



# **Royal University of Law and Economics**

Final Report on

## **Media and Its Impacts on Politics: Case Study of Cambodia**

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## **ABSTRACT**

When people hear about “Media”, what come up to their mind is “Entertainment”. Over decades, media was a common tool to reunion a family. Typically, people read newspapers in the morning while having their breakfast and discussing, regarding to the current issues on what are appearing in their newspapers. Later at night, they watch television, enjoy, and discuss about some short videos they have seen on screen together. After the arrival of social media, everyone is coming closer to society. They share ideas, thoughts, emotions, as well as receive more information freely. People start to give more concerns on social development, and political stuffs. More than just an entertainment tool, yet media is the most important tool to shape public opinion. Over this decade, while people think they only use media to entertain, coincidentally, media is influencer, advisor, and information provider. Especially, media plays the most significant role in every political campaign to provide the well-informed information, as well as construct public opinions. With the technological revolution, media is able to shape people mind even sharper years to years.

**Keywords:** *Media, Politics, Roles and Impacts, Traditional and Social Media*

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

Media is the main ways that large numbers of people received information and entertainment, which include television, radio, newspapers, and the internet.<sup>1</sup> In simple words, the media helps people to be aware of announcements, receives public information, communicates, and spreads the voice from one to another person.

However, it is inconvenient to provide the definition of politics that everyone can agree on. People see politics in very different ways. Politics can be (a) the art or science of government, (b) the art or science concerned with guiding or influencing governmental policy, (c) the art or science concerned with winning or holding control over politics.<sup>2</sup>

As a tool to spread the information, and offer chances for people to communicate, media has been playing an important role in order to encourage citizens to arouse their interest in social development or political issues. Commonly, the citizens in democratic countries choose the government. Therefore, the introduction of media has become an effective method in shaping human minds.<sup>3</sup> Not to mention, each party always uses media as a propaganda tool to exert the influence on voters before every election.

The story of media content creation came along with a particular purpose, rather it was for spreading the information or announcing the upcoming events to the public, but mostly related to politics.

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<sup>1</sup> Oxford dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> Marriam-Western.

<sup>3</sup> Kibore, Lumona. "ROLE OF MEDIA IN DEEPENING DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW Vs. PARTICIPATION OF PUBLIC ON DEMANDING LEADERSHIP CHANGE." LinkedIn. Last modified October 5, 2017. <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/role-media-deepening-democracy-rule-law-vs-public-demanding-kibore/>.

In 3000B.C, known as the early innovation period, there were not many countries had own alphabets. Some actualities we know in that era were the creation of Egyptian hieroglyphics<sup>4</sup> and Chinese alphabets, forerunner of newspaper and printed books. Egypt was the first country created alphabets. It started with the signs carved in stone, on the temple or on the wall for either decoration or recording the history. Egyptian also found the papyrus which is the paper that invented from river plant to record things. Therefore, there is no doubt why Egypt was the original place of the literature. Later on, Egyptian alphabets spread out to the near East and Asian minor. So, people were able to write a paper to communicate, and talk through politics.

After people were able to write and read. In 60B.C, Caser, who was living in Rome, had an idea to record what happened in his society, and sold it as a newspaper to the government in his area. That platform was named “Acta Diurna”. “Acta Diurna” means “Daily Act”. It originally meant for high-ranking civil servants as well as judges in the governmental system in Rome. Then, Caesar realized that the true potential of newspaper was to communicate. Therefore, the journal was put on the wall everyday as announcement to let the citizens know about the daily affairs within the country. After the civil war, “Acta Diurna” was used to release the news regarding to data of population, gladiatorial games,<sup>5</sup> government decisions, as well as astrological reading, the same as the newspaper people read these days. However, “Acta Diurna” continued to publish for around centuries. It was shut down when the seat of empire was transferred to Constantinople. Even if it was no longer successful, “Acta Diurna” was

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<sup>4</sup> The Egyptian writing, using picture to represent different objective, action, sound or ideas.

<sup>5</sup> A gladiator was an armed combatant who entertain audiences in the roman republic and Roman Empire in violent confrontations with other gladiators, wild animals, and condemned criminals.

already become the forerunner of press media.<sup>6</sup>

In 1040AD, the first moveable typed was created in China, before it was introduced into Germany as a press printer. Then, the number of printing books and pamphlets were increased by that time, especially from the 1500s. However, it had not have Newspaper Company formed yet until the colonial era.

According to World Association of Newspaper, “Relation aller Fürnemmen und gedenckwürdigen Historien”, the German newspaper, the first world newspaper, which created in the colonial era. In that era, the newspapers spread dramatically in Europe, especially in the colonial America. They used it as a tool to speak toward the British Empire, the mother country.

Postliminary, the first print media in Cambodia was found in French Colonization regarded as the presence of “Nagaravatta” newspaper in 1936.<sup>7</sup> Mr. Pach Chheun, a former translator and the director of this newspaper in French administration and during the First World War. He was influenced by French democratic ideology during his mission, which was later became his inspiration to run this newspaper. Most articles encouraged Khmer People not to be dependent, but dependable. During that time, there was only the government officials could read the newspaper, while the ordinary people indirectly received the news or information through the monks in spite of the fact that education in Cambodia was limited to boys, and was carried out by Buddhist monks.<sup>8</sup>

Nonetheless, after the digital media or electronic media was created in 1974, a number

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<sup>6</sup> Gurgel, André B. "Rome's "Acta Diurna", the World's First Newspaper." Carmenta Online Latin Blog. Last modified September 6, 2018. <http://www.carmentablog.com/2018/09/06/romes-acta-diurna-the-worlds-first-newspaper/>.

<sup>7</sup>Tola Lim, "The first Khmer press "Nagavatta," ThmeyThmey.com, last modified May 3, 2018, <https://thmeythmey.com/?page=detail&id=64388&fbclid=IwAR0no4SCzRBKdJt8wH8XnMVY1jdYKKdpuCzVZnH4qY96flcVocAIfX8rYec>.

<sup>8</sup> "French Colonial Education." ResearchGate. Last modified January 1, 1955. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49609877\\_French\\_Colonial\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49609877_French_Colonial_Education).



of American newspapers published in online in late 1990 which could made people accessing the updated information more convenient. Moreover, the invention of Facebook in 2004, people also used it as a tool to discuss about political concern between people and people, or between people and government. Not to mention, even either president or head of government uses social media to do their political debate that are broadcasted in Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube.

In short, around forty thousand years ago, the only way that ancient people could do in order to announce the information to the public was through messenger before the establishment of media. Some remarkable records were also painted on the wall, cave or temple. Then, the image of media was formed in paper which was the envelope. The idea began in China where people, especially diplomats, started using envelope to communicate between states. Next, the newspaper was created. There was no picture in newspaper before the arrival of photography. Since most people were not literate, the newspaper was not successful at all until people learn how to read and write. As long as new technology has been innovated, media has also been developed into newspaper with photographs, magazine, radio, television, social media, etc. By way of illustration, the media is one of sources of knowledge and development. The success of media is also the result of the prosperity.

## **1.2. Problem Formulation**

Cambodia is one of the democratic states in Southeast Asia. The constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia was adopted on 21 September 1993 and entered into force on 24 September 1993 after the general election which created by UNTAC in 1993. The constitution law is the supreme law in Cambodia, created as the fundamental law to regulate other laws as well as dealing with some issues within the country. By the way, the right of expression is written in the constitution of Cambodia in accord with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that Cambodia ratified in 1996. Furthermore, Cambodia does not have an

independent branch for media as the three main branches which adopted in the constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia such as legislative, executive and judicial branch. By not having an independent branch in Cambodia, it leads to have insecurity to the people who express their ideas about the loopholes of government in their area through media especially the journalists work on what they are facing. Therefore, the media becomes one of the main obstacles for government to implement his policies.

By the way, the emergence of media such as traditional and social media also provide both benefits and disadvantages to the users. Mostly, people is not suffer from using traditional media, but they suffer from using social media.

### **1.3. Research Question**

**Main Research question:** What are the roles and impacts of media in Cambodian Society?

**Sub-research questions:**

- What are the roles of Media?
- How media enters into Cambodia society?
- How does media affect to government?

### **1.4. Research Objective**

This final report is going to examine on the connection between media and politics with the society as well as the roles and impact of media in Cambodia. Moreover, this final report will mainly explore on the role of media though the regime in Cambodia from 1993 until present day. Then, it is going to focus on the impact of media through the regime and what the challenges for journalists and government are. Last but not least, when there are challenges that happen to media, how government solves it especially the security of the journalist.

## **1.5. Significance of Research**

This final report is going to provide a general understanding to Cambodian people about the media that can make the society to be better off or worse off. One more thing, this final report also focuses on the challenges of the journalists to express the concrete information to the society in the area that lack of the implementation of government. The journalists try hard to express what happens in that area with insecurity to them.

## **1.6. Scope and Limitation**

This final report are focusing on the media and politics which are related to each other in the Context of Cambodia by checking the previous history from 1993 until present day. Moreover, we are going to interview the professional journalists on the implementation of media in Cambodia in the context of Cambodia as well as the impact of media.

## **1.7. Research Methodology**

This final report is mainly based on the qualitative methodology such as the primary sources and secondary sources. For primary sources, this final report is going to do semi-structured interview to the Cambodia professional journalists. For secondary data, this final report collected through the journals, articles, books, and literature reviews. By doing this, it is easy to do data analysis.

## **1.8. Structure of Research**

This final paper is going to be organized into four main important parts such as introduction, body, and conclusion and recommendation.

**Introduction:**

This part is going to give a leading interest to research, and follows through research problem, research question, research objectives, significance of research, scope and limitation, research methodology and the last one is structure of research.

**Body as supporting:**

Chapter1: Literature Reviews

Chapter2: Traditional and Social Media in Cambodia

Chapter3: Media enters into Cambodia

**Conclusion and Recommendation:**

This part is the last part, which is going to provide the overall conclusion of key findings and give further recommendations by answering to the main research question.

# CHAPTER 1: Literature Review

## 1.1. Definition of Media

The word “media” received its meaning from the Latin word “Medium”, which means in the middle. Media can refer different means of communication in order to disseminate a very large population as well as the whole population within the country. The development of technology has created two type of media: the Traditional Media, and the Social Media.

Traditional Media refers to common communicational method practiced by communities and cultures. It includes televisions, radios, prints, and billboards. In another way, traditional media is the platform, which every released content is under the responsibilities of the News Company or the Government, and it normally attracts large groups of people at once.<sup>9</sup> Among all types of traditional media, the prints were the most popular tool in term of making historical changes, especially in WWI and WWII.

Unlike Traditional Media that has the News Company or the Government as the chiefs, social media is the websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking. In other words, social media is a computer-based platform that allows user to share thoughts and information to other users through various networks. Social media enables people to practice the freedom of expression more comfortably, and truly makes public people being able to catch up the information of their society more commonly.

## 1.2. Evolution of Media

Conversely, through the history, traditional media is not a new tool to military. The

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<sup>9</sup> Megha Shah, "Traditional Media Vs. New Media: Which is Beneficial," Techfunnel, last modified March 10, 2017, <https://www.techfunnel.com/martech/traditional-media-vs-new-media-beneficial/>.

implementation of media was noticed since the First World War. In military, media is a force multiplier that not only develop public awareness, but also the support of military site by informing about activities in troops, also acting as a propaganda tool. America was the most outstanding country that gain a lot of benefits from traditional media. The posters convinced their citizens to put all commitments to the war. Under key term “Nationalism”, American governmental media persuaded people to join the military, told people how much government wants them, and more importantly, most posters were downright to anti-Germany.

To make the world safe for democracy, Woodrow Wilson, the US president served in WWI, took immediate step to decrease power of one of the democratic pillar, freedom of press.<sup>10</sup> Traditional media was a tool to express Wilson’s loyalty toward his nation to US citizens. Follow this strategy, Wilson’s propaganda finally could turn US toward international revolution.<sup>11</sup>

In fact, the power of traditional media in World War I fought for American Mind. Their influenced news not only shaped public opinion to devote their lives to the warfare, but also spoiled the reputation of Germany to the international area. To achieve this, President. Woodrow Wilson first created the Committee on Public Information.

Stephen P. Vaughn, the general counsel to the United States Trade Representative, has mentioned in his research that the members of this committee were the secretaries of State, the Army and the Navy. This committee were in charge of delivery information to Wilson, and spread out their propaganda to the public. They produced films, poster, newspaper, magazine, as well as recruited professors and businessmen to be public speakers. The colorful posters were

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher B. Daly, "How Woodrow Wilson's Propaganda Machine Changed American Journalism," The Conversation, last modified April 27, 2017, <https://theconversation.com/how-woodrow-wilsons-propaganda-machine-changed-american-journalism-76270>.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid* 11

appeared in every store; every film were being watched widely in the theaters, and a lot of volunteers were recruited to be public speakers. With the success of American propaganda tool, finally, German was cut off from overseas communities, they lost troops, hope, and then decided to surround the war.<sup>12</sup>

Like Wilson, in Vladimir Lenin analysis, politics begins where the mass are.<sup>13</sup> Victory will belong only to those who have faith in the people, those who are immersed in the life-giving spring of popular creativity.<sup>14</sup> Lenin, who interpreted Marxism theory, believed that traditional media is a part of ideological platform in which people from different classes fight their views, as well as increase the monopoly capital by the influence from media professional.

In classical Marxist terms, traditional media is a mean of production which is in the ownership, the ideas, and the world views of the ruling class in capitalist society. It even denies or defuses the alternative ideas from the other class. Therefore, the class who could control the power of media is the ruling class since they have abilities to have the mass in hand. And it was also a part leading to the forms of vanguard party, international revolution, war communism, proletarian power, labor aristocracy, and etc.

With the previous achievement, America spent so much amount of money on propaganda tool during World War II. US government presumed that in order to win any battles, the first thing to do was to wage over people's beliefs. Hence, The United States of War Information was created by US government agency in 1942 to connect between battlefield and

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<sup>12</sup> David Mikics, "The Jews Who Stabbed Germany in the Back," *Tablet*, last modified November 9, 2017, <https://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-arts-and-culture/books/248615/jews-who-stabbed-germany-in-the-back>.

<sup>13</sup> *The Politics Book : Big Ideas Simply Explained* (London, United Kingdom: Dorling Kindersley Ltd, 2013), 226.

<sup>14</sup> Marina Amaral, "Vladimir Lenin," Marina Amaral, last modified August 31, 2017, <https://marinamaral.com/2017/08/2017-8-31-vladimir-lenin/>.

civilian communities.<sup>15</sup> Constantly, radios, newspapers, posters, photographs, and films were the media tools in World War II, yet poster was still the most popular one.

According to Anthony Rhodes, a British Writer of memoirs, novels, travelogues, review, and histories, the United States of War Information also enlarge themselves to several oversea branches abroad in order to create the large-scale information and propaganda abroad.

In 1942, propaganda campaign were seen included with specific goals, strategies, and government's agenda. In their posters, they used words to get the public attention such as: "When you ride alone, you ride with Hitler"; "Loose lips might sink ship." These messages were tapped into people's spirit-do, and made them want to become good American. There are some other dark side posters which show the dead, or shocking images of what used to happen in other countries if the citizens did not altogether join the war. Hence, it gave the illustration to people with what could have happened if the American did not do their part in the war.<sup>16</sup>

Additionally, Media met the significant development in Cold War. Anthony Shaw and Denise Youngblood, the authors of "Cinematic Cold War" stated that in proxy war, both the US and Soviet used media as a tool to spread out their ideologies to the public. American media took role in inspire European to join Capitalism while Soviet Media took role as watchdog approach.

During cold war, media extended the propaganda to every aspect of lives through radio, prints or television just to let the aliens, and other countries believe in their ideologies. Certainly, media created both fear and phycology.

Media and propaganda was the direct tool to against enemy. The contribution of media

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<sup>15</sup> Peters, Gerhard; Woolley, John T. "Franklin D. Roosevelt: "Executive Order 9182 Establishing the Office of War Information." June 13, 1942". *The American Presidency Project*. University of California - Santa Barbara.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Rhodes, "Propaganda: The art of persuasion: World War II", 1976, Chelsea House Publishers, New York.



attempted to spread the pro-capitalized to western countries, and form them as group. While maintaining their ideology, western media were rejected to subject the positive aspect to Soviet Union, so the communist ideology would come to a stop. That was how media in cold war impacts to the world politics.<sup>17</sup>

In another hand, Social media site was first recognized in 1997. It allows users to upload their profile, make friends, and communicate with other users. In addition, the creation of blog was seen in 1999. It was when people were able to share their opinions to the public.<sup>18</sup>

After the arrival of social media, and everyone can access the internet, presidents unprecedented YouTube, Facebook, Twitter to spread information, or debate. P.W. Singer, an American political scientist who specialized in 21<sup>st</sup> century warfare, and Emerson T. Brooking, a Research Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations, published a book to argue that social media is the new battlefield. They believe that the most important battles are now only a click away. Through the weaponization of social media, people in this generation spot new form of global conflict which has never happened before.<sup>19</sup>

### **1.3. Role of Media**

Role of media has been discussed and debated by many scholars and authors. By being one of the most important part in political system, scholars have explained that media plays three roles: Gatekeeper, Goalkeeper, and watchdog.<sup>20</sup> First, Gatekeeper theory by Kurt Lewin

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<sup>17</sup> Alexander Stafford, "The Role of the Media During the Cold War," E-International Relations, last modified October 26, 2013, <https://www.e-ir.info/2013/10/26/the-role-of-the-media-during-the-cold-war>.

<sup>18</sup> Drew Hendrick, "The Complete History of Social Media: Then And Now," Small Business Trends, last modified May 6, 2013, <https://smallbiztrends.com/2013/05/the-complete-history-of-social-media-infographic.html>.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Liptak, "A military expert explains why social media is the new battlefield," The Verge, last modified October 12, 2018,

<sup>20</sup> Deron T. Schreck, "The Media's Roles," Politics Matters, last modified March 31, 2015, <https://poliscinews.wordpress.com/2015/03/30/the-medias-roles/>.

in 1943 is the process of selecting, and then filtering items that media can assume within the time it happens.<sup>21</sup> This concept sets the standard of information values, also differentiate between “fake news” and “real news”. Shortly, media controls types of news that should be released through printing or broadcasting. In addition, Media decides to release only the information, which is beneficial to any purpose. Second, Scorekeeper theory is study of keeping the quality of media contents. While media plays role as scorekeeper, it maintains the reputation of the government, as well as seeks for balance between two parties. This briefly explains that as a scorekeeper, media has important role to stand on the truth, also investigates for the truth before letting the information falls to the public. Last but not least, media is a watchdog to protect or investigates on corruption. Watchdog journalism expects to reveal the wrong doing-activities of the government, protect democratic, and constitutional rights for the citizens. Moreover, media has responsibility to generate opinion, and everyone is aware of the importance of public opinion. Without media as a watchdog, there is no possible way to maintain the corruption acts, thus media is the watchdog to the democracy.

Role of Media defined by Ashley Dugger, the media played several important roles such as the information, watchdog, platform and public voice, public educator. First, media is an informant. In the American society, most of citizens receive their news and information from the media. The Media shapes how citizens in American interpret and observe the political information such as election coverage and other political event. Moreover, media plays an essential role in democracy because citizens play a vital role for the political process and political choices. Therefore, media must not bias when informing the public on all government activities and political events. More importantly, media should be unbiased rather than

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<sup>21</sup> Lewin, Kurt. “Forces behind food habits and methods of change”. *Bulletin of the National Research Council*. 108: 35-65

supporting one candidate or point of view in order for the voters to make informed decision. Second, media is a watchdog. The political journalist also facilitate the media's watchdog function. In this position, the media role is to protect the public from incompetent or corrupt political official by exposing illegal or unethical practices to the public. Therefore, media acts as the protector of the public. Then the public must receive the information clearly in order to make a clear decision relating to the ouster of official or changing the political practice. Moreover, the media also disseminates the information on the successes and failures of candidates, official and government practice. Thus, media helps to prove how the government performance. Third, Media is a platform and public voice. The media conveys a speech of political parties and candidate to communicate with the public. By being a platform, the media provides a forum for candidates to debate with each other which it affects to the political views and opinion. However, the media also provides a platform for the public to transfer their political thought and feeling. By this, the media served as the public voice, meaning that the media help the public to have discussion and debate. Last but not least, media as a public educator. The citizen will be informed and educated how to exercise their democratic right. In this role, media reports on the development of election campaigns, monitor vote counting, report election results and provide the update electoral vote result.<sup>22</sup>

Nate Sullivan mentions another role of media in Politics in term of Civil Rights Movement in the Montgomery Bus boycott. In the 1950s and 1960s, the media during that time played an essential role in the Civil Rights Movement for African Americans in term of living the video for the public. Before having the live videos, the people mostly use radio and print media in order to know what had happening within their country and in the world, late on most

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<sup>22</sup> Dugger, Ashley. "The Role of Media in Elections & Other Government Activities." Study.com. Accessed July 5, 2019. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/how-the-media-covers-elections-other-government-activities.html#/transcriptHeader>.

people use television to see what had happening within their area. By seeing the live video, it affects to the people emotion. Therefore, the media become one of the ally for Civil Rights Movement.<sup>23</sup> For instance, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, the 13th Amendment canceled slavery in the United States, however; the African-Americans were not treated equally as the white. Until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the American law still restricted the freedom of African-Americans such as the separation of drinking fountain, restrooms and public transportation seating. In the city of Montgomery, had a very strict law on the public transportation, during that time African-Americans were compelled to sit in the backs of city buses. Later on, on 1 December 1955, there was an African woman, Rosa Parks denied to move to the back of the bus in order to move her seat to the white man had standing on the bus. Then, she was arrested for this act of civil disobedience. Therefore, Martin Luther King, Jr., the de facto leader of the Civil Right Movement, attracted the national attention on the right movement. One the night to be boycotted. Then, the King was arrested and thrown into jail. It was attracted media to continue the boycott.<sup>24</sup> It showed the kind of racism in the American society on television.

#### **1.4. Media is the fourth pillar of democracy**

Many authors thought that the media should become one of the branches in democratic states. As we have already known that democratic states have three main pillars such as the legislature branch, executive branch and the judicial branch.<sup>25</sup> Each branch has its own function in the working field. For example, the legislature branch is one of the legal body, which has the

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<sup>23</sup> Sullivan, Nate. "Media's Role During the Civil Rights Movement." Study.com. Accessed July 5, 2019. <https://study.com/academy/lesson/medias-role-during-the-civil-rights-movement.html>.

<sup>24</sup> "Montgomery Bus Boycott." HISTORY. Last modified June 6, 2019. <https://www.history.com/topics/black-history/montgomery-bus-boycott>.

<sup>25</sup> Ashley Portero, "The Differences Between the Three Branches of the Government," The Classroom | Empowering Students in Their College Journey, last modified June 25, 2018, <https://www.theclassroom.com/differences-between-three-branches-government-17829.html>.

responsibility in drafting the law and passing the law. In addition, the executive branch is also one of the legal bodies in democratic states, which take responsible for implementation of the passed law within the state. Finally yet importantly, the judicial branch is one of the legal, which take responsible in solving dispute within the state.<sup>26</sup> According to Ayesha Khalid argued that media is a hope of the forth pillar of states in order to present political, economic and social structures are moving in the right dimension.<sup>27</sup> The reason is that media is the most powerful not only the society but also internationally. Media makes people aware of social, political and economic activities that have been implementing by the government or ruling party. He also argued that media has become more active because it takes a role to remind the government what he promised to develop especially in the rural areas that are not taken care by the government and it furthermore exposes the loopholes in the system or policies of government. In additionally, it plays important roles to fight against socio-political evils and injustice in one particular society, while granting empower to the masses and facilitating. He also emphasizes that the journalists have the responsibility to report unbiased, accurate information as they received from acceptable sources.

Malcolm X also emphasizes on media can make democratic states to be more healthy.<sup>28</sup> He raises that media is one of bodies that can change from the wrong to right and it also can change from the right to wrong. Therefore, media is playing an important role inside states. He stresses, for instance, in the republican government, there are three main important bodies such as Parliament, administrative department and judiciary body to run the government within

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid 24

<sup>27</sup> Khalid, Ayesha. "Media As a Fourth Pillar of Democracy." Voice of Journalists | Pakistan's #1 Independent News Source. Last modified December 22, 2016. <https://www.voj.news/media-as-a-fourth-pillar-of-democracy/>.

<sup>28</sup> X, Malcolm. "The Powerful Pillar of Democracy." Google Sites. Accessed May 24, 2019. <https://www.sites.google.com/site/fourthpillar/>.

states.<sup>29</sup> In the absence of one of them, the government system will not run automatically. However, he said that media is more necessary to take along way with these three bodies because it takes a role to convey information from the government to mass people and from mass people to government. In the absence of media, mass people cannot know how many laws that government passed and how many national and international policies that government implemented, and it also talks about the negative and positive effects in the society. For example, if there is no media, the government will do whatever they want because no one can complain. For political aspect, he argues that media is created to help people, especially the illiterates in electing their representative to hold power and compel the politician do what they have been promised. Furthermore, media helps illiterate people to know event intra-society and inter-society through television and radio. Last but not least, he said that “a democracy without media is like a vehicle without wheels”<sup>30</sup>. Since, media helps to show the loophole in democratic states that push government to do what they missed.

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<sup>29</sup> Bill of Rights Institute, "Republican Government," Bill of Rights Institute, accessed July 17, 2019, <https://www.docsoffreedom.org/student/readings/republican-government>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid 27

## **CHAPTER 2: Traditional and Social Media in Cambodia**

In the past, before being able to release news contents, the writers or journalists had to work in a media company or organization which was already registered to the Ministry of Commerce. With technological developments, today everyone knows how to create their own blogs or word press, and write news to public without joining proper professional journalist class. In short, social media allows individual who does not even understand code of ethics of journalism to spread out their thoughts independently.

In free market, this movement gives media companies more competitive.<sup>31</sup> So the pressure puts them to make the best of their contents. However, the number of content creators cannot define the development of media literacy because to guarantee for good quality of media, all the news providers must have fully freedom whether politically or economically.

While media has potential significance on shaping audiences' opinion, it is very necessary to tell that the quality of media, which are approaching people, are all realizable and non-bias.<sup>32</sup> However, when it came to Cambodia contexts, most media channels are openly associated with politics. According to Freedom House, a U.S.-based 501 U.S. government-funded non-governmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on democracy, political freedom, and human rights, before social media was adopted to Cambodia, people seem to have little chance on expressing their ideas, and thoughts. Journalists do not really have much space on delivery the critical news, and conducted contents in the public interest at all. Hence, the evolution of media platforms in Cambodia does make so much impacts to Cambodia

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<sup>31</sup> Ismail S. Essiz, "Competition in Media," DailySabah, last modified April 20, 2015, <https://www.dailysabah.com/readers-corner/2015/04/20/competition-in-media>.

<sup>32</sup> W.Phillips Davision, "Public Opinion - The Mass Media," Encyclopedia Britannica, last modified March 17, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/public-opinion/The-mass-media>.

society in this late 20s years unlike in the previous time that government control prints and electronic communications media. It regularly served for governmental interests only.<sup>33</sup>

## **2.1. Registered Traditional Media in Cambodia**

According to the recorded data from Media Ownership Monitor Cambodia, there are 41 registered media companies in Cambodia. However, there are only 10 Khmer media companies that are popular and active such as PPCTV Co., Ltd., Angkor Thom Media Group, Bayon Media Hight System Co., Ltd., Cambodian Center for Independent Media (CCIM), DAP Media Center, Hang Meas Video Company Co., Ltd., Kampuchea Thmey Daily Co., Ltd., Koh Santepheap Co., Ltd., Post Media Xo., Ltd., Radio France International (RFI), Rasmei Kampuchea Co., Ltd., Royal Group, Southeast Asia TV and Radio FM 106 Co., Ltd., Tinkle Group, Women's Media Centre, etc. These media companies are in operation and owned by individual, and some are associated with the government.<sup>34</sup>

Among all types of traditional media, newspapers are the most preferable one that people would go for social information. The most favored Khmer language newspaper in Cambodia are Koh Santepheap Daily, Rasmei Kampuchea Daily, The Voice of Khmer Youth, The Voice of Cambodia; meanwhile The Cambodia Daily, and The Phnom Penh Post serve audience internationally by providing news in English Language.<sup>35</sup>

On the other hand, Cambodian government see the potential of well-informed citizens. After 1979, government encouraged people to build their reading habit by reading news,

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<sup>33</sup> Jeffrey Hays, "MEDIA, TELEVISION, BLOGGERS AND CENSORSHIP IN CAMBODIA," Facts and Details, last modified 2018, [http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Cambodia/sub5\\_2c/entry-2902.html?fbclid=IwAR0IMM6n1wqsJHddI-XwUIdeYuHjeVXP\\_Hj8bydpM-H3pFQpEIOOgcvdRzo](http://factsanddetails.com/southeast-asia/Cambodia/sub5_2c/entry-2902.html?fbclid=IwAR0IMM6n1wqsJHddI-XwUIdeYuHjeVXP_Hj8bydpM-H3pFQpEIOOgcvdRzo).

<sup>34</sup> Cambodia Center for Independent Media, "Cambodian Media Companies," Media Ownership Monitor, accessed July 17, 2019, <https://cambodia.mom-rsf.org/en/owner/companies/>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid 32



journals, as well as listening to radio every day. However, because of low literacy rate, as well as the arrival of social media, the amount of newspaper sale is decreasing year by year.<sup>36</sup>

In democracy term, the enlargement of private owned Media means the qualification of freedom of expression in each country since people are allowed to raise up their voice to the public. A healthy democratic country is somewhere with well-educated citizens. Beside just let the citizens live in a way that they are being ruled by, journalists in Cambodia also have an obligation to encourage people to stand for their voice by releasing critical content to raise up their awareness, and some word of them may directly went to the head of states.

So far, many organizations have put their commitment on creating educational contents that promote people to understand the benefits of clean environment, climate change, as well as political involvement. The active educational media platform that we can find in Cambodia is Women's Media Center, The Cambodian Center for International Media, as well as National TV. They study about trash waste, dangers of using plastic, air pollution, water contamination, also educate Cambodian citizens about basic understanding toward health, human rights, social moral ,law, and etc. By producing short film or TV shows, then release it to public. Some other organizations are also trying to promote education, legal immigration, health, and other relevant concerns to people in the area. In this view, media are not only the tool for people use in reporting words from one to another one, but also provide citizens knowledge that they should know in order to improve the standard of their lives, also encourage them to take care of their own family and country.

Moreover, the core value of media is “to do anything only to serve the public interests”.

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<sup>36</sup> Nguon Serath, deputy director of business/media content specialist of Koh Santepheap Media

That is why most journalists in Cambodia are inspired with self-esteem that they are working for the public people, not for the owner of the company as well as the government. In short, their mission becomes the voice of the public, the voice that speaks out from unvoiced people to the government.<sup>37</sup> Thus, when media is able to stand on their ethics, and provides truth and knowledge to citizens, the citizens will be able to involve closer to the country.<sup>38</sup>

## **2.2. Favored Social Media in Cambodia**

Social media refers to the communication via websites and other online sources such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Telegram and LinkedIn. They are used by large group of people to disseminate information, develop social and professional contact and promote business.<sup>39</sup> It most popular and effective of social media in Cambodia is Facebook.

In this generation, people do not need to ask News Company to release news for them because they can easily post it in their personal Facebook account. The arguments between them and their neighbor, the compliant to any companies' service as well as the criticism to inactive governors in their local will be spread out in one click. Each interesting post will be shared from one to other in just minutes, and it is how people in this era got information, and rumors to gossip on. Facebook is the only most favored social media in Cambodia. Facebook users in Cambodia met a remarkable increase in 2017.<sup>40</sup> Just in time, Cambodians nowadays are able to mention about inactive government, talk about social problems which are needed to

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<sup>37</sup> Ms. Kann Vicheka, an independent journalist in Cambodia

<sup>38</sup> Myrah Q. Khan, "Media Interest Vs Public Interest," Voice of Journalists | Pakistan's #1 Independent News Source, last modified February 18, 2017, <https://www.voj.news/media-interest-vs-public-interest/>.

<sup>39</sup> Matthew Hudson, "Learn What Social Media Is and How to Use It to Grow Your Business," The Balance Small Business, last modified November 1, 2014, <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/what-is-social-media-2890301>.

<sup>40</sup> Samatha Fuentes, "Cambodia's 2018 Social Media & Digital Statistics," Geeks in Cambodia, last modified November 1, 2018, <http://geeksincambodia.com/cambodias-2018-social-media-digital-statistics/>.

be solved, and spread out what they wants. Some are even get chance to communicate directly to Prime Minister through his personal social media.

### **2.3. Technology Revolution Opens the Space for Democracy**

Digital is a powerful way to allow people to stand up for the law of expression. The technology revolution gives opportunity for citizens to practice in politics as they are able to do report, and eyewitness on what government doing. However, in Cambodia, the ability to see governmental activities is just open freely in recent century regarding to technological development.

As mentioned above, traditional media are Print (newspaper and magazine) and Broadcast (television and radio). It was the first platform of media which does not allow citizens to write down their thoughts to the public because every content is providing by the News Media Company. In the previous time, before being able to release citizen's thought, people have to come directly to meet journalist or send their journals to Media Company such as Koh Santepheap Daily or Rasmei Kampuchea, and then wait for the approval.<sup>41</sup> Basically, not all the contents were able to be released. This means citizens did not meet big chances to express their opinion, what they can do is just to hear or be informed only.

On the other hand, Social Media is a channel that allow people to communicate across the world. Today, social media opens space for democrats by offering Cambodian people the opportunity to speak out through Facebook. Naturally, it brings both advantages and disadvantages whether it is for people to have their own voice or for people to misleading news.

In the past, the media provides lack of contents, but today media provides too many contents. Media used to be monopoly or goalkeeper, where people can rely on and put on their

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid30

beliefs, but after the innovation of social media, when everyone can write or create their own news leads people to face with fake news at any time.

Most Cambodian people who live in rural areas always believe in News on Facebook. In fact, Facebook is neither an official nor a professional media. It is just a door or way for people to update the information. That is why people have to have more educated in media literacy in order to be able to deal with fake news.

## **CHAPTER 3: Media enters into Cambodia**

### **3.1. The regime of Cambodia media during colonization until present**

#### **3.1.1. Media during colonization period 1863-1953**

In 1860s, the French found Cambodia and also tried to find the area for expanding the commercial interest in Southeast Asia. Furthermore, they believed that the Mekong River is the special gate to China. During that time, France colonized Vietnam, and wanted to spread his power over the Southeast Asia as the whole.<sup>42</sup> By the way, because of the clash between Thai and Vietnam troops on Cambodia territory, it caused to destroy many things such as Cambodian life, pagodas. Due to this reason, Prince Norodom asked French to be a protectorate, however, the French controlled Cambodia economic and political sector.<sup>43</sup> After the break of the Second World War on 1 September 1939 until 2 September 1945, most of super power countries such as Germany, England, Portugal, and France started to move from their own continent to the Asia continent in order to find more resources for waging war. The Southeast Asia was an interested location for those super power countries the commercial purpose. Moreover, France interested on the area of Indochina where consisted of Cambodia, Vietnam and Laos. These three countries was dominated by the French. Because of the invasion of neighboring countries such as Thailand and Vietnam who wanted to control Cambodia territory, the King Norodom asked for help and signed the agreement for the protectorate and colonization.

In the start of the colonialism period, press did not bring its attention on Cambodia. The

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<sup>42</sup> Thomas Clayton, "Restriction or Resistance? French Colonial Educational Development in Cambodia," ResearchGate, last modified January 1, 1995, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49609877\\_French\\_Colonial\\_Education](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/49609877_French_Colonial_Education).

<sup>43</sup> Chandler, David. "Cambodian History." Cambodia Tribunal Monitor. Last modified July 2009. <https://www.cambodiatribunal.org/history/cambodian-history/>.

news about Cambodia mostly appeared in two main locations, which are Saigon and Hanoi. About two decades later, press started to interest in Cambodia and there were many journals and newspapers was written in French, Khmer, Vietnamese, Chinese as well as it was the time that they started to publish. In 1936, the first Khmer newspapers which was written in Khmer called Nagaravatta was established.

### **3.1.2. Cambodia media in Sangkum Reastr Niyum (The people's socialist Community)**

After gained fully independence from France on 9 November 1953, Prince Norodom Sihanouk decided to abdicate the throne to his father Norodom Soramarith in order to create the political party so-called Sangkum Reas Niyum (The people's socialist community) on 23 March 1955. This political party was appeared in the election in 11 September 1955. At the same year, this party got 83 percent of voice in parliamentary which could run unitary government.<sup>44</sup> During the world was threaten by the two main blocs such as the capitalist bloc and the communist bloc, Cambodia had adopted the neutrality as the political regime, meaning that Cambodia did not support either communist or capitalist. This political neutrality helped Cambodia to have more prestige in the region and the oppositions could not oppose and acknowledged this neutrality.<sup>45</sup>

However, during his regime, the media was so strictly for the international media and local media. In 1969, Prince Sihanouk to used to file a case in order to sue a media which is Khmer Ekreach on the accusation of his close allies who are involving with the corruption. Furthermore, he also had his own newspaper, Kambuja Monthly Illustrated Review, as the

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<sup>44</sup> Savdy. "Sangkum Reastr Niyum Regime." KhmerDeng. Last modified November 20, 2018. <https://khmerdeng.com/poeple-love/>.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid 43

political tool and voice in the purpose of against the foreign press.<sup>46</sup> This regime failed because of the economic and civil political crisis, the presence of North Vietnam troop on Cambodia territory as well as the confrontation between Capitalist and Communist in the cold war era.<sup>47</sup> There was a coup d'eta to overthrow Prince Sihanouk and also to end his regime on 18 March 1970 while he was visiting Moscow and Beijing.<sup>48</sup>

### **3.1.3. Media in Khmer Republic 1970-1975**

General Lon Nol overthrew the Prince Sihanouk from the position through the coup d'eta while Prince Sihanouk had a visiting in Moscow and Beijing in 18 March 1970. He adopted the presidential system during his administration because this regime backed by the United States of America. Cambodia had a good ally with United States and South Vietnam. During that time, it was a second Indochina war which happened between the United States and the North Vietnam. By proving aid to the South Vietnam in order to contain the communist spread from the North Vietnam.<sup>49</sup> After the coup d'eta of Prince Sihanouk, there were around 30 printed news was established. However, the media was much more in a critical condition officially imposed by the government. The Lon Nol Administration ended the freedom of the press by enforcing a pre-publication censorship rule. Therefore, many journalists were threatened and attacked and the number of newspaper were shut down in the late 1974. Only a few newspapers could survive during that time such as Voice of Phnom Penh, Save the Khmers

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<sup>46</sup> Yale University Library, "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 1953 - 1970: Sangkum Reastr Niyum." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976022>.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid 46

<sup>48</sup> "Lon Nol Ousts Prince Sihanouk." HISTORY. Last modified November 16, 2009. <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/lon-nol-ousts-prince-sihanouk>.

<sup>49</sup> Pletcher, Kenneth. "Lon Nol." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Accessed June 10, 2019. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Lon-Nol>.

and Voice of free Cambodia.<sup>50</sup> However, General Lon Nol had resigned and left the country on 1 April 1975 because of the fear of the movement of Khmer Rouge, initiated their dry-season offensive to target the capital of Cambodia on 1 January 1975.<sup>51</sup>

### **3.1.4. Media in Khmer Rouge Regime 1975-1979**

Because of the French colonization, it caused to have the emerging of Cambodian communist movement that struggle against the French Colonization. This communist party got the influence from the Vietnamese and it led to create the state of Democratic Kampuchea in 1976, which could rule country until 1979. This communist party had their own army power and Pol Pot, who was appointed as the secretary and leader of Communist Party of Kampuchea and led it in 1963. Furthermore, this party got the aid from the Vietnamese and started to defeat Lon Nol regime. The Khmer Rouge controlled around 85 percent of the whole Cambodian territory and this party made the Lon Nol armed force went down which couldn't offense. Lastly, Cambodia was fell into the communist regime which had been known as the darkest regime ever in Cambodia history.<sup>52</sup> On the other hand, the press was completely silent during this darkest regime. The private or foreigners could not own the newspaper. Therefore, the press that belonged to Angkar-owned such as magazine, a radio station which broadcasted the propaganda of communist. Only three newspapers were established which including Boy&Girl of the Revolution, the Revolution Flag and the red Flag.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Yale University Library, "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 1970 - 1975: Khmer Republic." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976023>.

<sup>51</sup> Pike, John. "Lon Nol Regime - 1970-1975." GlobalSecurity.org. Last modified February 6, 2012. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/cambodia/history-lon-nol.htm>.

<sup>52</sup> Khamboly, Dy. "Khmer Rouge History." Cambodia Tribunal Monitor. Accessed June 18, 2019. <http://www.cambodiatribunal.org/history/cambodian-history/khmer-rouge-history/>.

<sup>53</sup> Yale University Library, "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 1975 - 1979: Khmer Rouge Regime." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976024>.



### **3.1.5. Media in People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) and State of Cambodia (SOC) 1979-1991**

After the collapse of Khmer Rouge regime in 7 January 1979, Cambodia turned into the new regime so-called People's Republic of Kampuchea, led by top two leaders who are Heng Samrin as a President, and Chea Sim as a Vice President. After the victory of Kampuchea National Liberation Front (KNLF), the Vietnamese-backed got victory over the Pol Pot regime on 7 January 1979. During that time, Cambodia was led into the communist bloc which backed by the Hanoi government.<sup>54</sup> Before the Vietnam troop left from Cambodia, PRK began to make a change. Therefore, the name of People's Republic of Kampuchea was changed to the State of Cambodia 1989. The new national flag and anthem were adopted and the state was rule by one party state. Although the government tried hard to having a tight control of the economy, the free market trade flourished as well as the black market goods flowed in form the Thailand to Vietnam through Cambodia.<sup>55</sup>

The Press during that time was not different from the previous regime. Cambodia government from 1980 to 1986 did not allow the foreign journalists to enter to investigate within the Cambodia territory. There were only state and party media were existed and worked as a tool to broadcast the communist propandas. There was a famous press, Saraphordarmean Kampuchea (SPK) was the official government news established by the KNLF. There were four other written presses owned and control by the party, which one of them could criticize the state on behalf the party. However, they could be pressured by the state through the party line. The paper were freely distributed among the communist though the state and party channels.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Pike, John. "People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) - Government." GlobalSecurity.org. Last modified February 6, 2012. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/cambodia/history-prk-gov.htm>.

<sup>55</sup> Pike, John. "State of Cambodia (SOC)." GlobalSecurity.org. Last modified February 6, 2012. <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/cambodia/history-soc.htm>.

<sup>56</sup> Yale University Library, "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 1979 - 1991: PRK & SOC." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976025>.

### **3.1.6. Media United Nations Advance Mission in Cambodia (UNAMIC) and United Nations Transition Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1991-1993**

There were four Cambodian factions which were the State of Cambodia, Democratic Kampuchea, FUNCIPPEC and the Khmer People's National Liberation Front came to sign Paris Peace Agreement on 23 October 1991 in order to end the long-lasting civil war as well as promoted national dialogue and ensured right of self-determination of the Cambodia people through free and fair election.<sup>57</sup> This peace agreement brought the involvement of UNAMIC to Cambodia to monitor the cease-fire during October 1991 to March 1992 and the UNTAC February until September 1993 in order to ensure the free and fair election in Cambodia which took place in May 1993.

Within the presence of the UN agencies, the Cambodian printing press began to grow once again. By May 1993, there were about 20 news organizations including 12 private newspapers that were serving as a political instrument of 12 parties competing in the general election.

### **3.1.7. Media in 1993 until Present**

After the first general election in 1993, there was a form of government in September 1993 before the leaving of UNTAC. During that time, Cambodia was led by co-prime ministers, which the first time of two prime ministers in Cambodian history and the world. At that time, Prince Norodom Ranaridh, the first prime minister and Hun Sen was the second prime ministry.

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<sup>57</sup> "Framework for a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict." UN Peacemaker. Last modified October 23, 1991. <https://peacemaker.un.org/cambodiaparisagreement91>.

The new constitution of the Cambodia ensures the freedom of expression, press and journalist. Therefore, the newspapers in Cambodia was flourishing which consists of 30 newspapers publishing in 1993, and about 90 in 1995 and by 1998 the number rose to about 200 media organization that registered with the Ministry of Information. There were some challenges by that year because of the lack of qualified professional journalist, low quality paper, suppression, intimidation, threat, violence and killing. However, it still play an important role in term of the check and balance to government in absence of opposition voice.<sup>58</sup>

Even there was a form of government, the journalism system in Cambodia sill facing issue because of the Cambodia development and education under the reform. It did not have school of media within the country yet. During that time, the journalist was divided into four categories. First is about journalist who was trained and served in Media in Khmer Rouge regime because most of these people worked in high position as editors or publishing director of papers. Second is about the journalist who served during the PRK/SOC period who was trained in Vietnam, Soviet Union and Easter Europe. Third was about those who worked for the media of the resistant group along the border. Forth was about those who has no experience in the media at all.

The poor quality of Cambodian papers were caused of the lack of professional journalist. By this issue, the Cambodian paper lacked of research while fact and figures and pictures were not appropriately and ethically used. Furthermore, most of newspapers use inappropriate or insulting words not only in body but also the heading of newspaper. More importantly, many newspapers backed and financially supported by the political parties for their political interest

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<sup>58</sup> Yale University Library, "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 1993 - 1998: 1st RGC." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976026>.

and provided bias information.<sup>59</sup> For instance, the conflict between the opposition parties and the ruling party in term of propaganda.

Freedom of Press in that time, during that time there were eight journalists killed between 1993 and 1998. Three of them were shot dead in 1994, another one shot dead in 1996 and four other in 1997. Besides physical threat, Cambodian journalists also face serious court case. For example, Mr Ngun Non, the editors-in-chief of the Morning News was arrested and jailed over an article accusing a provincial governor of corruption in April 1994. In July 1994, he was arrested and jailed for his article suggested several senior officials of the ruling party CPP involved in the coup attempt in 1993. There were also cases of legal action taken by the Supreme Court over the defamation and disinformation lawsuit against two editors-in-chief of the opposition newspapers in 1996. Each of them were sentenced to one year imprisonment by UNTAC penal code, but were luckily release by pardon from the king.<sup>60</sup>

During 1998-2003, the Cambodian press was seen as the freest press among countries in the region and most countries in Europe. There was no systematic repression on the press beside a political alignment and some cases of intermediations, threats of suspension and lawsuits. An improvement and development had been made since the formation of the second collision government in 1998. Moreover, it was noted with less violence compared to the time prior the election while the quality was improving with more investigative and informative news article published among these top local papers. For instance, Rasmey Kampuchea was among other international papers, The Cambodia Daily, Cambodge Soire and Phom Penh Post, were providing a good model to the local papers. Another importance and excitement happen

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid 58

<sup>60</sup> Ibid 58

during this period was the opening of a Department of Media and Communication at the Royal University of Phnom Penh to provide a degree training in journalist in 2001. It was the first degree program in journalism ever established in Cambodia.<sup>61</sup>

In spite of improvement was made, the Cambodian press still faced a number of issue. For example, the lack of investing capital to secure the successful operation without dependence on the support from patron and parties. A key factor that strongly impacted the successful operation of the papers were not only the journalism skill but also the management and marketing skill among the newspaper staff.<sup>62</sup>

During 2003-2008, it was a time when the political stability was seen to be more realistic. At the same time a number of training and trained journalists was increasing. The factors had enhanced the Cambodia media reaching its new level of development toward a more investigative reporting and to fulfill its three main roles of informing, educating, and entertaining the public. Newspapers are not only wrote about political but also the daily life.

The role as a watchdog was still tough and unsatisfactorily accomplished. Some journalist were murdered, injured, sued, arrested or jailed for defamation while pursuing this important role. For example, five human rights activists and journalist were arrested and jailed in the late 2005 and early 2006. The arrest of editor-in-chief, Dam Sith and the murder of the reporter of the opposition paper in 2008. As the result, the reporters without border lowered the Cambodia's ranking from 78<sup>th</sup> in 2007 to 126<sup>th</sup> of the 173th in 2008.<sup>63</sup>

In 2008-2013, Cambodian press is continued to be seen as the freest press in the region

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<sup>61</sup> "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 1998 - 2003: 2nd RGC." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976028>.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid 61

<sup>63</sup> "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 2003 - 2008: 3rd RGC." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976029>.

while steady improvement and development has continuously made. One important development during this period is the rise of internet media as the internet access becomes affordable. This new news is highly popular among the new generation and it also makes the Cambodians living abroad conveniently stay connected with the current development of Cambodia.

Another important development is the international media cooperation and collaboration at national level between countries in the indo-china as well as in the Asia region. For instance, the collaboration between the Thai and Cambodia journalists. The support and collaboration from China and South Korea and so on. Another national effort that has been pushed forward by the Ministry of Information is to assign a spokesperson and a media person for the government ministry, agency and institution at national, provincial and district level to ensure the accessibility, accurate and consistent information provided to the public. Several training courses on a protocol and spokesperson and media person have been conducted for the government ministry and agency officials.<sup>64</sup>

Cambodian journalists are still divisive and is commonly categorized into three groups – pro-government, pro-opposition and the independent who works for international news agencies. It has been observed that the opposition papers voice become smaller and smaller. Some of them have been under attacked and pressured for being too critical and anti-government while some defected to the CPP. For instance, the Khmer Conscience was ordered to shut down by the government and its editor-in-chief was jailed despite later were released and the paper was reopened in 2009. The Voice of Khmer Youth was defected to FUNCINPEC in 2003 and then to CPP in 2008 and the same as Sralanh Khmer. Now the publishers of both

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<sup>64</sup> "Cambodian Newspaper Project: 2008 - 2013: 4th RGC." Home - Yale University Library Research Guides at Yale University. Last modified May 31, 2019. <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=295977&p=1976030>.

papers are serving as Undersecretary of States with the Ministry of Information.<sup>65</sup>

there were two lawsuits were filed in 2009 against journalists under the UNTACT panel code while the 1995 Press Law was ignored as a numerous cases of threats, intermediation and violence against journalists took place. In late 2011, the Ministry of Information terminated licenses of 16 newspapers, 15 magazines and six bulletins that had not been active as explained by the Ministry. This certainly marked the largest gag in the history of Cambodian press. However, it was noticed that the foreign language newspapers owned by foreigners seems receive high tolerance and freely and straightly reports without any government intervention, especially the Chinese one that is in the rising tone.<sup>66</sup>

In 2013-2018, the general election on 28 July 2013, the final result release by the National Election Committee (NEC), a body controlled by the ruling Cambodian People's Party (CPP). The NEC declared result that the CCP won 68 seats and the CNRP won 55 seats in the election. Although the Cambodia has increasing social media sector remains largely unrestricted, all state and private television stations and almost all print media, local radio stations, and news websites are control by the ally of the CPP as well as the rejection CNRP demands for an independent investigation because of the irregularities during and after the election.<sup>67</sup>

The freedom of media throughout the year of 2017 was restricted because it affected to the policies of the ruling party. On 4 September, the independent news Cambodia Daily was closed down because of the unpaid tax bill to the government as well as its two reporter was

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid 64

<sup>66</sup> Ibid 64

<sup>67</sup> Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2014: Rights Trends in World Report 2014: Cambodia," Human Rights Watch, last modified April 16, 2015, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2014/country-chapters/cambodia>.

charges of incitement. Furthermore, the government withdrew license from independent radio station, Mohnorkor radio and its alliances, including the broadcast of Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Asia (RFA) and closed down Voice of Democracy (VOD). Therefore, the RFA and VOA has been pressured from the government and stopped broadcasting in August, however, almost all domestic broadcast media is under the control of government. By late 2018, Cambodia does not have any domestic independent newspapers or radio and TV channel. Furthermore, the social media also become pressured by the government of Cambodia with the criminal charges for posting to Facebook in order to criticize of Cambodia government.<sup>68</sup> By this, international community especially the democratic states argue that Cambodia is moving far away from democracy.

## **3.2. Impact of Media to the government of Cambodia**

### **3.2.1. Government uses Media as the political tool**

The political tools refer to the processes and systems that help government to carry out the action that he or she needs to perform. It is very crucial for government because it can build the influence of the government to the citizens as well as the ability to develop his or her network with the citizens.<sup>69</sup> Due to the fact that Cambodia is one of the democratic states, the power of citizens is very essential for the government, thus; citizens has power on the government. According to this context, Media plays a role of informant to provide the information of the government to the mass people through media.

After the general election passed in the democratic states, the government system starts

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<sup>68</sup> Human Rights Watch, "World Report 2018: Rights Trends in Cambodia," Human Rights Watch, last modified January 18, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/cambodia>.

<sup>69</sup> Ian Daniels, "Political Tools," About Politics.com, last modified July 12, 2014, <https://www.about-politics.com/about-author.html>.



working with their policy to rule inside the state. Furthermore, there are some TV stations, radio stations or newspapers who are pro-government by showing, broadcasting government action when government doing something. Media is trying to capture the action of government both intra-state and interstate activities. Government has been trying to lobby some countries in international stage in order to get fund or aids to develop his own country. For example, Cambodian government got aid from China to construct an expressway to Sihanoukville under \$2bn China-funded<sup>70</sup>. Some media also talk about the loopholes of the action of government especially it can make an adjustment on the government policy.

Second, the government also uses media to talk about the structure of policy implementation. By doing so, the government of Cambodia would like to keep closer with his people within the country especially in the rural areas where are far away from the capital city, Phnom Penh. Sometimes there are some problematic within the party structure in term of leading country especially the corruption issue that is the hottest issue. For example, the collapse of seven-floor building in Sihanouk Ville, it caused many people 26 construction workers injured and 28 died.<sup>71</sup> The press broadcasted this news the mass public in order to seek for help and have action on what is happening. By this, the Prime Minister of Cambodia took action on this case by investigate on the root causes of the building collapsed, furthermore; he also removed provincial governor out from the position and replaced by the provincial governor of Kompong Cham province.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Onishi, Tomoya. "Cambodia Breaks Ground on \$2bn China-funded Expressway." Nikkei Asian Review. Last modified March 23, 2019. <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/Belt-and-Road/Cambodia-breaks-ground-on-2bn-China-funded-expressway>.

<sup>71</sup> "Cambodia Charges Seven over Sihanoukville Building Collapse." Breaking News, World News and Video from Al Jazeera. Last modified June 25, 2019. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/06/cambodia-charges-sihanoukville-building-collapse-190625042834294.html>.

<sup>72</sup> "Governor of Sihanoukville to Step Down Following Deadly Construction Collapse." Khmer Times. Last modified June 25, 2019. <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50617200/governor-of-sihanoukville-to-step-down-following-deadly-construction-collapse/>.

Third, Government uses media as tool to respond back to international community, opposition party and criticism. The nature of political party is to win the general election within the country. Therefore, sometimes the speech of other political party beside the ruling party can cause impact to the implementation policy. By the way, the head of government also can publish a speech to support something that happening in the international stage. For example, the current issue in the Venezuela, the US president Donald Trump used social media, Twitter, to support the Juan Gaido who is the opposition party in Maduro regime as well as regard him as the interim president. Moreover, the head of state of Cambodia has responded to many arguments which raise by international community and especially the opposition party.

### **3.2.2. Citizens of Cambodia use Media as the tool in Politics**

The new media is very important role the democratic states especially it can make consequences for democratic governance and politics. Media in the current time usually talk about the government institution operate, the way political leader communicate, the manner in which election are contested, and the involvement of citizens. Media as the political media are the structures of communicate that help the production, dissemination and exchange political content on platforms and within network that accommodate interaction and collaboration. Furthermore, the new media has its responsibility for democratic government and political practices.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, Media has been playing an essential role for conveying the information both from citizens to the government and vice versa. In the democratic states, citizens use media as a tool to deliver the news from their areas to government to deal with the issues that are happening over there. According to article 41, Cambodian citizens have freedom of expression,

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<sup>73</sup> Owen, Diana. "The New Media's Role in Politics." OpenMind. Last modified 12, 2017. <https://www.bbvaopenmind.com/en/articles/the-new-media-s-role-in-politics/>.

freedom of press, freedom of publication and freedom of association. Therefore, because of the right of citizens are protected by law, citizens, journalists and opposition party leaders are likely to criticize the government through media.

For the last two decades, most of citizens usually complain about politics through the legacy media though printed newspaper, TV or radio stations for telling the event in their area to the government. Along with this, they are used as a tool to deliver the citizens' status to the government in order to show how people in that area living, and what are they need in their villages or community. For example, the farmers in one area have problem with the weather such as drought, thus; the farmer cannot do farming and the outcome of farming also decrease. To dealing with this issue, TV or journalist go to that area in order to pick up news for the government to help them from the issue that they are facing by create water channel.

However, when they talk about the loophole of government, the government pressures them by detaining, jailing or exile to the foreign countries. Moreover, the government always accuses them as the incitement to topple down the regime.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, the media functions as the watchdog and public voice. Media is as watchdog and public voice, the media role is to protect the public from incompetent or corrupt political official by exposing illegal or unethical practices to the public. Therefore, media acts as the protector of the public. The citizens might feel that their area less-developed which contrasted from what government promised. Thus, citizens are going to complain about the government policies, then the journalist as media go to investigate that area whether it is conformity with the complaining of citizen or not. Then, Media bring the citizen voice to broadcast to the government in order to check it. Furthermore, media also broadcast the citizen demand to the government.

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<sup>74</sup> "Challenges for Independent Media 2017 Report." Cambodian Center for Independent Media – Everybody Well-informed, Everybody Empowered. Last modified February 21, 2018. <https://www.ccimcambodia.org/?p=413>.

### **3.2.3. Media Contributes to the Social Development**

Social development refers to the improvement of the well-being of each individual people inside the society in order to fulfill their potential. The government starts to make national policy to development the areas that are not equality or almost equality with the other area. Furthermore, social development focuses on the people as the priority, meaning that the government removes of barrier which can make all citizens go forward their dream with confidence and dignity. Especially, the government tries to reduce the poverty rate of the citizens to have a good living standard.<sup>75</sup> There are two ways that media contribute to the social development such as the construction of public opinion and well-informed citizens.

First of all, it is about the construction of public opinion. Technically, democracy is the best form of government because it is a system which citizens are able to exercise their power by voting in the election. To be citizens in democratic country means they have responsibility to choose the satisfied leader; receive information or news on what happens within the society, capable to express ideas. In addition, they are important actors to build up their own community. While Democracy allows citizens to choose their own governments, citizens have to improve their great senses of judgment by being well-informed about vision and mission of each political party, characteristics of political candidates (whether they support the same things voters do), major political issues as well as community issues which could make any possible consequences in the future. Therefore, in order to assure for healthy democracy, citizens must receive good information from Media. Media allows people to see their leaders' activities and opinions, and expose their ideas to the public. Unlike the past time that people firmly believed

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<sup>75</sup> "What is Social Development?," Government of New Brunswick, Canada, last modified November 25, 2010, [https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/overview/content/what\\_is\\_social\\_development.html](https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/esic/overview/content/what_is_social_development.html).

to one politician, today a voter might possibly change their mind to other parties just in time they use media.<sup>76</sup>

Second, it is about the well-informed citizens. In order to assure for healthy democratic system, it requires public to freely access to social information. Hence, media is in charge of doing that stuff; so, there are no doubt why media is an important part in running a successful political system. Moreover, media becomes the most important criteria in democratic countries to guarantee for fairly elections that citizens could confidently decide on what they believe in by seeing what happened through media or press release. This mean the “Well-informed citizen”. Citizens must get to know enough information about political parties as well as the representative candidates before they make assumption. The voters should know about the strengths or weaknesses of each party by reading, listening or watching their campaigns and activities in the news which are related to their political activities, political policies, political philosophy, or the political vision of each party. By doing so, people are able to understand and convenient to choose what they need with their willing.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Catherine Happer and Greg Philo, "The Role of the Media in the Construction of Public Belief and Social Change | Happer," *Journal of Social and Political Psychology*, last modified 2013, <https://jspp.psychopen.eu/article/view/96/37>.

<sup>77</sup> "Media and Information Literacy is the Key for Smart and Well-informed Citizens," UNESCO, last modified December 12, 2018, <https://en.unesco.org/news/media-and-information-literacy-key-smart-and-well-informed-citizens>.

## **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Media has been playing a very important role not only nowadays, but also the ancient time. Media functions as the communicator and information providers to the people as well as raise the awareness of people about the social development and political issue within the country.

In Cambodia, using media is becoming a new lifestyle to people. Both traditional and social media open up opportunities to citizens to get to know social issues as well as capable to communicate directly to the governments.

Media entered to Cambodia society since the French Colonization. Between during the colonization until 1993, media seemed like a frequency because it went up and down through the regime. In the Sangkum Reastr Niyum era, Media started to flourish with the increasing of the number of print media. However, in the darkest regime, Pol Pot regime, the media started to fall down. During that time, there were only magazine, newspapers and radio that owned by Angkar and served as the propaganda tool to broadcast the communist ideology. Until the first election in 1993, the life of media started to flourish again by the increasing of print media year by year. Unfortunately, even there is a freedom of expression that is set in the constitution of Kingdom of Cambodia, the one who convey the real information or the loophole of government out usually get pressured by the government, especially the journalist.

The significant results of how media could contribute to society illustrates through the well-informed citizens, and the construction of public opinions. Basically, it is a good move to Cambodia when people are able to raise up their voice through social media these days which means Cambodia is going straight forward to better implementation of freedom of expression.

In addition, the implementation of media in Cambodia also allows government to work closely to their own citizens. Beside spreading the national information, informing about

policies and implementation, government can easily respond back to any issues which were raised up by the citizens regarding to local security, national community, and also could quickly respond back to opposite party or any criticism toward governmental service.

This research has shown that the development of technology has brought people to more healthy democracy. Opposed to previous time that local people need to approach the media company to speak instead of them whenever they need the problems, however; the individual person or individual group are able to creates the platforms such as website, Word Press, or personal blog to share their news to social media. Some of them are independent journalists, and some are not because they just copy the contents from the celebrities' or high ranking people's posts, and share it to Facebook. On the other hand, the quality of media started to improve because everyone has enough ability to express what they found within the society without feared or pressured by government or interest groups. Therefore, Cambodia will be able to move forward to the fully democratic state.

By looking to the other views, while most scholars raised up that the traditional media are more likely the propaganda tools as it was in WWI, WWII, and Cold War, this research have eased to claimed by introducing people to see the positive impacts that news media could make a better changing from time to time as have seen in Cambodia case as the example. Even if there are some concerns regarding to media literacy by comparing to the benefits in democracy term, it is just a small issue which is not really matter at all.

It now comes to the limitation of this research, the purposes are show how much media could contribute to politics by taking part in social development, and open space for the government and people to raise up their concern among each other. As the arrival of social media makes people get addicted to sharing their idea to the public, this study will open up their mind that what they have said are really matter to the society, thus to enhance for a better democracy purpose, people must understand the impact of media, and use it in a beneficial way.

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