

## **Structure**

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Appendix

## 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.