cambodia, many young people go to the cinemas and one, they become meeting points for them either to socialize or two, escape from every day life struggles and problems.

Figure 37: Sample distribution by occupation



1. **Student**
2. Internat. Organisation
3. NGO
4. Factory/ Company worker
5. Self Employed
6. Unemployed
7. Civil Servant
8. Restaurant worker
9. Other

Figure 38: Sample distribution by education

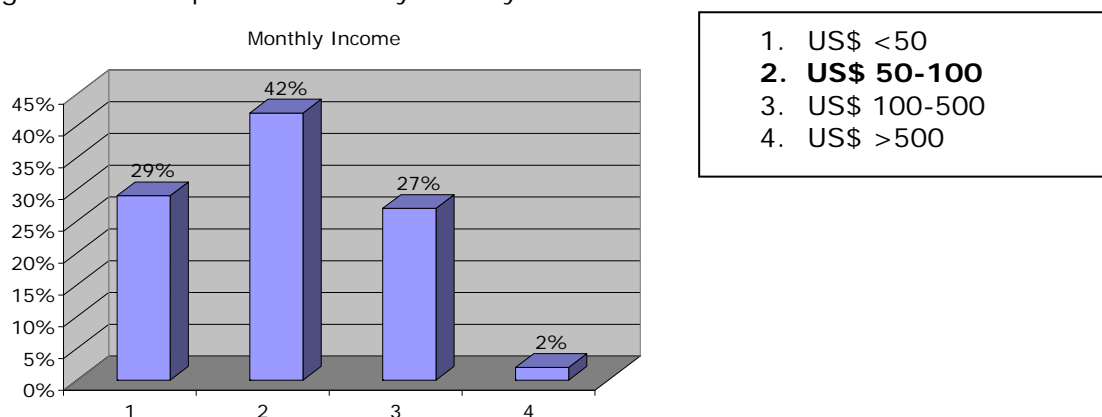


1. Primary school
2. Secondary school
3. **High school**
4. University
5. no formal schooling

Nearly one third of the sample moviegoers have received university education but at least nearly half of the sample has a high school degree. In addition more than 1/8 are receiving or finished secondary education already. This somehow shows that most moviegoers are holding better education, which categorizes the standard of the country's capital. The educational contrast between unemployed people and restaurant workers to the rest is quite evident. The first two groups are mainly featured by lower

educational background whereas the rest can vary from the lowest to the highest. While students are doing their degrees all international organization workers have already completed theirs. The occupational categories are quite interesting, given the fact that students, half of the sample, and factory workers (more than one fourth of the sample) are the two dominant groups. The other relevant group are self-employed people with 11 percent of the sample. Other occupations have no significance, because it contains too small numbers of interviewees (less than 4 percent).

Figure 39: Sample distribution by monthly income

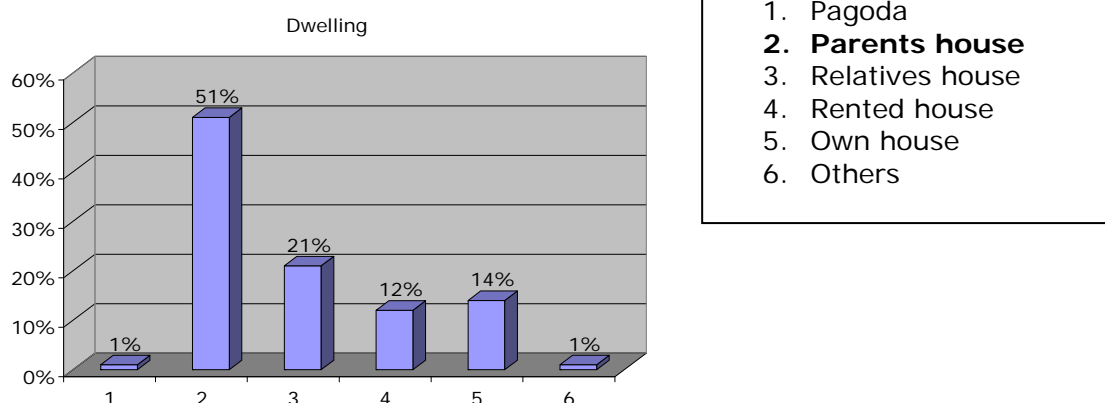


This question asked for the rank of individual respondent's monthly income. For moviemakers this is an interesting part, because it provides the financial status of their audience. The main average income, nearly half of the sample, is from US\$ 50 to 100, indicating that most of the moviegoers are those with a low income. Although it is not the lowest category, cinemagoers do not have so much money to spend. Most of the moviegoers are students who get pocket money from their parents. People who live on less than US\$ 50 per month ranked second. In Cambodia, factory workers, who are the second largest group of respondents, start the work with US\$ 40 a month as a minimum wage. The richest part of the sample refers to those who earn more than US\$ 500. This category is under represented and refers to NGO and International Organization workers.

The next question asked was where the respondents live in Phnom Penh. As seen in the below figure, more than half live with their parents, which corresponds to the sample who are students (50 percent). The overall data are in line with Phnom Penh society's youth at large, nearly ¼ at their relative's house, 12 percent in a rented house, 14 percent in their

own house and only one percent in the pagoda. Men are significantly living in the pagoda, because female persons are not allowed to stay.

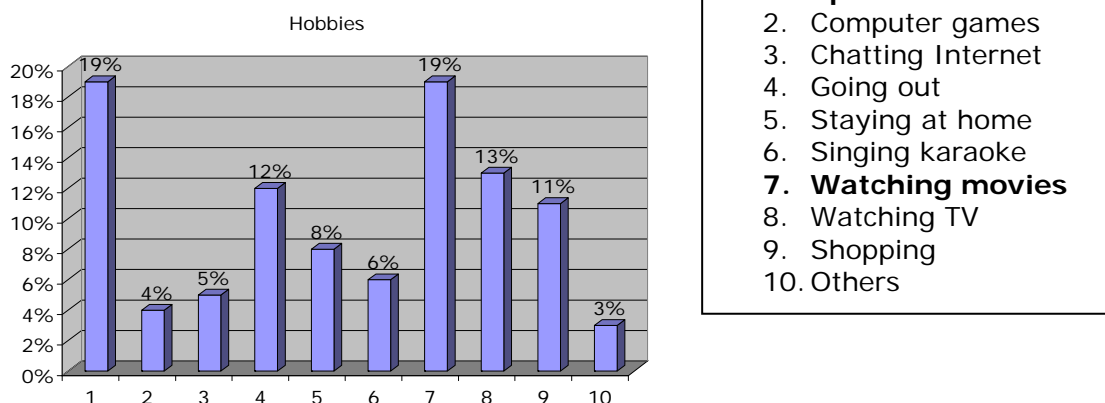
Figure 40: Sample distribution by dwelling



3.3.2 Watching Movies

In the following chapter, watching movies as general free time leisure will be described.

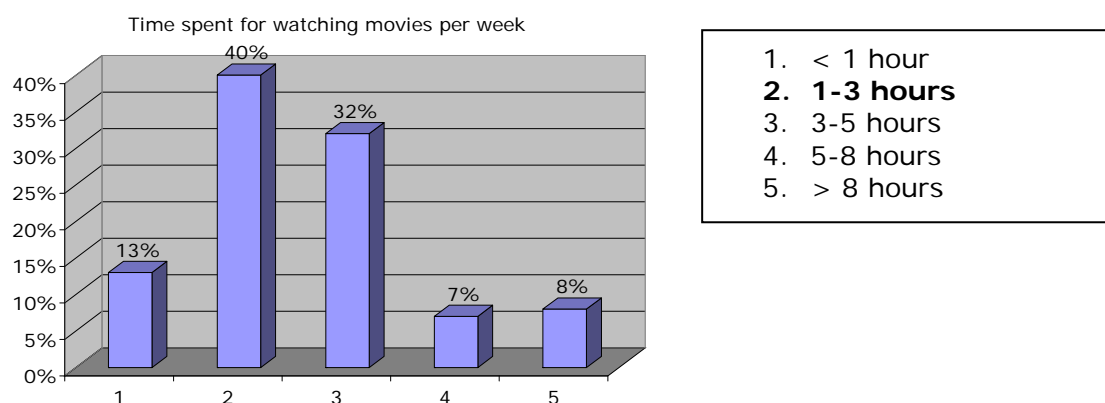
Figure 41: General hobbies of the respondents



The first question in this section required the respondents to go through a checklist of what they usually do in their free time and look at their interest in movies in relation to other activities. The main feature of the question is to find out the percentage of people who go to movies as a usual habit. Nearly one fifth of the respondents prefer to do sports and watching movies in their free time. Other relevant answers were going out, watching TV and shopping. The majority of women marked "staying at home". This must be seen in the Cambodian social context where women are viewed more as belonging at home rather than having a social life. Going out in free time

and sports is still a male-dominant activity and is more open to a university graduate who loves to socialize. Going shopping (11 percent of the sample) is significantly a more popular hobby among students and young people. In the context of Cambodia they are within the stylish age where portraying image is important to them. This fact leads to the presumption that merchandising articles³⁷³ could be an important advertisement tool. So far not considered, it could link the audience to the movie and then going to cinema. The desire to watch a film is related to a whole range of other desires, such as fashion, icons or signs that are highly valued by the audience.

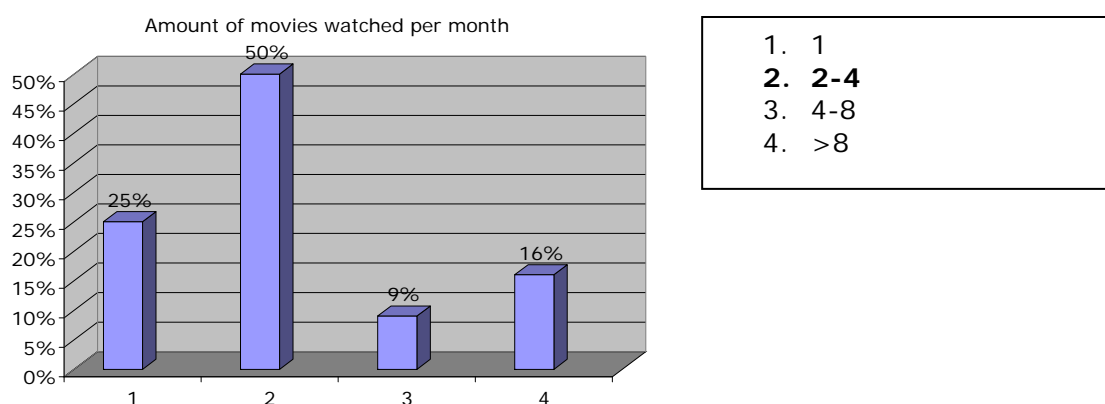
Figure 42: Respondents time spent for watching movies per week



This question asked the interviewees to identify their time spent watching feature films in a week period, regardless of the mediums, TV, VCD/DVD or cinemas. Nearly half of the respondents watch movies one to three hours per week and 1/3 spend three to five hours per week. This represents and confirms the educational level. The more educated one is, the less free time one has and the less fictional programs are desired, rather than news. Lower educated people spent more time watching movies. Although most of the interviewees have been students, which indicates a higher educational level they are not yet employed and as a result they have more time.

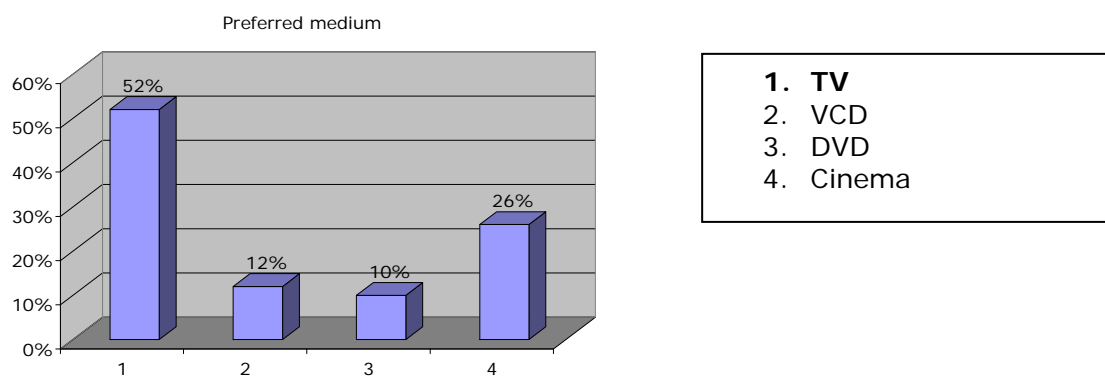
³⁷³ Merchandising articles are those articles sold in order to make a product well known or to increase the buying public or the audience.

Figure 43: Amount of movies (DVD/VCD/TV/Cinema) per month



Due to the time in watching movies per week, people watch about two to four movies per month. Ranking second, $\frac{1}{4}$ of the respondents only watch one feature film per month. This confirms again, the above mentioned reasons. The more educated the people are, the less time they have for watching movies.

Figure 44: Preferred medium for Khmer movies

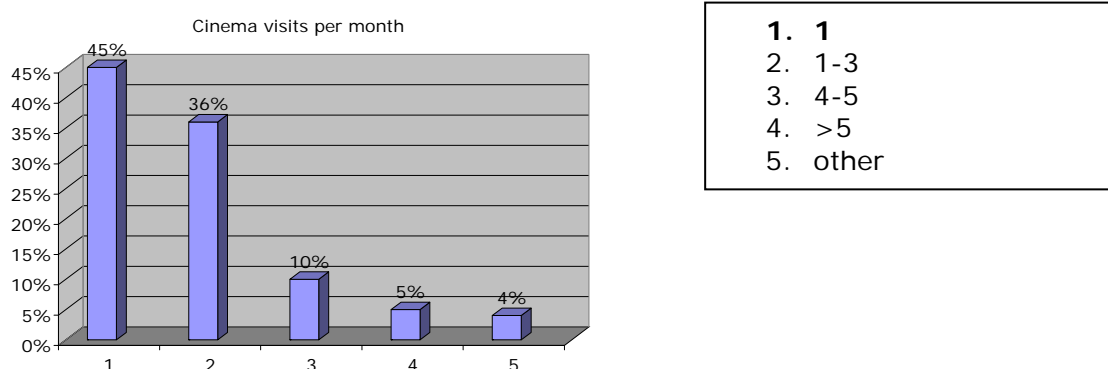


The four main mediums for Khmer movies are TV, VCD, DVD and cinema. To tap in to the issue, concerning Khmer movies, it needs to be found out which is the right medium to distribute Khmer movies. The most preferred medium, with 52 percent, is TV. More than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the sample access Khmer movies through cinemas and ranking third and fourth are VCD and DVD with 12 percent and 10 percent. Cambodia is not a rich country, money spent on entertainment is critically thought of before spending. And since TV is available for everyone, it is a popular and effective medium to provide people access to Khmer movies. This confirms the thoughts in part one of the thesis, where people complain about the free access of Khmer movies on TV.

3.3.3 Watching Movies in Cinema

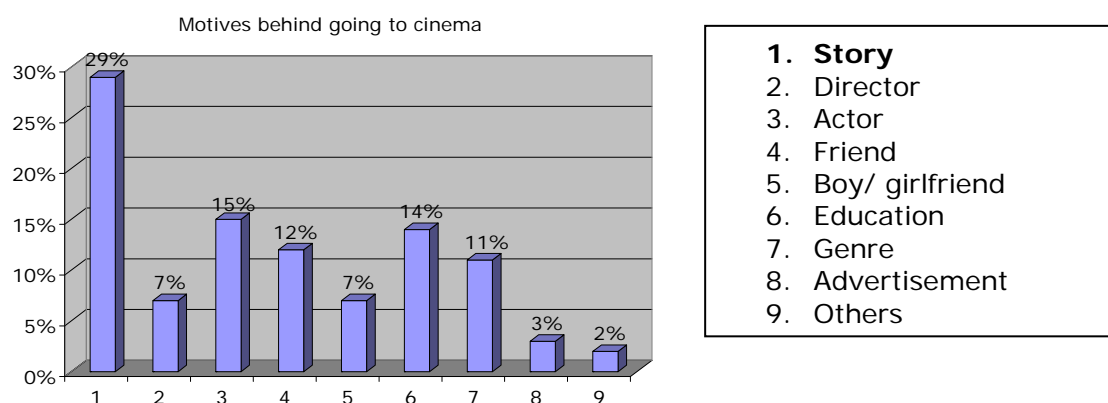
After giving an overview about watching movies generally, the following chapter explores the motives behind cinema-going.

Figure 45: Amount of cinema visits per month



The result of the cinema visits per month is according to the decreasing audience in the cinemas. Nearly 50 percent of the respondents go only one time per month to the cinema. Only 10 percent are going four or five times. This confirms the previous answers, where respondents preferred to watch the movies at home gratuitously.

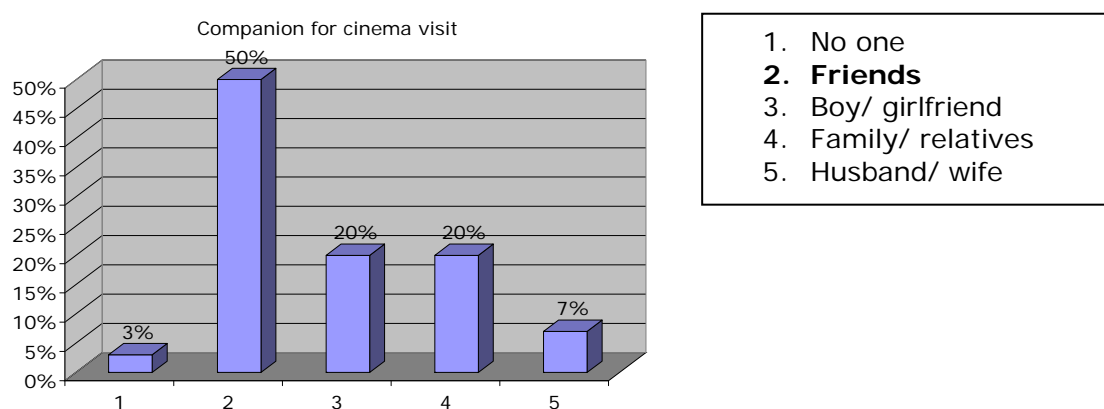
Figure 46: Motives behind going to cinema of the respondents



This is the part where film producer should give serious consideration. It describes the motives behind going to the cinema and the success parameters for the Cambodian market. The most important thing while producing a film is to call for the audience and therewith profit. The questionnaire requires respondents to reveal what pushes them to come to watch movies at the cinema. The results above show that the story line is the main concern, mentioned by nearly one third of the respondents.

Especially young and educated people focus more on the story and content than on anything else. Actors and actresses play the second biggest concern. Up to 19 percent of the respondents come to the cinema for no special reason besides that their friends or boy and girlfriends come along. They even do not know what will be screened. Especially among students, “friends” or “relatives” are the reason for going to the cinema. This confirms the psychological reason mentioned in the theoretical chapter. Furthermore this answers show that a lot of people want to support the Khmer film industry, no matter what type of movies the cinemas are showing. Another reason for going to the cinema is education. Cambodians often go to the cinema to “know what happened in the past”, “get knowledge about society”, “to get solutions for problems in every day life” and “to get to know more about relationships and how I [they] should behave.” These are typical answers from the respondents. As a reason for going to the cinema, genre was named by only 11 percent of the respondents followed by directors with seven percent. So film genres are not a big concern for audiences and this holds the fact that a well told story, no matter which genre, and good performances are more important. Advertising is only three percent of the reason for going to the cinema. Therefore it needs to be found out, if the advertising so far does not attract moviegoers or if they did not see any advertisements and not enough advertising was done. Therefore it has to be pointed out the likely weak point of the film industry: marketing.

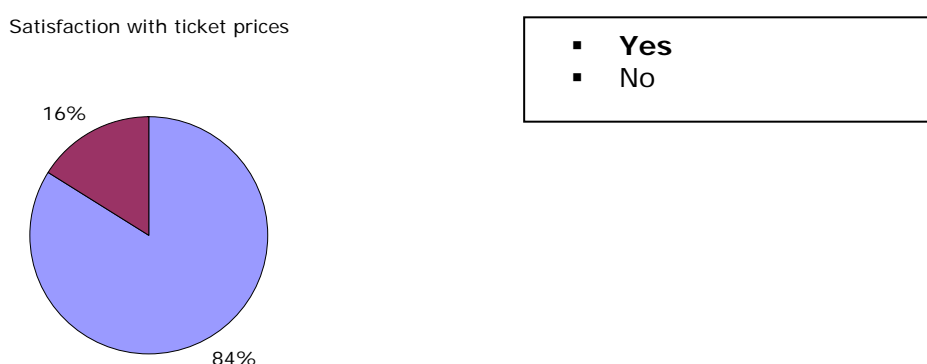
Figure 47: Companion for cinema visit



This figure confirms that cinema-going is a social activity and therefore half of the respondents are going to the cinema with friends and nearly 100 percent (97 percent) do have a companion, either their friends, girl and

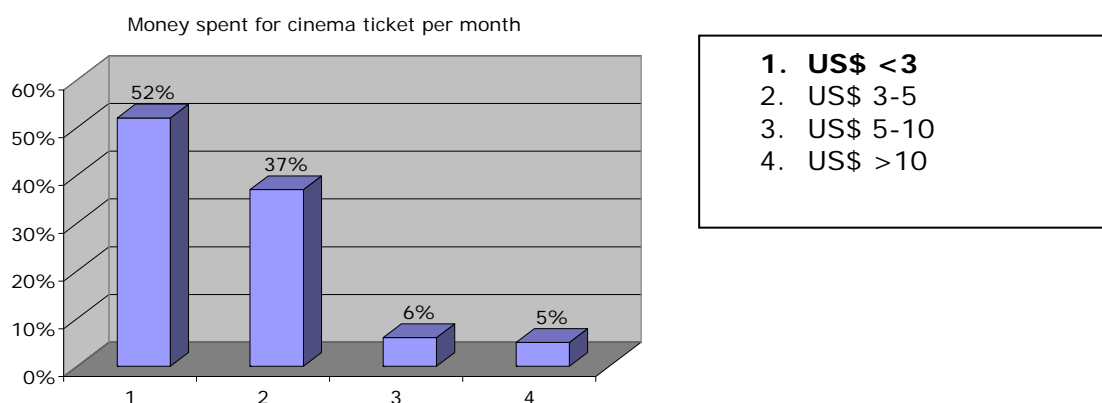
boyfriends or their family and relatives. It is said that Cambodians are going to the cinema because this is the place where they could meet their boy or girlfriend for the first time. Normally it is not common in the society to have a boy or girlfriend or going out with them until they are married and so the cinema with a dark room is a good place for meeting in order not to be recognized.

Figure 48: Satisfaction with actual ticket prices for Khmer movies



Although people do not earn a lot of money, more than $\frac{3}{4}$ are satisfied with the ticket prices nowadays. The average ticket price was about 3000 R-5000 R in 2007.

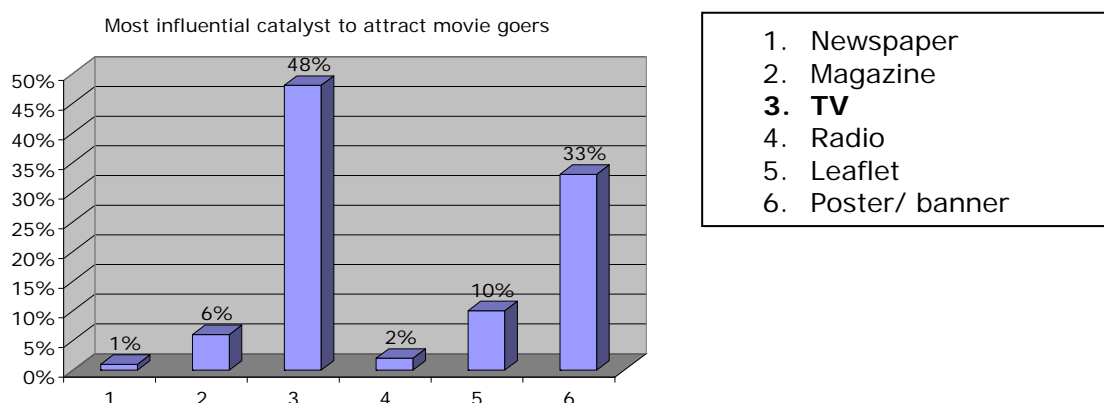
Figure 49: Respondents monthly expense on cinema visits



Respondents were asked to name their monthly maximum expenses for cinema visits. According to the occupation and the income of the respondents it is plausible that more than half of the moviegoers do spend less than US\$ three per month. Only a disregarding percentage spends

more than US\$ 10 per month. Mostly these persons do not only pay for themselves but also for their friends and relatives.

Figure 50: Most influential catalyst to attract the moviegoers



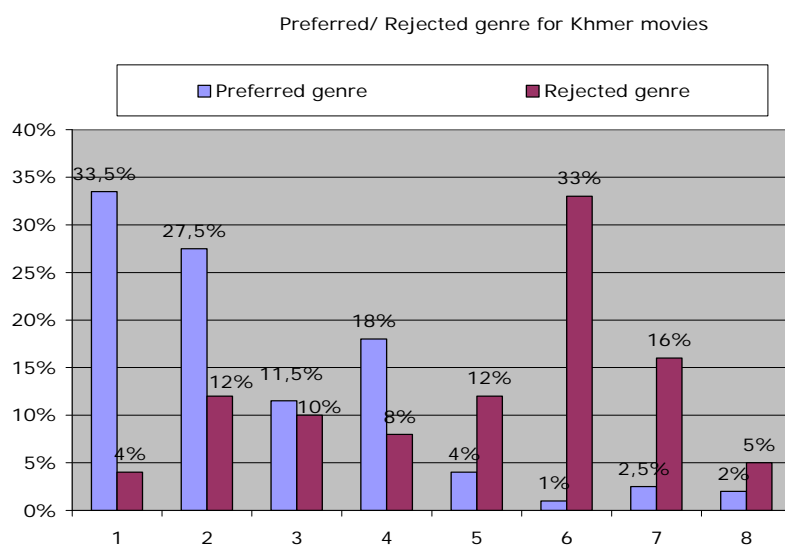
The next question tries to figure out the most effective advertising tool for Khmer movies. TV ranks first and and poster/banner ranks second. Both are the most popular form of information and entertainment. Far behind are newspapers with (one percent) and radio with two percent. In a country where reading is considered a very educated and complicated issue not many people receive information through this type of media. This is easily understandable among the less educated respondents but surprisingly among the student group. But more of the students do receive their information through magazines.

3.3.4 Film Genre

This is the most interesting part for all moviemakers who would like to understand the interests of their audience. A list of movie genres was put out and the respondents were asked to choose the best types of story they like. Among all, comedy ranked first with 33.5 percent of the total sample, followed by horror (27.2 percent) and romantic movies (10 percent). According to the less preferred genre, political is the most rejected genre by one third of the audience. This is due to the fact that especially young people are not interested in politics and political movies are not made in Cambodia. According to the respondents, political movies are “too difficult to understand”, “only propaganda and made for persuasion” or young people do not “want to become involved in politics”. Cinema as a place “for self-escape of every day struggle” makes the preferred genre comedy explainable. Nearly 90 percent of the respondents answered that they are

going to the cinema because they “want to be happy and relax from the day” as well as to “reduce their stress”. The second ranked genre, horror is more surprising, because cinemagoers answered that a horror movie “makes them happy and laugh”- therefore the horror genre is different in Cambodia. It is more a superstitious story line combined with comedic elements. Third ranks the genre romance. Respondents preferred this genre because this let them understand “about other people’s feelings and their way of thinking”. Especially among students the romance genre is preferred, because through this they get a first impression about love. With 11 percent, historical movies ranked fourth. Respondents preferred this genre because through movies they can “learn about my [their] history” and it “tells me [them] what happened in the past”. Therefore movies have an educational task. Cambodian people do not like movies which are “not credible and too complex”. Therefore “science fiction” and “action” rank second and third among the rejected genres. They are “not useful and damage the Cambodian culture” in the eyes of the respondents. According to concerns about robbery and violence it is understandable that Cambodians think action movies “lead to imitation of crimes among the youth”. The importance of realism and a connection to Khmer culture reflects the rejected genre “animation”. Surprisingly, the second ranking preferred genre is also rejected by 12 percent of the respondents. Reasons are “too scary movies” and the “repeating and boring storyline.”

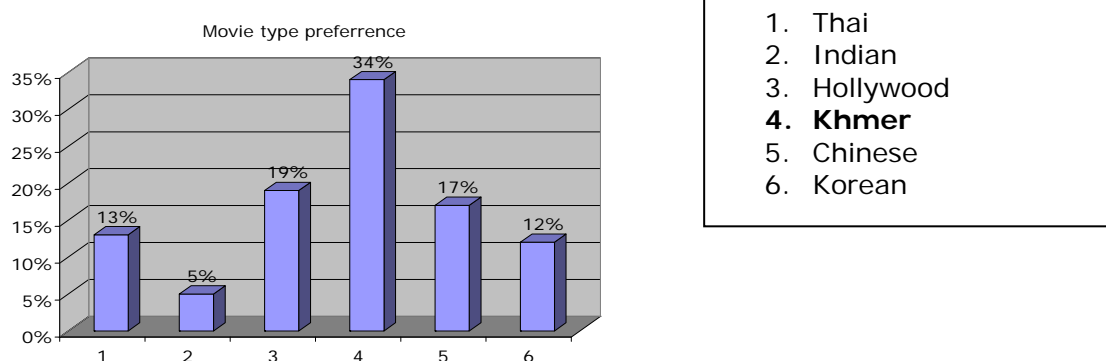
Figure 51: Preferred and rejected film genre for Khmer movies



1. **Comedy (preferred genre)**
2. Horror
3. History
4. Romance
5. Action
6. **Political movie (rejected genre)**
7. Science Fiction
8. Animation

The following question shows how the popularity of Khmer movies ranges in relation to other foreign movies which have been booming in the country's market.

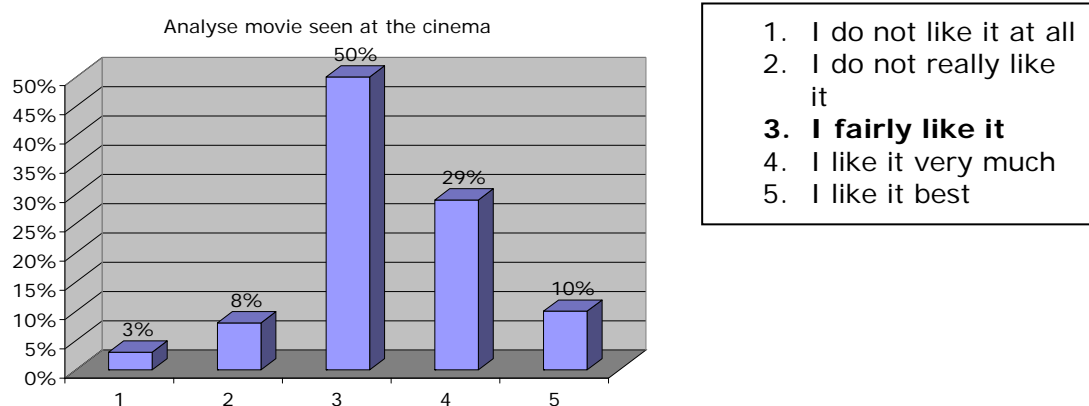
Figure 52: Movie type preference of the respondents



There seems to be some kind of exaggeration by the respondents when they express their "likes" for Khmer movies. As a matter of fact, Khmer movies rank first as the top interest enjoyed by most moviegoers (34 percent), followed by Hollywood (19 percent) and Chinese movies (17 percent). For years, Cambodian people, the majority of its ethnic people are Chinese, have been a loyal audience to the commodity for its better production quality than Cambodian made films. Most of the respondents also named their "meaningfulness" and "colourful pictures." Hollywood movies are appreciated by their "high technical standard and good picture quality" as well as "good and natural performing skills". Among all the respondents who named "Khmer movies" as their favourite type, nearly none if them named "good quality" as reason for this. In fact most of the answers were: "I support Cambodian fine art", "I want to improve Khmer film industry and encourage local filmmakers", "I want to glorify Khmer products" but also "to find out weak points comparing to other countries."

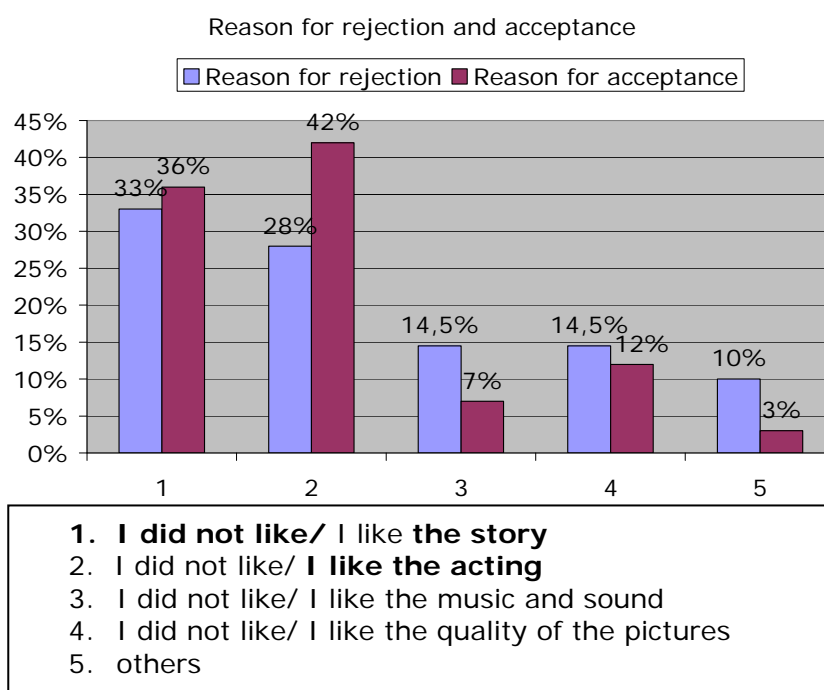
Therefore it needs to be considered that appreciation results through quality reasons rather than through national pride.

Figure 53: Judgement for movie seen at the cinema



This figure reflects that people are not very satisfied with Khmer movies. Audiences who came out after watching a Khmer movie (three of four have been to Ghost movies) had to analyze the movie seen before. Half of the respondents fairly liked the movie and only 29 percent liked it very much and 10 percent liked it best. This confirms that people often do not go to cinema in order to see a good movie but for social reasons. In order to increase ticket sales, local film producers should be more aware of the product relevant parameters and fulfil the mentioned demands of the audience.

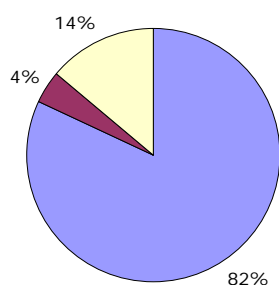
Figure 54: Judgment of film quality by parameters



After judging the movie, respondents were asked why they liked or disliked the movies. The lack of scriptwriting skills and the common copying tradition is reflected in the reasons why people do not like the movie. More than one third named the boring story as reason for dislike. Although nearly the same percentage (33 percent) named the interesting story as reason for acceptance, it can be assumed that Cambodian people do not want to be too critical. Only a few people were willing to give answers to this question. All in all the technical aspects or the quality of the picture can be disregarded, because nearly none of the respondents mentioned it, whether as a reason for like or dislike.

Figure 55: Demand for Khmer Rouge feature film

Demand for feature film about Khmer Rouge

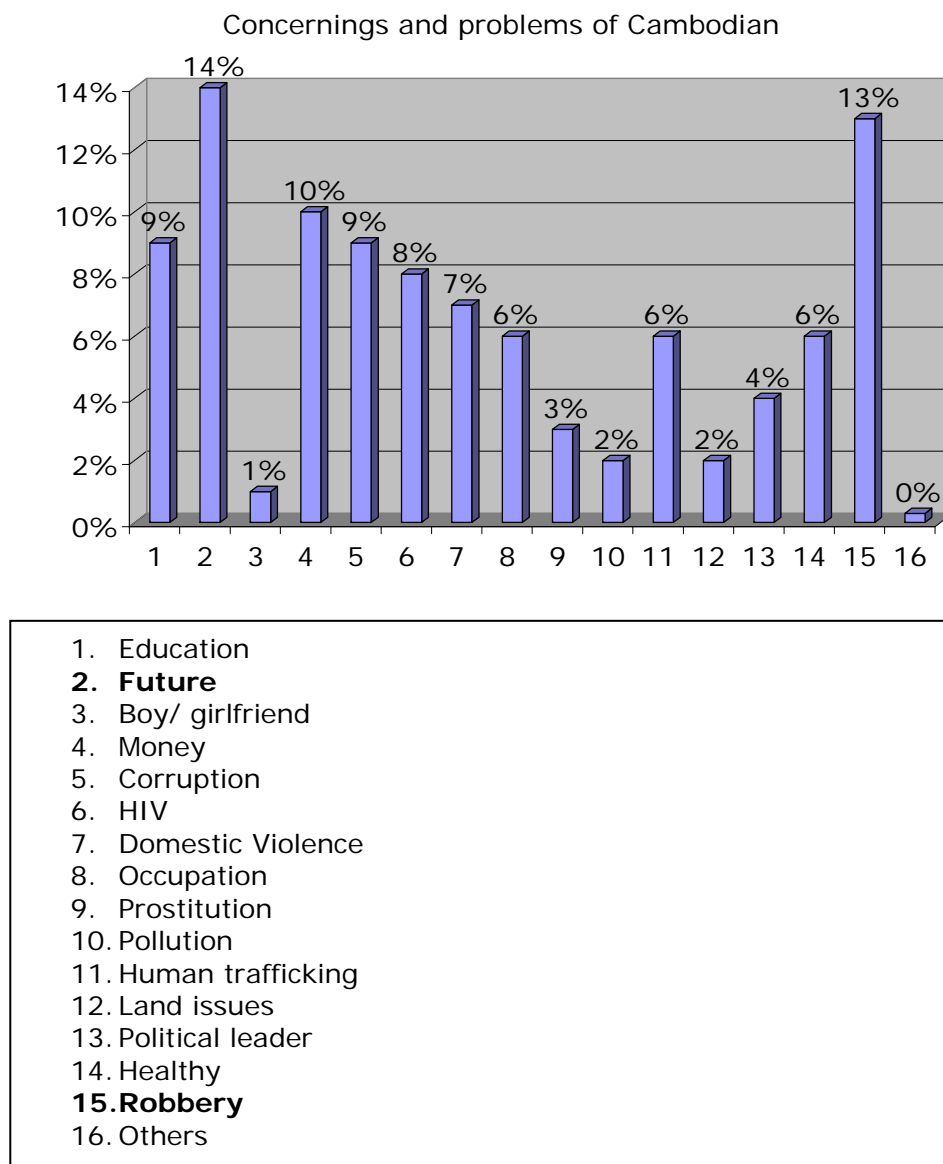


- 82 percent Yes
- **4 percent Maybe**
- 14 percent No

To come up with new ideas or demanded story lines, the respondents were asked about their desire for a feature film about the Khmer Rouge tribunal. More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the respondents want to see a feature film about KR and nearly half of them think that this movie will be allowed to screen. Only 15 percent believe that the movie will not get permission for screening in Cambodia.

3.3.5 Social Study

Figure 56: Social Study



In order to understand the problems of Cambodians and to get an idea why they go to cinema and what kind of educational movies are demanded, the respondents were asked to name their concerns and problems. Among all, "future" ranked first, followed by "robbery". In fact, these are more common problems in developing countries and especially the concern "robbery" is reflected in the disregarded genre "action." Most of the respondents marked at least three of the given answers and 50 percent

marked half of the answers. Therefore movies should become a bigger part of education and help to find answers for their problems. Arthouse movies would probably be disregarded, because movies should give answers and not come up with new problems and questions. Due to these answers the preferred genre Comedy is more understandable.

3.3.6 Summary Cinema goer survey

In order to find out the demands of the cinemagoers, influencing elements and significant values need to be described. The survey confirms hypothesis A1, by figuring out, that the target groups are young students (50 percent) and families (28 percent) with a low income. Therefore implications concerning the ticket prices must be done.

Second, the survey answers hypothesis A2. The most popular genres are comedy (33.5 percent) and horror (27.5 percent), but in my opinion, there are two reasons which disprove the second most given answer. First, how should someone mention another genre, if nearly exclusively ghost movies are shown and there is no fall back procedure? Second, ghost movies are not comparable to classic horror movies in Cambodia. They are more superficial stories with comedy elements. This confirms again the preferred genre comedy. According to the answers, Cambodians use cinema as a form of self-escape from every day live and want to forget their sorrows and problems. The third ranking genre romance (18 percent) confirms the fact that movies act as a mirror of life and the audience can identify with the heroes. According to the answers, people assign the behaviour of the heroes of their own life. Furthermore hypothesis A2 asked for the rejected genre. According to the results political movies (33 percent) and science fiction (18 percent) are the most rejected genre. Especially with politics, Cambodians do not want to be involved and there is no culture of criticizing. People are afraid to produce and to watch critical political movies in a country, where freedom of opinion is limited. Due to the demand of realistic movies, Cambodians dislike science fiction. In their opinion it is neither credible nor real what happens in this kind of movie. The third ranking rejected genre is horror (12 percent), this confirms the surfeit of this genre. According to these results film production companies should rethink their produced movies in the last years and draw consequences for further movies.

Hypothesis A3 asked for the influencing element to attract an audience. In the survey TV ranked first (48 percent) followed by poster and banner.

(33 percent). It can be assumed that personal recommendations play a big role in the opinion making. Cinema in Cambodia is more a social event; people care less about the movie instead talking, chatting and calling during the screening. People do not even stay until the end. This confirms that the content is weak and the story line is boring and does not need to be watched until the end. Ninety-seven percent do have at least one companion for the cinema and half of the interviewees named friends as the companion. This confirms the fact, that the cinema plays an important role as a social event. But this fact is alarming. If people would go to the cinema only for socialization and do not care about the content at all, the cinema would be replaceable and socialization could happen in other places. The focus of the producers should be the content in order to give the audience a reason for watching the films and coming to the cinema, besides meeting friends.

As already mentioned, it seems that the story is unimportant for the audience, but this was refuted by answers given by the interviewees. Twenty nine percent named the story as reason for going to cinema and actors/ stars ranked second followed by education. This shows that the story is more important than anything else and even a star acting in the movie can not neutralize a boring story. Other motives behind going to cinema are, friends (12 percent), genre (11 percent) followed by directors and boy- and girlfriend (each 7 percent). Advertising is only for three percent of the respondents decisive for watching a movie. Other product relevant parameters mentioned in the theoretical part like film reviews, awards, secondary exploitation and serials, success in other countries were disregarded because all these do not play a big role in the film industry so far.

Due to the difficult living conditions, Cambodians use the cinema as a form of self-escape from struggles of everyday live and want to take their mind off things (according to hypothesis A5). Therefore films with comedy elements are preferred rather than complicated long arthouse movies. This confirms that cinema is also a form of amusement and entertainment. As already mentioned, movies act as a form of development and as mirror of someones own life. Therefore romances are demanded in order to understand their own life.

The survey found out, that there is a demand for Khmer movies (50 percent watch about two to four movies per month) and people love to see them (34 percent). Although movies are preferred to be watched on the TV

(52 percent), anyhow 26 percent of the interviewees want to watch movies at the cinema. But the supply has to correspondent with the demand (new, realistic and creative storylines) otherwise people will not go to the cinemas anymore and the answers given by the questions about the amount of cinema visits per month will get worse from the point of view of the film producers (so far 45 percent of the respondents go at most one time per month).

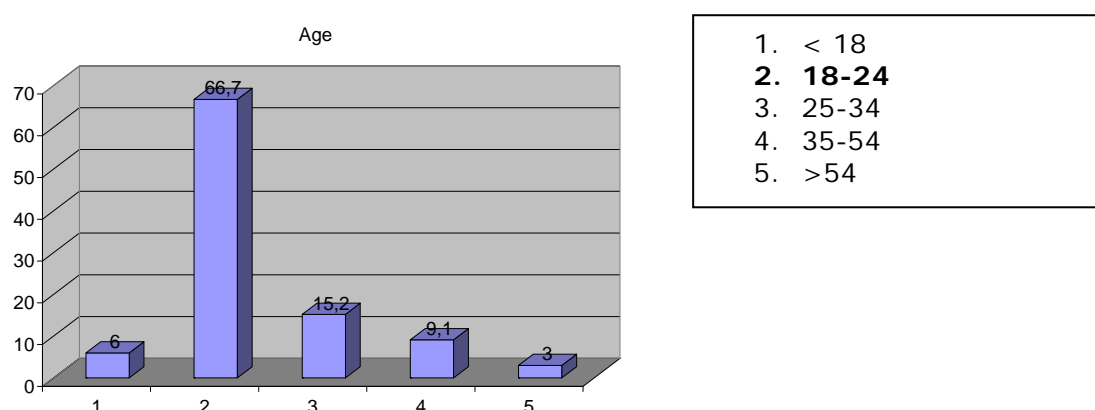
3.3.7 Focus group survey

To prove the results of the survey among cinemagoers a focus group survey among a student group and a family was done.

3.3.8 Demographic Information of the Respondents

In order to understand to which extent the data bears I'll examine the demographic information of the sampled respondents.

Figure 57: Sample distribution by age/ occupation and education

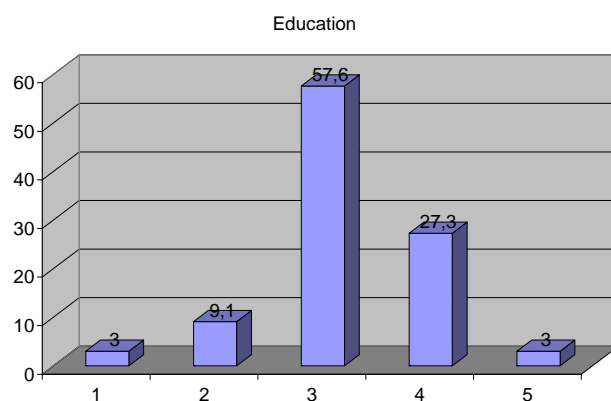


The sample contains 59 percent females and 41 percent males. According to the results among the cinemagoers and the found out target group, the sample of people aged 18 to 24 demonstrate two thirds (66.7 percent) of the audience at the focus group screening. The majority of them (63.6 percent) are students. Many of the younger respondents are highly-educated in a sense that they are pursuing their university education, which is still a golden opportunity in Cambodia.



1. **Student**
2. International Organisation
3. NGO
4. Company/ Factory Workers
5. Self Employed
6. Unemployed
7. Civil Servants
8. Restaurant
9. Housewife

More than 2/3 of the sample have received the university education in addition to more than 4/5 either receiving or having finished the secondary education already.

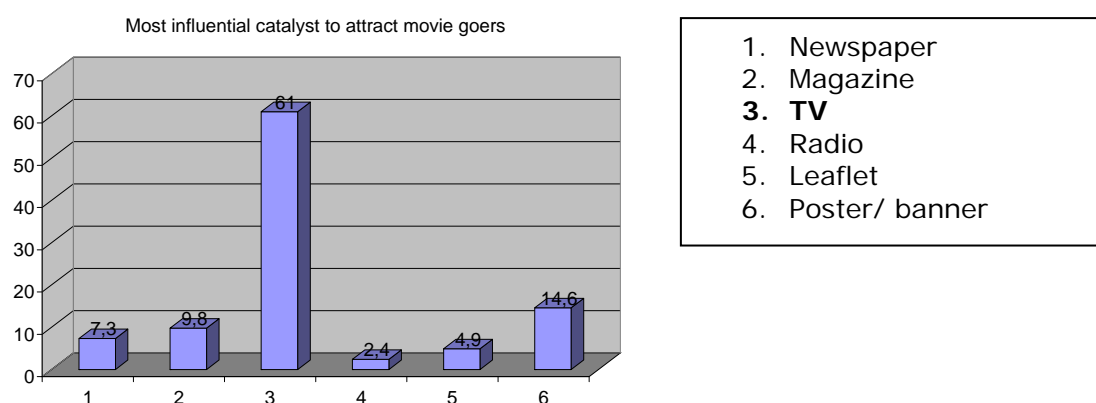


1. Primary School
2. Secondary School
3. **High School**
4. University
5. No formal schooling

The occupational categories also correspond to the fact, that students (more than half of the sample) and housewives (10.2 percent) are the two dominant cinemagoer groups and therefore the target groups. The other relevant groups are: International organization staff (9.1 percent) and NGO (6.1 percent).

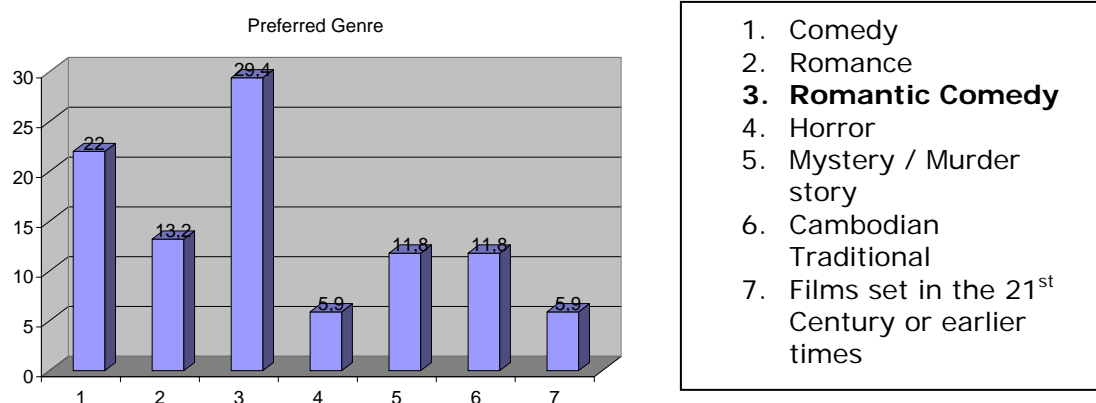
The educational contrast between unemployed people and housewives to the rest is quite evident. While students are doing their degree, all international organization workers have already completed theirs and housewives (9.1 percent) just reached their secondary school degree.

Figure 58: Most influential catalyst to attract the moviegoers



This result confirms the result found out among the moviegoers. The most effective advertising tool for Khmer movies is still TV. It ranks first and is the most popular form of entertainment and information (61 percent). Posters/ Banners rank the second (14.6 percent). In a country where reading is considered a very educated and complicated issue, not many people (7.3 percent newspaper, 9.0 percent magazine) receive information through this type of media. It is not recommended to promote the movies through Radio and Leaflets because just a few people are attracted through this. Not asked within this survey but needs to be taken into consideration are merchandising products as an influential catalyst.

Figure 59: Preferred film genre of the respondents



Concerns of KMF have been that the story was not strong enough or the genre is not welcome among young Cambodians. Therefore a list of movie genres was put out and respondents were asked to choose the best types of

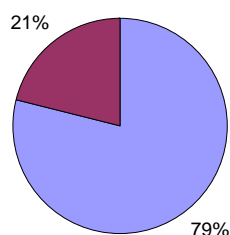
story they like among the seven main elements produced so far by Cambodian filmmakers.

Among all, Romantic Comedy ranked first accounting for 29.4 percent of the total sample, followed by Comedy (22 percent), Romance (13.2 percent), Mystery / Murder story, Cambodian Traditional (11 percent), Horror and Films set in the 21st Century or earlier times (5.9 percent). In this case there was a huge difference between the answers from the first and the second film screening. Among the first screening, 62.5 percent of the audience aged between 25 and 54 years, preferred Cambodian Traditional (32 percent) and totally rejected the Mystery and Murderer Story (100 percent). On the contrary only 2.2 percent among the audience at the second film screening, aged between 18 and 24 years (84 percent), preferred Cambodian Traditional Stories and 17.4 percent preferred Mystery and Murderer Stories. Amazingly, Comedies, Romance, and Ancient Story come before Horror (5.9 percent), the main genre that most filmmakers have chosen to stick with recently. Summarizing the genre was not the reason for the small success of *SSW*, because romantic comedies are very well accepted among the target group, students. This is contrary to the first survey. There people preferred comedy and ghost stories rather than romance. Although it was ranked first, it was not as important as in the focus group survey. Reasons could be the direct influence of the movie seen before rather than the fact that it was a romantic comedy.

3.3.9 Analyse Staying Single When

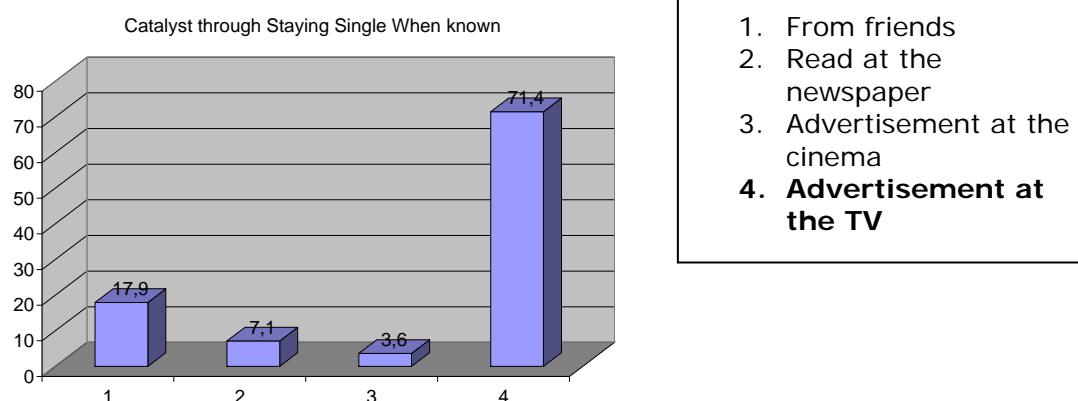
Figure 60: Knowledge about *Staying Single When*

Have you ever heard about Staying Single When



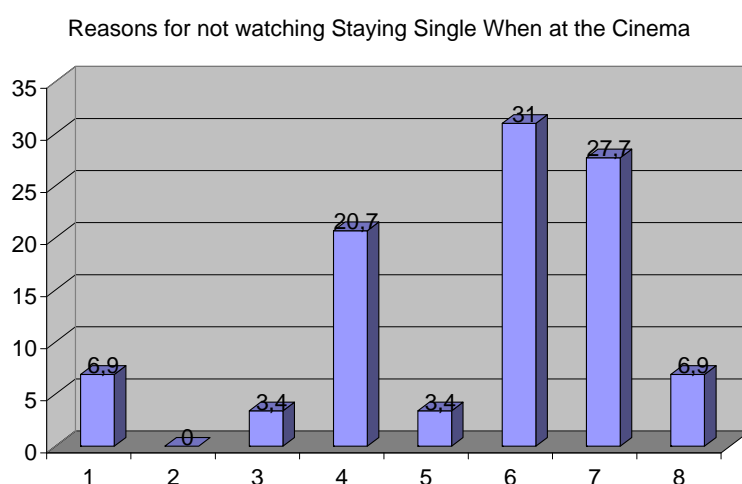
- **79percent Yes**
- 21percent No

Among the sample of 33 persons 79 percent had heard about *Staying Single When*. Only one of the 79 percent, who had heard about the movie, had watched *Staying Single When* before.

Figure 61: Most attractive medium for *SSW*

Analogue to the results from the “Most influential Catalyst to attract moviegoers” TV advertisement (71.4 percent) was the medium through which people have known *Staying Single When*. Further confirming the results of “Most influential Catalyst to attract moviegoers” the advertisement in newspapers (7.1 percent) was not recognized by many people as much as the mouth-to-mouth propaganda, through friends (17.9 percent)

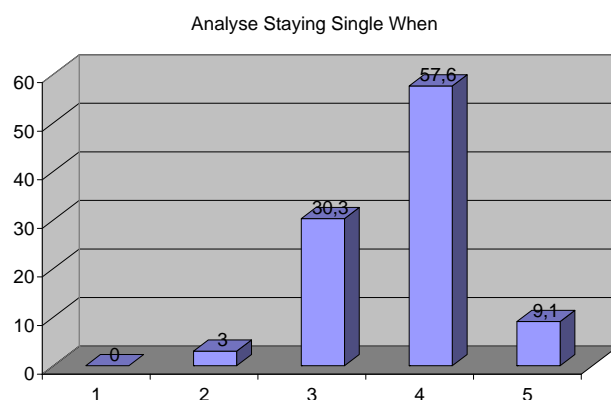
Especially the elderly, who have been in this case undereducated people, did not recognize the advertisement in the newspaper (100 percent), rather than the TV advertisement (86 percent). On the contrary 9.5 percent of the students recognized the advertisement in the newspaper and only 66.7 percent had seen the TV advertisement.

Figure 62: Reasons for not watching *SSW* at the cinema

1. The story was not interesting to me
2. The actors were not popular
3. I did not see any advertisement or promotion
4. The advertisements or promotions did not attract me
5. Friends said the film is boring
- 6. Price of ticket (7000 R) too high**
7. I don't like going to the cinema
8. I did not have time to go to the cinema

Although 33 percent of the focus group had seen the advertisement, only one of them went to the cinema. According to the results, there are two main reasons why they did not go to the cinema. First of all 50 percent of the housewives and 26.1 percent of the students considered the ticket price too high. Secondly the cinema generally does not attract people anymore and people do not like to go in (27 percent). As a matter of fact, old people do not like coming to cinemas because it is too crowded and young people prefer to watch the movies on DVD. Take into consideration that six of 33 people (20.7 percent) were not attracted by the advertisement KMF did. Only 3.4 percent of the respondents have not seen any advertisement or have heard from friends that the film is boring.

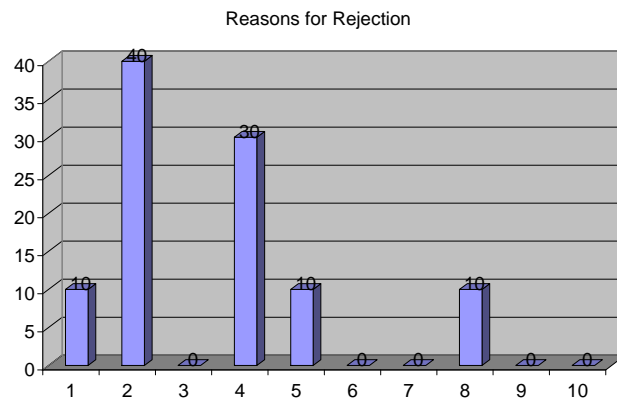
Figure 63: Analyse SSW



1. I don't like it at all
2. I don't really like it
3. I fairly like it
- 4. I like it very much**
5. I like it best

Participants recognised that the film is different from other films they have seen before. As such, the film was appreciated by a big majority of respondents (66.7 percent). 57.6 percent liked it very much and three of the respondents marked on the questionnaire "I like it best" (9.1 percent). Nearly one third "fairly like it." Only one did not really like it (3 percent) and no one disliked it.

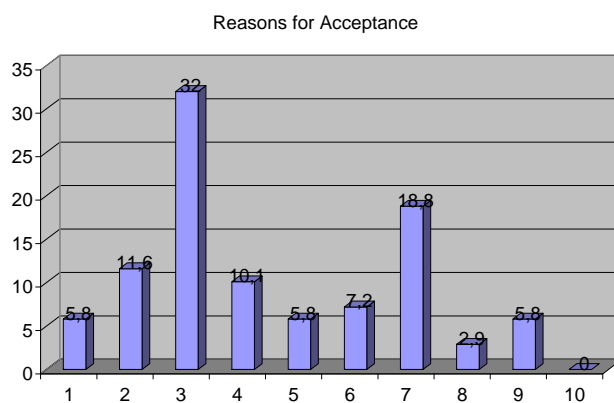
Figure 64: Reasons for rejections of SSW



1. I did not like the story
2. **Predictable outcome, boring, no surprises**
3. I did not like the stars/actors
4. I did not like the acting
5. There was not enough "romance"
6. There was not enough "comedy"
7. I did not like the music
8. I did not like the real voices of the actors
9. I did not like the quality of pictures
10. Others

Among the respondents 75.6 percent had nothing specific to complain. Thirty percent of the critics judged the acting as worse and 40 percent did not like the predictable outcome. Only five of ten possible critic points were marked. Nobody complained about too less comedy and the quality of the pictures or the characters.

Figure 65: Reasons for acceptance SSW

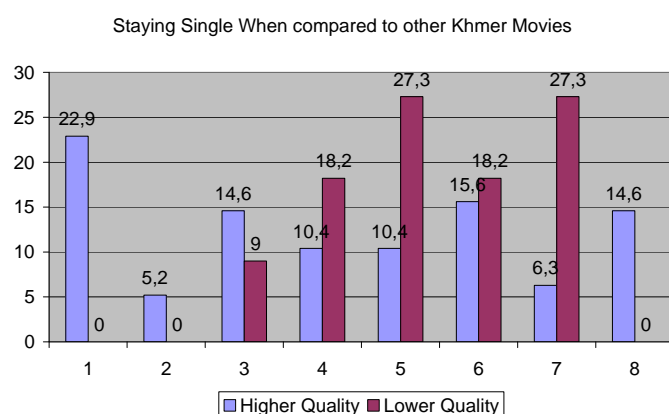


1. I liked the story
2. It was romantic and made me feel happy
- 3. It was funny and made me laugh**
4. It was a good combination of romance and comedy
5. I liked seeing the stars
6. I liked the acting
7. I liked the live voices of the actors
8. I liked the quality of pictures
9. I liked the music
10. Others

The film made 32 percent of them laugh and happy. For 39.1 percent of the younger people it was a reason to like the film. For only 17.4 percent among the elderly people the comedy in the movie was the reason for acceptance. For them it was especially the real voices of the actors that was new and important (34.8 percent). On the contrary only 10.9 percent of the students, aged 18 to 24, appreciated the real voices of the actors. Nearly one fourth appreciated the new form of recording the voices. Only 5.8 percent named the story as a reason for liking the film and 2.9 percent named especially the quality of the pictures.

3.3.10 Quality of the movie

Figure 66: *SSW* compared to Khmer movies



- 1. Story**
- 2. (higher)**
3. Stars
4. Actors
5. Setting
- 6. Picture quality (lower)**
7. Sound quality
- 8. Music**
- 9. (lower)**
10. Editing

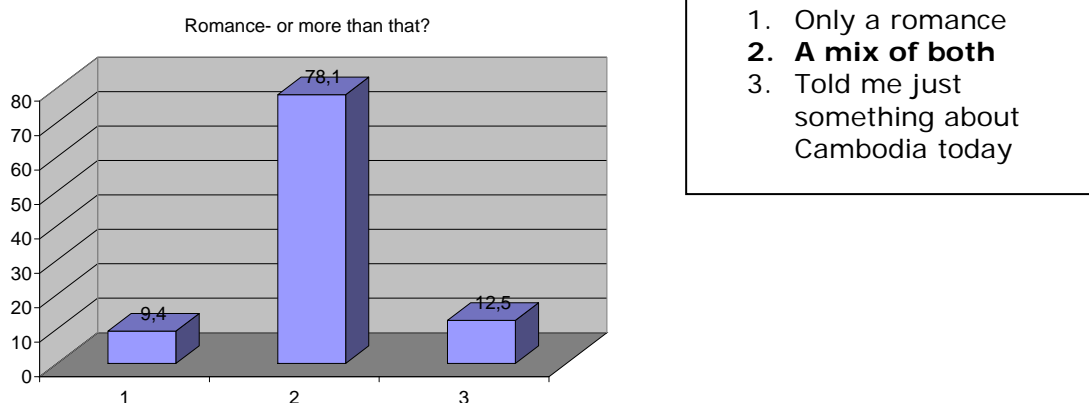
Most of the respondents (22.9 percent) agreed that *Staying Single When* has a better story compared to other Khmer movies, followed by the better sound quality (15.6 percent) and actors' performance (14.6 percent) and editing (14.6 percent). Among the students even 15.5 percent appreciated the editing. Only 5.2 percent mentioned that the movie has better Stars.

Among all the respondents only 30.3 percent named some areas where the movie has a lower quality than others. Leading were the picture quality

("too dark") with 27.3 percent (three of 11 answers) and the music (27.3 percent). During the first film screening nobody of the audience had anything to complain about.

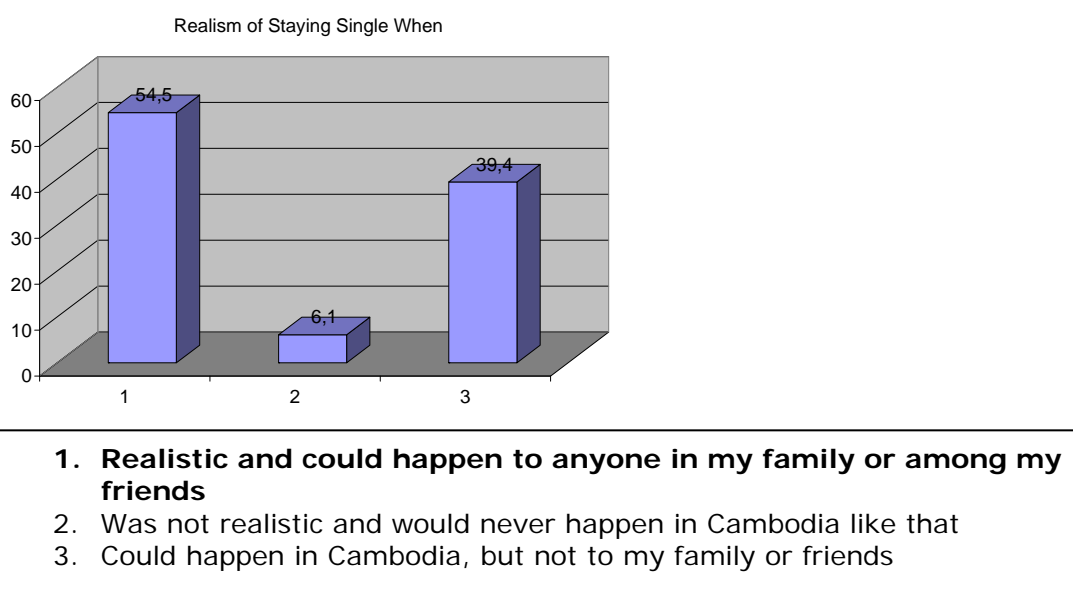
3.3.11 Content of the movie

Figure 67: Judgment *SSW* by romance



For 70.1 percent *SSW* was a good mix of a romance and reflecting the society. Only 9.4 percent of the audience named that this is only a romance. This confirms the high appreciation of the story *SSW*, considered that 60.6 percent want movies that reflect the Cambodian society and tells a good story.

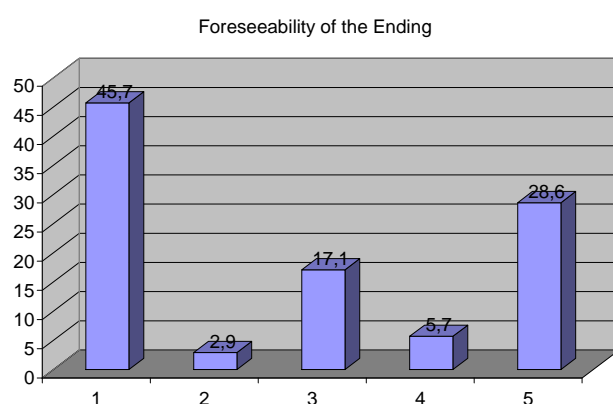
Figure 68: Realism of *SSW*



Generally 81.8 percent desire realistic stories. For 30.3 percent it is very important that the story is realistic and for 51.5 percent it is important. Only 15.2 percent do not care if the story is realistic or not and only one among the 33 respondents named that it is not important at all for him.

Many of the respondents confirmed the life-like story telling of *Staying Single When* and either named that it also could happen in their families (54.5 percent) or happen in Cambodia generally (39.4 percent). Only 6.1 percent determined the movie unrealistic.

Figure 69: Foreseeability of the ending of *SSW*



1. I could guess the end before I've seen the end of the story
2. I thought it impossible that Sarun and Somalie would get together
3. I hoped that they will get together but I could not imagine how
4. I didn't care at all whether or not they get together
5. It didn't matter I could guess the story end. I still enjoyed them getting together

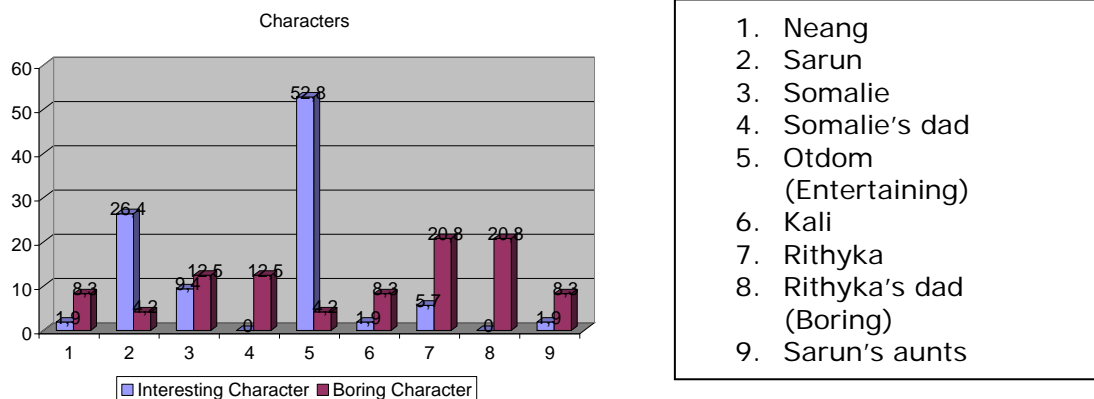
Connecting to the genre "Romantic Comedy" most of the audience could guess the end before they had seen the movie (45.7 percent). Even though they could guess the ending 28.6 percent still enjoyed watching *Staying Single When*. Only 2.9 percent thought it is impossible that Sarun and Somalie would get together at the end.

Because of the predictable outcome of the story (40 percent named this as reason for rejection *Staying Single When*) and the foreseeability (45.7 percent could guess the end before) only 18 percent want to watch *Staying Single When* again. Although the story is considered to be better than most of the other Khmer stories it is not strong enough to convince more people to watch the movie. 70 percent are not yet sure if they want to watch it again and 12 percent named it as boring and they do not want to watch it again. Considering the higher quality and story of *Staying Single When*

nearly all of the audience (67 percent) would recommend this movie to a friend. Only one of the 33 persons would not recommend this movie to a friend.

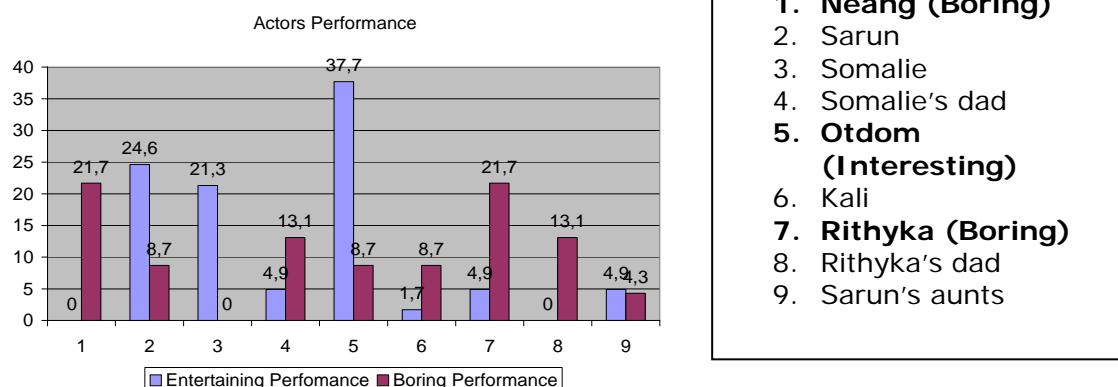
3.3.12 Characters

Figure 70: Characters of *SSW*



Confirming the desire for comedies and stories that makes them happy, the funny and clumsy Otdom is the most preferred character. 52.8 percent appreciated his character, no matter if they were an old or young respondent, followed by the performance of Sarun (26.4 percent). The least interesting characters represent Somalie's and Rithyka's dad. Although 42 percent did not figure out any boring character, critics mentioned that they both have the least interesting characters. (20.8 percent)

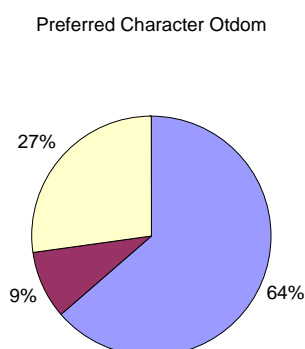
Figure 71: Actors performance of *SSW*



Due to the favourite character Otdom's performance was appreciated by most of the respondents (37.7 percent). Also Sarun's (24.6 percent) and Somalie's performance (21.3 percent) were appreciated by the audience. Surprisingly nobody liked the performance of Neang and 21.7 percent

named his performance as boring. Also Rithyka's performance was not appreciated by the audience (21.7 percent). Considering only 61 percent found a boring performance, these both were mentioned as the worst. Reasons for these decisions could be the inappropriate behaviour of them both and the audience connected these to the actors themselves.

Figure 72: Character Otdom

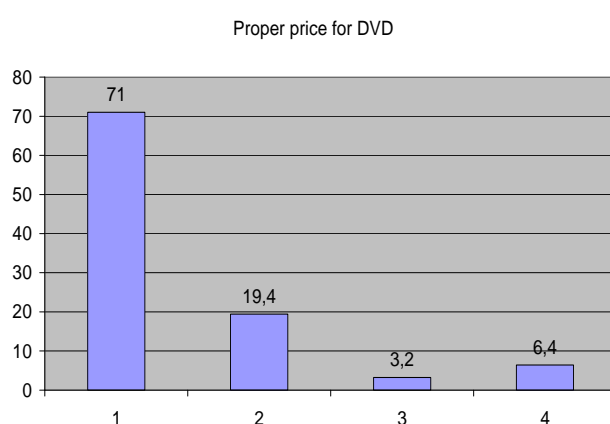


- **64% Comedy**
- 9% Serious character
- 27% It does not matter if comedy or serious character

The most favoured and liked character Otdom is desired in another movie by 91 percent of the audience. 88 percent would see him also playing a different character but 64 percent prefer to see him in a comedy. Only 9 percent prefer a serious character, confirming that people ask for funny and entertaining stories.

3.3.13 DVD Staying Single When

Figure 73: Proper price for DVD SSW



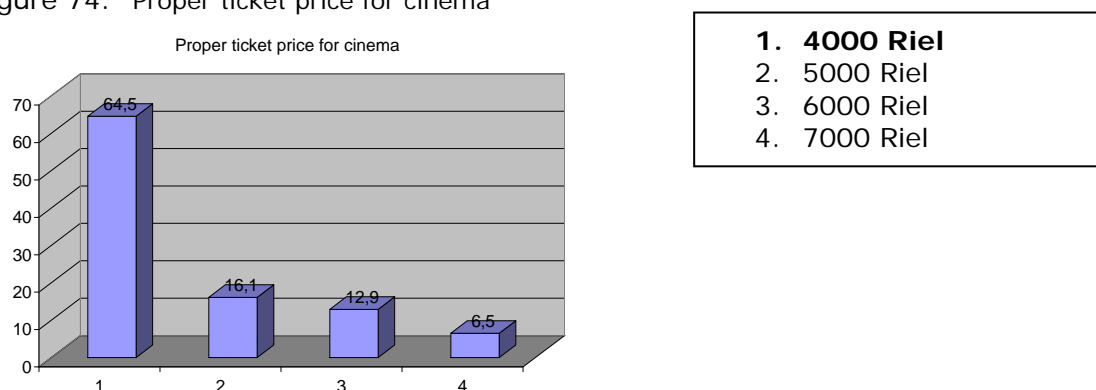
1. **US\$1-2**
2. US\$2-3
3. US\$3-4
4. US\$4-5

Among the people who have seen the movie 27.3 percent want to buy the DVD. 54.5 percent of the people are not yet sure if they want to buy the movie. This reflects also the undecidedness of the people (70 percent)

about watching the movie again. Furthermore this reflects that only 5.8 percent appreciated the movie because of its story and even four of 33 persons criticized it as totally boring. The majority of the respondents (71 percent) think US\$ 1-2 is a proper price for the DVD. Among the housewives all (100 percent) rate US\$ 1-2 for an adequate price for a DVD. Those who spend more than US\$ 3 are under represented. (9.6 percent)

3.3.14 Desires for further movies

Figure 74: Proper ticket price for cinema



According to the income of most of the respondents (either housewives or students), 64.5 percent regard 4000 R as a proper ticket price. This confirms again the reason why less people came to watch *Staying Single* at the cinema. Only two of 33 people (6.5 percent) are willing to pay 7000 R for a ticket. Considering these two were NGO workers and had a higher income than the students, the target group is not able to spend more than 4000 R. Although everybody confirms the higher quality of the movie, nobody is willing to pay more for a higher quality movie.

3.3.15 Summary Focus Group Survey

Before concluding my analysis, it is necessary to summarize and generalize the survey results. After I did the survey among the 33 people, I came to the following results.

Among all genres, Romantic Comedy rank first accounting 29.4 percent of the total sample, followed by Comedy, Romance, Mystery / Murder story, Cambodian Traditional, Horror and Films set in the 21st Century or earlier times, considering the difference between the older generations, who prefer traditional stories, rather than comedies. This differs from the survey done before. There comedy ranked first, but the focus group members especially pointed out the comedic elements within *SSW* and therefore the

cinemagoers survey would be confirmed. To attract audiences and therefore make a profit, production companies should avoid too serious and complex stories.

Also the most effective advertising tool, TV, was confirmed.

Although all the participants recognised that the film is different from other films they have seen before and appreciated especially the life-like story, nobody is willing to pay more for more quality. This is understandable due to the low income and the cheap piracy copies.

The reason why most of the people liked the film is connected to the movie type preference: the comedy. During the first survey among 120 moviegoers it was found out that Cambodian people want to be entertained; "When I go to the cinema I want to become happy and relax from the hard day."

Total nearly one fourth appreciated the new form of recording the voices.

Because of the predictable outcome of the story (40 percent named this as the reason for rejection *Staying Single When*) and the foreseeability (45.7 percent could guess the end before) only 18 percent want to watch *Staying Single When* again. This also confirms what is lacking in most of the Cambodian movies - good stories. Although SSW was something special it was not special enough.

Because of the desire for comedies and stories that makes them happy, the funny and clumsy Otdom is the most preferred character. Due to being the favourite character, Otdoms performance was appreciated by the most of the respondents. The demand for comedy leads to a demand for Otdom in more comedy roles.

The majority of the respondents (71 percent) think US\$1-2 is a proper price for the DVD and 64.5 percent regard 4000 R as a proper ticket price. This confirms hypotheses B 1 and figures out why less people came to watch SSW. The survey shows, that the audience is not very willing to pay more for the tickets since their monthly income is also not much. Furthermore they prefer to watch the movies on DVD or VCD at home.

Going to cinema generally seems to be not very attractive nowadays and the audience is demanding something special. Not only a good (comedy) story, higher technical standards and lower ticket prices can attract the audience, also going to the cinema must be an event again. According to hypotheses B1 not only more advertising is needed to be done, but instead filmproducers and cinema owners have to offer a "special

cinema experience" to the audiences. Even though this could increase the costs, it could also increase the ticket incomes. Suggestions could be: if four people come, the fifth could get a free entry ticket or even a bottle of water would be a present which the audience would appreciate. Another survey is necessary to find out the best attractive marketing tools.

4. Conclusion

There is no easy solution how to build up a growing film industry in Cambodia. One step would be a stronger national-state policy. A lack thereof is often pivotal in setting the climate and conditions that enable films to get produced. A nation-state's involvement in cinema can take the form of state investment (film subsidies, film foundations), state protection (for example, through quotas stipulating a required number of national productions, or through taxes on foreign imports, copyright law), industrial assistance (training institutes for actors and cinema schools), intervention (censorship boards, film rating), a national festival with prizes and inducements conferring prestige to filmmakers, or cooperation with another state.

If the national-state policy would change, also the production companies have to fulfil the demands of the audience. The results of the surveys clearly indicate that success parameters in Cambodia depend strongly on the movie genre respectively on creative storylines. Due to the problems of everyday life, Cambodians want to be entertained, whether through comedies or superficial ghost stories with comedy elements. Self-escape and personal development rank second but are not less important as reasons for going to cinema. Therefore realistic historical movies, based on Cambodian culture and traditions, should fulfil the demand of educational movies. Movies should give answers to problems and do not come up with new ones. Other important product parameters are stars and actors who perform naturally.

According to the target group, students and families with low incomes, the ticket and DVD price should not be higher than now.

Not practised in Cambodia, but a growing practice within the film industry, is product placement. Therefore the partner's products are shown in an appropriate context on screen as a means of offsetting production cost. Sometimes a company can make a lot of US\$ without selling a ticket, video rental, or an actual item of merchandise. This could be a way to decrease production costs or increase revenues. Furthermore the desire to watch film is related to a whole range of other desires – for fashion, for the possession of icons or signs that are highly valued by one's peers. One way such desires are satisfied is through the massive increase in merchandising. To attract cinemagoers in Cambodia, effective and affordable merchandising

articles could be caps, hats, posters, T-shirts, pens or even helmets. Additionally, toys, video games, jewellery or mouse pads could be another possibility but the higher costs would not be matched by higher revenues.

It needs to be said that films are a special economic good and although success parameters are known, there is no 100 percent answer to what people all over the world definitely want to see in the cinema.

The following checklist should give advice to Cambodian film producers. Therefore they should draw conclusions on marketing strategies in order to be successful:

Product parameters

- Stars
- Cambodian actors who perform naturally
- New and creative storylines and ideas of scriptwriter

Genre

- Comedy but also ghost stories including comedy
- Historical movie

Content

- Realism
- Connected to Cambodian culture and society
- Movies should give answers to questions and not come up with new one (education)

Marketing

- Ticket price not too high (4000R)
- DVD price not too high (US \$ 1- 2)
- Event character, buy four tickets get one free
- TV advertisement campaign including merchandising products

If all these facts would be considered, an understanding of a real film industry could develop in Cambodia or in other words, in the sense of Rithy Panh: the entertainment industry could be completed by a film industry. This would first attract a larger Khmer audience and second attract more foreign filmmakers to shoot in Cambodia. This causes international attendance and in the future it could even bring about coproductions.

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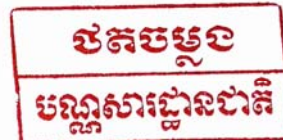
Appendix

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Appendix I

a summary of film dates and major events of King Norodom Sihanouks life	
1941 to 1954	Atlantide Tarzan among the Kuoy Double Crime on the Maginot Line
1960	Shianouk becomes Head of State
1965	Heavenly Dancers Cambodia 1965
1966	The enchanted forest Divine Sanctuary The Vist of General de Gaulle to the Kingdom of Cambdia
1967	The GANEFO in the Kingdom of Cambodia The little Prince of the People Shadow over Angkor
1968	The Joy of Life Twilight Royal Procession A Khmer Phaedra
1969	Thunder over Koh Kong Rose of Bokor Tragic Destiny An Evanescent Happiness
1970	Shianouk is deposed and becomes leader-in-exile of CRUNK
1975	The Khmer Rouge defeat the Khmer Republic
1979	Vietnamese forces oust the Khmer Rouge
1988	The Mysterious City
1989	Farewell, My Love!
1990	The Countess of Nokorom I Will Never See You Again, O My Beloved Kampuchea
1991	Sihanouk returns to Cambodia as President of th SNC
1992	The Beacon that Lights the Way My village at Sunset The Flower of the Chams of Battambang
1993	To See Angkor Again ... And Die The Ghost Of My Beloved Wife
	UN-organized Election. Sihanouk gets recrowned
1994	Peasants in Distress Fate
1995	An Ambition Reduced to Ashes The Royal Palace of Phnom Penh The Pagoda of the Emerald Buddha at Phnom Penh Flower of Vietnam: The Country of Madame Nguyen Thy Ty Cambodia 1995 Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha, The only Haven
1996	Heir of a Vanquished Savath The Last Days of Colonel Savath
1997	An Apostle of Non-Violence
1998	The Great Assassination



Appendix II

Logistique / Logistics { CHAPTER 4 }

KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
Nation Religion King

APPLICATION FORM FOR FILMING IN CAMBODIA

Date:.....

To The Cinema And Cultural Diffusion Department Of Ministry Of Culture And Fine Arts

Name Of Production Company:.....Country:.....

Address:.....

Telephone:.....Fax:.....E-Mail:.....

FilmTitle:.....

Type: ☐ Feature Film ☐ Documentary ☐ Theatre / Tv Commercial
☐ Other.....

Film: ☐ 16 Mm ☐ 35 Mm ☐ Other.....

Video: ☐ Betacam, Digital Betacam ☐ Hd ☐ Dv, Dvcam
☐ Other.....

Commercial Photo: ☐ Magazine ☐ Catalogue
☐ Other.....

Length:.....Hrs.....Mins.....Secs

For: ☐ Theatre ☐ Television ☐ Other.....

Proposed Shooting Locations In Cambodia:.....
.....

Arrival Date Of The Main Film Crew Members:.....

Period Of Filming:.....

Budget For Filming In Cambodia:.....

Accommodation In Cambodia:.....

Address:.....

Tel:.....Fax:.....E-Mail:.....

Local Co-Ordinator In Cambodia:.....

Address:.....

Tel:.....Fax:.....E-Mail:.....

Producer

APPLICATION FORM

I hereby agree that I shall abide by the Cambodian laws and regulations particularly those relating to permission to work in Cambodia. The filming process and end product shall not adversely affect the National security, public order, good morals, environment and dignity of the Cambodian Nation. The film company shall be responsible for transportation and accommodation expenses of the Film Board Representative at the rate equivalent to that of the film crew executives. The film company is also required to pay to the Department of Cinema upon the receipt of the permit, the per diem at the rate of per day for each Film Board Representative.

Please note that filming is not allowed in the absence of the film board.

Representative

SIGNED.....

Producer or Director

SIGNED.....

Co-ordinator

Appendix III



CAMPRO FILM PRODUCTION
KIRIROM CINEMA BUILDING
#256, 258, Preah Sihanouk Blvd., Khan ChamCarmorn,
Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
Tel: (855) 23 220157. 012 626 266. 012 753 332.
E-mail: camprofilm@online.com.kh

QUOTATION

Item	Description	Qty.	Unit Price / Day
1	Camera DXC-50PL	1 Set	\$ 100
2	Wide Angle Lens	1 Set	\$ 40
3	Sony Monitor 9 Inch	1 Set	\$ 20
4	Daylight 5000W (1 Pcs)	1 Set	\$ 100
5	Daylight 2500W (2 Pcs)	1 Set	\$ 70
6	Daylight 1200W (2 Pcs)	1 Set	\$ 70
7	Cutter Flag (9 Pcs)(Size 24" x 36" & 18" x 24")	1 Set	\$ 10
8	Italian Clamp (3 Pcs)	1 Pcs	\$ 10
9	Steamlight 2000 (2 Pcs)	1 Set	\$ 20
10	Steamlight 1000 (4 Pcs)	1 Set	\$ 20
11	Crane 1 Set (Height 5m)	1 Set	\$ 70
12	Crane (Small) 1 Set (Height 3m)	1 Set	\$ 50
13	Dolly Straight 6 Pcs (1Pcs=2.5m)	1 Pcs	\$ 20
14	Dolly Straight 2 Pcs (1Pcs=3m)	1 Pcs	\$ 20
15	Dolly Curve 2 Pcs (1Pcs=2.5m)	1 Pcs	\$ 20
16	Car 3.5 T	1	\$ 50
17	Car 1.5 T	1	\$ 30
18	Car 1.5 T Including Scene Projector	1 Set	\$ 200
19	Generator 45 KVA	1	\$ 50

Prepared by
Marketing Department

Kao Un



QUOTATION

Client :
 Rent : Equipment for Production
 Period : 1 day
 Date :

No.	Descriptions	Period	Quantity	Unit Price	Discount Price
1	Crane 5m	1 Day	1	100.00	
2	Dolly	1 Day	1	100.00	
3	Lighting 2.5 KW (De light)	1 Day	1	80.00	
4	Lighting 2 KW	1 Day	1	60.00	
5	Lighting 800 W	1 Day	1	20.00	
6	Lamp	1 Day	1	20.00	
7	Generator 45 KVA	1 Day	1	80.00	
8	Transport (Arround Phnom Penh)	1 Day	1	40.00	
9	Camera Sony (DVCAM SONY MODEL DSR-370P)	1 Day	1	80.00	
10	Monitor	1 Day	1	20.00	
11	Len	1 Day	1	20.00	
12	Filter	1 Day	1 set	10.00	
13	Refect	1 Day	1 set	10.00	
14	Big Fan	1 Day	1	10.00	
15	Crew	1 Day	1 person	20.00	

Client Approval

SSB Productions

SSB PRODUCTIONS

No. 615 National Road, 5 sangkat Russey Keo, Phnom Penh City, Cambodia
 Tel: (855-23-723848) E-Mail : ssbstudio@online.com.kh

Appendix IV

Survey “Film consumption”

Cinema:
Date:
Time:
Interviewer:

Demographic Information of the respondents

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. Age

- < 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-54
- >54

3. Occupation

- Student
- International Organisation
- NGO
- Company/ Factory Workers
- Self Employed
- Unemployed
- Civil Servants
- Restaurant
- Others

4. Education

- Primary School
- Secondary School
- High School
- University
- no formal schooling

5. Monthly income

- Less than 50
- 50 to less than 100
- 100 to less than 500
- more than 500

6. Dwelling

- in the pagoda
- in parent's house
- in relatives house
- in a rented house
- in my own house
- others

Watching Movies generally (VCD, DVD, TV, Cinema)

1. Hobbies (several answers possible)

- Sport
- Computer games
- Chatting at Internet
- going out
- Stay at home
- singing karaoke
- watching movies (VCD, DVD, TV, Cinema)

- watching TV
- shopping
- others

2. Time spent in watching movies per week (VCD, DVD, TV, Cinema)

- less than 1 hour
- 1-3 hours
- 3-5 hours
- 5-8hours
- more than 8hours

3. Movies per Month? (VCD, DVD, TV, Cinema)

- 1
- 2-4
- 5-8
- more than 8

4. Preferred medium watching movies

- TV
- VCD
- DVD
- Cinema

Watching movies in cinema

1. Cinema visits per month

- 1
- 1-3
- 4-5
- more than 4
- Others (for. Ex. One time a year)

2. Motives behind going cinema (several answers possible)

- Story/ content
- director
- actor
- friends
- boyfriend/ girlfriend
- education
- film genre
- advertisement
- other

3. Companion for cinema visits

- no one
- friends
- boyfriend/ girlfriend
- family (relatives)
- husband/wife

4. Satisfaction with ticket price?

- yes
- no, too much

5. Money spent for Cinema per month

- less than 3\$
- 3-5\$
- 5-10\$
- more then 10\$

Film content

1. Preferred genre for kmehr movies (several answers possible)

- comedies
- ghost stories
- historical epics
- romance
- action/ thriller
- political movies
- science fiction
- animation

1.1 Why do you have chosen this genre?

2. Which genre you absolutely do not like?

- comedies
- ghost stories
- historical epics
- romance
- action/ thriller
- political movies
- science fiction
- animation

2.1 Why you don't like?

3. Movie type preference (several answers possible)

- Thai
- Indian
- Hollywood
- Kmehr
- Chinese
- Korean

3.1 Why you preference this type?

4. Which is your favourite movie and why? (Please add the genre)

Analyse Movie seen before (Please add the genre)

1. How do you like the movie you have seen before?

- I don't like it at all
- I don't really like it
- I fairly like it
- I like it very much
- I like it best

1. Why not?

- I did not like the story
- I did not like the acting

- I did not like the music
 - I did not like the quality of pictures
 - Others
2. Why yes?
- I liked the story
 - I liked the acting
 - I liked the music
 - I liked the quality of pictures
 - Others

2. Most influential catalyst to attract moviegoers (several answers possible)

- Newspaper
- Magazine
- TV
- Radio
- Leaflet
- Posters/ Banners

Film about Kmehr Rouge Tribunal
--

1. Would you like to see a feature film about Kmehr Rouge Tribunal?

- Yes, I'm very interested in political movies
- Maybe I would see it
- No I'm not interested in political movies like that

2. Do you think it would be allowed to screen?

- Yes, why not
- No, too political
- I do not know

Social study

1. What are your concernings and problems everyday? (several answers possible)

- education of family
- future
- Boyfriend/ girlfriend
- Money
- Corruption
- HIV
- domestic violence
- occupation
- Prostitution
- pollution of environment
- human trafficking
- land issues
- Political leader
- Healthiness
- Robbery
- Others

Appendix IV

Focus Group Survey *Staying Single When*

Demographic Information of the respondents

Gender

- Male
- Female

Age

- < 18
- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-54
- >54

Occupation

- Student
- International Organisation
- NGO
- Company/ Factory Workers
- Self Employed
- Unemployed
- Civil Servants
- Restaurant
- Others

Education

- Primary School
- Secondary School
- High School
- University
- no formal schooling

What sort of films do you prefer to see?

- Comedy
- Romance
- Romantic Comedy
- Horror
- Mystery / Murder story
- Cambodian Traditional
- Films set in the 21st Century or earlier times

How do you know about new movies generally?

- Newspaper
- Magazine
- TV
- Radio
- Leaflet
- Posters/ Banner

Analyse <i>Staying Single When</i>

Had you heard about the movie *Staying Single When* before you saw it today?

- No
- Yes
 - From friends
 - Read at the newspaper
 - Advertisement at the cinema
 - Advertisement at the TV

If you had heard about this movie, why you did not go into cinema to watch it?

- The story (a Romantic Comedy) was not interesting to me
- The actors/actress were not popular
- I did not see any advertisement or promotion
- The advertisements or promotions did not attract me

Appendix

- Friends said the film is boring
- Price of ticket (7000 R) too high
- I don't like going to the cinema

Quality of the movie

. How do you like the movie now you've seen it?

- I don't like it at all
- I don't really like it
- I fairly like it
- I like it very much
- I like it best

3. Why not? (several answers possible)

- I did not like the story
- Predictable outcome, boring, no surprises
- I did not like the stars/actors
- I did not like the acting
- There was not enough "romance"
- There was not enough "comedy"
- I did not like the music
- I did not like the real voices of the actors
- I did not like the quality of pictures
- Others

4. Why yes? (several answers possible)

- I liked the story
- It was romantic and made me feel happy
- It was funny and made me laugh
- It was a good combination of romance and comedy
- I liked seeing the stars
- I liked the acting
- I liked the music
- I liked the live voices of the actors
- I liked the quality of pictures
- Others

Was this a "quality" Khmer movie compared with other Khmer movies you've seen? In which areas was it higher or lower quality than others?

Higher in following areas

- Story
- stars
- actors
- setting
- picture quality
- sound quality
- music
- editing

Lower in following areas

- Story
- stars
- actors
- setting
- picture quality
- sound quality
- music
- editing

Content of the movie

Was the movie only about a romance between Sarun and Somalie - or did it tell you anything about the sort of country Cambodia is today?

Appendix

- only a romance
- a mix of both
- told me just something about Cambodia today

Is it important to you that movies reflect what's going on in society today as well as telling a strong story?

- only the story is important, it is not necessary if it is connected to the Khmer culture
- for me it is important that the story reflects what is going on in the Cambodian society
- for me is both important

This movie was

- Realistic and could happen to anyone in my family or among my friends
- Was not realistic and would never happen in Cambodia like that
- Could happen in Cambodia, but not to my family or friends

How important is "realism" to you in a movie like this?

- very important
- important
- I do not care whether realistic or not
- not important at all

Content of the movie

- I could guess the end before I've seen the end of the story
- I thought it impossible that Sarun and Somalie would get together
- I hoped that they will get together but I could not imagine how
- I didn't care at all whether or not they get together
- It didn't matter I could guess the story end. I still enjoyed them getting together

Would you watch this movie again?

- No, it was boring
- Maybe
- Yes, I like it so much

Would you recommend this movie to a friend?

- No
- Yes
- Maybe

Characters

Which characters were most interesting?

- Neang
- Sarun
- Somalie
- Somalie's dad
- Otdom
- Kali
- Rithyka
- Rithyka's dad
- Sarun's aunts

Which characters were most boring?

- Neang
- Sarun
- Somalie
- Somalie's dad
- Otdom
- Kali
- Rithyka
- Rithyka's dad
- Sarun's aunts

Appendix

Which actors' performances entertained you?

- Neang
- Sarun
- Somalie
- Somalie's dad
- Otdom
- Kali
- Rithyka
- Rithyka's dad
- Sarun's aunts

Which actors' performances bored you?

- Neang
- Sarun
- Somalie
- Somalie's dad
- Otdom
- Kali
- Rithyka
- Rithyka's dad
- Sarun's aunts

Would you like to see the actor playing Otdom in another movie?

- yes
- No

Would you be interested in seeing the actor playing Otdom play a different character in another movie?

- yes
- No

If yes, would you prefer this to be a comedy or would you be interested to see him play a serious character?

- comedy
- serious character
- it does not matter if comedy or serious character

DVD Staying Single When

Would you buy this movie on DVD?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

How much would you spent per DVD?

- 1-2\$
- 2-3\$
- 3-4\$
- 4-5\$

Desires for further movies

Would you buy a ticket to see another Romantic Comedy made by this film company?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Would you buy a ticket to see murder/mystery story made by this film company?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

What would be a fair price for the ticket?

- 4000 Riel
- 5000 Riel
- 6000 Riel
- 7000 Riel

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