

Sex-Trafficking in Cambodia
Assessing the Role of NGOs in Rebuilding Cambodia

Katherine Wood

A Senior Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for graduation
in the Honors Program
Liberty University
Spring 2014

Acceptance of Senior Honors Thesis

This Senior Honors Thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for graduation from the Honors Program of Liberty University.

Steven Samson, Ph.D.
Thesis Chair

Thomas Metallo, Ph.D.
Committee Member

Robert F. Ritchie, M.A.
Committee Member

Brenda Ayres, Ph.D.
Honors Director

Date

Abstract

The anti-slavery and other freedom fighting movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did not abolish all forms of slavery. Many forms of modern slavery thrive in countries all across the globe. The sex trafficking trade has intensified despite the advocacy of many human rights-based groups. Southeast Asia ranks very high in terms of the source, transit, and destination of sex trafficking. In particular, human trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of forced prostitution remains an increasing problem in Cambodia. Cambodia's cultural traditions and the breakdown of law under the Khmer Rouge and Democratic Kampuchea have contributed to the current governing policies which maintain democracy only at the surface level of administration. With the cooperation of Western and Cambodian non-governmental organizations, the problem of sex trafficking can be greatly alleviated as women come to understand their value and attain success and leadership within Cambodian society and beyond.

Sex-Trafficking in Cambodia

Assessing the Role of NGOs in Rebuilding Cambodia

Introduction

In 1948 the United Nations established the “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” to abolish slavery by declaring “everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.”¹ One year later, in 1949, the United Nations created the first global indictment against human trafficking in its Convention for the Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and the Exploitation of Others. As tremors rippled around the world after the horrors of World War II, Europe established the 1950 Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Despite movements to permanently end slavery during the last century “... these documents remain simultaneously idealized portraits of the as-yet-to-be achieved and contested sites of struggle in the realm of the real.”² The exponential rise of people forced into inhumane and cruel “occupations” reveals the reality that the battle against slavery cannot be fought with mere words.

Nestled in the heart of Southeast Asia, the heart-shaped nation of Cambodia holds one of the highest rates in the region for trafficking among women and children. Non-governmental agencies, especially those founded on Christian principles, constitute major actors in the fight against human trafficking in Cambodia. By contrast, Cambodia’s Prime Minister Hun Sen maintains an outward appearance of confident regality, yet his policies

1. Kevin Bales, Zoe Trodd, and Alex Kent Williamson, *Modern Slavery: The Secret World of 27 Million People* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009), 17.

2. Elizabeth A. Castelli, “Theologizing Human Rights: Christian Activism and the Limits of Religious Freedom,” in *Nongovernmental Politics*, eds. Michel Feher, Gaelle Krikorian, and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 673.

have not brought any significant freedom or justice to oppressed women, children, and even men. Sex trafficking represents one of the modern representations of slavery and an issue of high prominence in Cambodian society. The political and educational traditions of Cambodia's past illuminate the deep roots supporting the obstinacy of the present government which manages to maintain practices of the past at the expense of improving the conditions of the Cambodians in today's society. Studying the environment of sex slavery in Cambodia reveals the striking rise of trafficking even as the Cambodian government attempts to address the problem. The role of women in Cambodia shows the traditional views concerning women's behavior and expectations from society. Discussing the many actors involved in forced prostitution demonstrates the interwoven complexities of identifying victims and executing beneficial change. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Cambodia represent the primary agents of change in Cambodia. NGOs work with Cambodians to understand their personal backgrounds and build healthy relationships with rescued victims as they seek to bring justice to Cambodians and fight the crime of sex trafficking.

The Modern Issue of Slavery and Prostitution

Slavery remains a thorn in the side of modern society. Human trafficking refers to the crime of forcing people into slavery. In 2003, the United Nations defined human trafficking in the "Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children" as follows:

The action of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by means of the treat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or vulnerability, or giving payments or benefits to a person in control of the victim for the purposes of exploitation, which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery or similar

practices, and the removal of organs. Consent of the victim is irrelevant where illicit means are established.³

The United States uses the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report to diplomatically deliberate with foreign governments over the issue of human trafficking. International organizations and governments also use the TIP Report to assess the trafficking situation and best determine where and how to allocate resources and programs to combat trafficking.⁴ According to the 2005 report, over 80% of those trafficked throughout the world are female, and 50% are children. Currently, over 27 million slaves live in bondage to at least one kind of slavery across the globe.

Modern slavery exists within relationships that impose force, violence, and economic exploitation upon those who cannot independently act. Although there are many forms of modern slavery, such as forced labor and the use of child soldiers, the issue of human trafficking with the purpose of forced prostitution specifically signifies a major problem in Cambodia.

Organizations and individuals continue to debate over what constitutes prostitution and trafficking. The U.S.-headquartered Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) is an example of those who argue that all prostitution is forced since violence or social or economic pressures force a person to become a prostitute. Those who consider all prostitution to be trafficking oppose legalizing prostitution. Others, such as the Global Alliance Against Trafficking (GAATW), claim that not all prostitution is

3. Bales, *Modern Slavery*, 38.

4. "Trafficking in Persons Report," U.S. Department of State, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.state.gov>.

slavery since adults are able to consent to participate in illegal activity such as prostitution. Both sides agree that minors should not be engaged in prostitution.⁵

The definition of prostitution and human trafficking remains elusive due to a variety of nuances and scenarios. Many female sex slaves are tricked into believing they are leaving their families and homes to go work at a legitimate job in another city. Other girls are sold by their own families. Others enter prostitution willingly yet discover they cannot leave the awful conditions. Still other women choose to work and stay in the industry.⁶ Traffickers generally capture Cambodian women and children from highly impoverished rural areas such as Kampong Cham, Battambang, Svey Rieng, Prey Veng, Kandal, and Takeo.⁷

In Cambodia, distinguishing independent prostitutes from sex slaves remains difficult due to the variety of their reasons for entering and staying within the sex trade. Factors such as poverty or minimal choices of occupation lead some women to willingly enter prostitution. Many women continue in prostitution due to the stigma of being a *Srey Kouc*, a 'broken woman' or prostitute, once they have lost their virginity.⁸

The Politics of Cambodia

Throughout the history of Cambodia, freedom has not been guaranteed to all the people within its borders. Up until the 1800s, the rulers of Cambodia governed loosely under a monarchic system and central government. Since there were no schools in

5. Bales, *Modern Slavery*, 75-76.

6. Vidyamali Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking in Asia: The Resilience of Patriarchy in a Changing World* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 91-92.

7. *Ibid.*, 105-106.

8. *Ibid.*, 104.

Cambodia even into the twentieth century, only monks and the young boys they tutored received education. As a result, the public officials had no political knowledge and sought mainly to acquire personal riches rather than improve society.⁹ When France made Cambodia one of her protectorates during the late nineteenth century, French colonialism developed an integrated model legal system in Cambodia. In 1935, the French built the first high school in Phnom Penh to educate the royal family. The French then sent several talented Cambodian students to study in Paris, anticipating their later return to govern the colonial government in Cambodia. Though appointed King of Cambodia by France in 1941, Norodom Sihanouk soon led Cambodia to achieve independence of French rule. Sihanouk's extravagant lifestyle and aberration of aid from the United States brought disapproval from the Cambodians. A military coup displaced Sihanouk from office in 1970, placing the corrupt prime minister, Lon Nol, as the new head of government. One Cambodian student sent to study in France, Saloth Sar, later known by his nom de guerre, Pol Pot, brought back the learned system of Communism to Cambodia. After several years of planning, the Cambodian students who returned from France gathered enough support from the provinces to overthrow Lon Nol and establish Communism in Cambodia.¹⁰

In 1975, when Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge (the Cambodian Communist military regime) ruled Cambodia under the title of Democratic Kampuchea (DK), most Cambodians had no protection for their basic rights. During this time, the DK regime destroyed the legal system of Cambodia since the Communists did not perceive any value

9. Joel Brinkley, *Cambodia's Curse: The Modern History of a Troubled Land* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2012), 24.

10. *Ibid.*, 26-30.

in the law. The DK murdered all the Cambodians involved in legal and academic work, as well as other intellectuals. Through the cultural purging of Cambodia, the DK regime also destroyed legal texts and court buildings. Supported by Vietnam, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PKK) ousted the Communist Khmer Rouge from power in 1979, yet did not immediately focus many resources towards reinstating the legal system. During the 1980s, the power of the ruling party and officials dominated the decisions of the judiciary. Even when the government framed a new constitution in 1989 and transitioned to the State of Cambodia (SOC), the influence of the executive branch still blended with the duties of the judiciary.¹¹ Cambodia's most recent constitution, established in 1993, supposedly guarantees the independence of the judiciary from the legislative and executive branches. Ideally, political insularity should inhibit judges from advancing the goals of political institutions.¹²

Cambodia's Ministry of Justice (MOJ) only allocates about 0.1 percent of the GDP budget, or about U.S. 2.4 million dollars, for the judicial system. In 2003, 1.7 percent of the GDP, or U.S. 91.2 million dollars, funded the defense department. The court buildings throughout Cambodia do not even have basic supplies unless the staff personally provides the necessary office supplies. For example, the Phnom Penh

11. Kheang Un, "The Judicial System and Democratization in Post-Conflict Cambodia," in *Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society*, eds. Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), 74-75.

12. *Ibid.*, 70-73.

Municipal Court (PPMC) which has jurisdiction over the capital, Phnom Penh, is deteriorating internally due to lack of funds for the upkeep of the legal services.¹³

The majority of the 198 judges serving in the legal system in 2002 did not have the proper legal education required for the vital roles of rebuilding justice within the nation. According to a 2000 Asian Development Bank (ADB) study, only 40 per cent of the judicial personnel had attended lower secondary school. Seven per cent did not finish any more than a primary education. Weakened respect for the judiciary often leads the local police to prevent the execution of the courts' verdicts by not cooperating with legal decisions.¹⁴

Court officials attribute corruption within the judicial system and law enforcement to the patronage system. Leaders of all levels of politics in Cambodia receive power based on the success of maintaining the loyalty of other elites. Preserving an urban-rural dichotomy, Prime Minister Hun Sen continues to lead Cambodia through a system of political elitism. The following Cambodian proverb reveals the general public's recognition and resignation to institutionalized corruption: "*Thum si tam thum touch si tam touch*"; "the big eat big, the small eat small."¹⁵

Leaders in Cambodia have insisted that human rights cannot be universal since each country follows its own path for political, economic, and social development. For example, the government of Cambodia considers due process to be granted to specific

13. Un, "The Judicial System," 75-76.

14. Ibid., 78-80.

15. Un, "State, Society and Democratic Consolidation: The Case of Cambodia1." *Pacific Affairs* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 230, accessed September 12, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40022690>.

people rather than equally across society.¹⁶ The overwhelming majority of Cambodians do not even have access to an unbiased judiciary through which to confront state workers who violate human rights as protected in the constitution. The police and military are unreliable since they themselves safeguard their interests by wielding arbitrary power to protect themselves and the ruling elite. In addition to a lack of protected civil rights, many Cambodian citizens have quite limited access to health services and institutions of education.¹⁷ Furthermore, government officials do not believe legal protection should be offered to criminals. In 2005, however, Prime Minister Hun Sen declared that enforcing human rights protection is second only to enforcing the law.¹⁸

Even the judicial system is rife with bribery, which people consider to be a method of investment. Prosecutors and judges usually accept bribes since they themselves have received favors in the past from such reciprocal relationships. Upon being interviewed, one judge admitted, “I want judges to be able to say precisely what they see. If they see [something] wrong, they say it is wrong.... But in reality, judges feel really cold. If we do not compromise, they [powerful people] can remove us.”¹⁹ Based on the kleptocracy intertwined within the state, few trust Hun Sen to keep the government

16. Judy Ledgerwood and Kheang Un, “Global Concepts and Local Meaning: Human Rights and Buddhism in Cambodia,” *Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 4 (December 2003): 537- 538, accessed October 23, 2013, *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost.

17. Markus Karbaum, “Cambodia's Façade Democracy and European Assistance,” *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 30, no. 4 (December 2011): 121, accessed September 12, 2013, *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost.

18. Duncan McCargo, “Cambodia: Getting Away With Authoritarianism?” *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 4 (2005): 110, accessed September 11, 2013, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2005.006>.

19. Un, “State,” 232- 233.

free from corruption when the leaders in his administration are corrupt. “These conditions, if they persist over time, will consequently impede the deepening of democracy and legitimacy because they undermine the rule of law and people’s trust not only in the court system but also in other political institutions.”²⁰

The case can be made that civil society should unite to actively protest the illegal actions of the Cambodian government. Non-governmental organizations, or NGOs, greatly contribute to Cambodian civil society by promoting democracy and educating the people about democratic values to elevate living standards and deepen the people’s knowledge and association with civic culture.²¹ In addition to supplying the people with civic knowledge, NGOs aim to mobilize the people to pressure the state and elites to consider and adopt their policy reform suggestions. Cambodian non-governmental organizations, CNGOs, also contribute to human rights advocacy by representing the poor and abused. However, the Cambodian judicial system denies fair justice even to the CNGOs.²² Since the establishment of the 1993 Constitution, the government has not yet passed a law determining the rights and regulations of NGOs.

Taking these factors together, it is evident that Cambodian politics has made the prosecution of human trafficking difficult at best. Cambodian judges have deemed the use of undercover evidence collection illegal for human trafficking cases even though Cambodian law does not explicitly prohibit such operations. Because traffickers have advanced their methods of trafficking to become more clandestine, proactive

20. Un, “The Judicial System,” 96.

21. Un, “State,” 235.

22. Ibid., 236.

investigation is needed in order to collect enough evidence to build thorough cases. The 2013 Trafficking in Persons Report recommends that the government of Cambodia issue an executive decree (*prakas*) to authorize undercover investigation of human trafficking.

The 2013 TIP Report also seeks to

improve interagency cooperation and coordination between police, court officials, and other government personnel on trafficking cases and victim referral processes; and continue to promulgate public awareness campaigns aimed at reducing the demand for commercial sex and child sex tourism by locals and foreign nationals.²³

The 2013 TIP Report reveals the slow progress the Cambodian government is making towards eliminating trafficking. In the past year, the government prosecuted and convicted fewer trafficking criminals than the year before. Since the Cambodian government has not significantly addressed human trafficking within the last year, Cambodia ranks on the Tier 2 Watch List. A country reaches Tier 1 status by publicly recognizing the problem of human trafficking, making steps to address the issue, and fulfilling the TVPA's minimum standards. A country's government must increase notable progress against trafficking each year to retain its Tier 1 status.²⁴

Although the Cambodian government does promote victim identification policies, the government does not yet prescribe procedures for the law enforcement officials to discover victims of vulnerable populations. The scarcity of long-term care and restoration leaves trafficking victims extremely susceptible to the cycle of re-trafficking. The Cambodian government also has not outlined the proper procedure to officially transfer the custody of child victims; therefore NGOs caring for those victims can be liable to

23. U.S. Department of State, "Trafficking in Persons Report," 2013.

24. Ibid.

court actions against them. Cambodia's government created the National Committee on the Suppression of Human Trafficking, Smuggling, and Labor and Sexual Exploitation to spearhead Cambodia's anti-trafficking endeavors. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation identified only 958 victims total for the past year, a dramatic decrease from the 1,131 victims identified in the preceding report period. The influx of child sex tourism causes the Cambodian government to deal with pedophile cases. The Cambodian government released a convicted Australian pedophile from prison in December 2012 without even investigating the claims that his lawyer bribed the victim's family in order to force her to alter her testimony. Cambodia pardoned over 400 criminals, several of which were convicted pedophiles, during the funeral ceremonies for the former Cambodian king in February 2013. In response to the festering problem of trafficking, the Cambodian government does continue to lead the police to raid brothels.²⁵ While the Cambodian government acknowledges the problem of trafficking in the nation, many procedures must be uniformly enforced in order to effectually prevent future trafficking and punish current criminals.

The main governmental office that leads the anti-trafficking campaign in Cambodia is the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs of Cambodia (MWVA).²⁶ Mere existence of state departments cannot be enough to ensure justice throughout a country. For example, in 2006, Cambodia's former Deputy Director of the Police Anti-

25. U.S. Department of State.

26. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 90.

Human and Juvenile Protection Department himself was convicted of his involvement with trafficking.²⁷

Cambodia possesses certain domestic laws condemning kidnapping, trafficking, and exploitation, for example: *The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia* (created in 1993 and amended in 1999); *Laws on the Suppression of Kidnapping, Trafficking, Exploitation of the Human Persons* (1996), and *Provisions Relating to the Judiciary and Criminal Law and procedure Applicable to Cambodia during the Transitional Period* (1992). Cambodia ratified the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2003. Cambodia and Thailand share the Memorandum of Understanding (MUO) to combat cross-border trafficking. Since the lawmakers, judges, and police are predominantly male, and the culture accepts commercial sex, the laws passed relating to such issues have not been fully implemented. Even though sex trafficking and prostitution are illegal in Cambodia, high-ranking officials are known for personally utilizing commercial sex, and even for aiding the transport of victims as the result of bribes. Some law enforcement officers also work as guards at certain brothels. Some brothel-owners pay public officials between \$100-200 USD monthly in exchange for immunity from arrest.²⁸

Overview of Sex Slavery in Cambodia

NGOs seek to fulfill the neglected needs of societies since foreign governments and militaries cannot resolve every social and political fragmentation when disasters devastate populations. Ninety NGOs operated throughout Cambodia in 1994 to aid in the

27. Louise I. Shelley, *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective* (Cambridge [UK]: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 86.

28. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 116-118.

reconstruction of the nation.²⁹ Many foreign nations sent groups and organizations to Cambodia to help the nation rebuild after the rule of the Khmer Rouge and the Vietnamese forces.

Not all peace-making missions aiming to assist the oppressed people across the globe produce completely positive results. For example, when the UN Transitional Authority Forces arrived in Cambodia in 1991 to aid in the preparations for the nation's first elections since the Khmer Rouge, they consequently increased the existing demand for sexual services. The number of prostitutes in the cities rose from 6000 to 20,000 in one year alone. According to the Cambodian Women's Development Association, over half of those prostitutes were victims of human trafficking. In Cambodia, traffickers often smuggle women from rural regions to large cities like the capital, Phnom Penh, as well as Thailand and Malaysia.³⁰

As an origin, transit, and destination country for people of all ages, Cambodia continues to hold an active role in perpetuating human sex trafficking. In addition to the enslaved Cambodian women, sex slaves from Laos and Vietnam work in areas such as Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Southeast Asia exports sexual slaves to brothels in East Asia, Australia, Europe, and even the United States.³¹ According to Cambodian anti-trafficking NGOs, brothels resemble social clubs since men congregate to consume

29. Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: from Togo to Turkmenistan, from Iran to Cambodia—a Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy* (New York: Vintage Departures/Vintage Books, 1997), 408-409.

30. Bales, *Modern Slavery*, 71.

31. David Batstone, *Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade - and How We Can Fight It* (New York: HarperOne, 2007), 21.

alcohol and food. In addition to providing sexual services, the sex industry in Cambodia offers other services such as bars, night clubs, discos, massage parlors, and guesthouses.³²

Two types of sex work prevail in modern Cambodia. Many sex workers work directly from brothels to which they have been trafficked. Indirect sex work refers to the girls who serve in bars or guest houses and may have the ability to leave their work after hours, but most have been enticed into the commercial sex business with false promises of honest work. Due to the proximity to the capital, Tuol Kork and Sway Pak represent the major concentrations of brothel communities in Cambodia. The red light district of Tuol Kork spans about two and half kilometers along a major highway. In addition to the pimps, guards, and girls, the *meabons*, or brothel owners, supervise the premises from the center of each brothel. Most *meabons* are actually females themselves. Sway Pak, called “K11” since it is eleven kilometers from Phnom Penh, actually is the worst red light district in Phnom Penh. Guarded by steel and iron gates, the concrete brothels of Sway Pak also employ barbed wire or sharp stakes atop fences to ensure the captivity of the sex workers within the premises of the brothels. Although Prime Minister Hun Sen closed down fifty brothels in 2003 and commanded karaoke bars and discos to close, the underage prostitution of Khmer and Vietnamese girls continues to be a problem in Sway Pak.³³

Besides the capital of Phnom Penh, sex workers work from major cities nearby the border with Thailand: Battambang, Siem Reap, Poipet. The border cities house many Vietnamese girls as sex slaves. Even during the day, truckloads of Thai and Khmer

32. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 104.

33. *Ibid.*, 102-103.

soldiers enter the brothels. As a port city in southwest Cambodia, Sihanoukville also serves a major site of the sex industry, serving fishermen, sailors, and foreign tourists. Fueled by tourism surrounding the ancient Angkor temples of Siem Reap, the sex industry caters to thousands of tourists each day.³⁴

Sex slaves in Cambodia serve an average of eight to ten customers per day. Even though a girl's value as a prostitute is high at first, her value varies based on her age, physical beauty, and purity. According to the NGO Agape International Missions in Cambodia, virgin sex sales can range between USD \$5,000-8,000. The average cost for purchasing sex with a pre-pubescent girl who has already lost her virginity remains staggering at USD \$400.³⁵ Sex slaves have to work to repay the total purchasing price from the trafficker as well as the brothel owner. Prostitution in Cambodia reaps an annual revenue of about \$205 million. The intermediaries clearly profit the most since they receive money from the pimps and brothel owners.³⁶

Several factors contribute to the reasons why sex slavery festers so deeply in Cambodia: deleterious poverty, armed conflicts, swift industrialization, and rapid population growth.³⁷ Although Southeast Asia has transitioned from subsistence farming to cash-crop agriculture, the distribution of wealth is greatly disproportionate.³⁸ Women

34. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 103-104.

35. "CNN: Everyday in Cambodia ជីវិតនៃការរស់នៅក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ភាគ." Khmer-News.org, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://khmer-news.org/videos/vdetail.php?vid =145881664435-1523>.

36. Samarasinghe, 112-113.

37. Batstone, *Not for Sale*, 21-22.

38. *Ibid.*, 23.

in Cambodia have an unequal social status from men in regards to education and occupations.

The Role of Women in Cambodia

Religion and Ethics

Daughters in Southeast Asia tend to have more responsibilities than sons, such as caring for other siblings as well as their parents. According to Theravada Buddhism, women are unable to reach the highest echelon of enlightenment. While working during their entire life to accumulate enough karma to be born a male in the next life, the very fact a woman is a woman suggests that the woman must have been immoral in a previous life.³⁹

Chap Srey, the traditional code of ethics governing Cambodian women's behavior, continues to regulate the manners of girls and women in today's conservative Cambodian families. In addition to being shy and naïve, a Cambodian girl must walk so quietly that no one can hear the rustling of her silk skirt. Cambodian women must also be capable of managing such household matters as family finances.⁴⁰ Cambodian women remember their proper roles as servants of their husbands and their parents. Because the gender hierarchy has been institutionalized for centuries, many Cambodian women today share the mindset that they are inferior to men and cannot work in all the same areas, such as politics. Recently, the few women in business and leadership positions have been

39. Batstone, *Not for Sale*, 54.

40. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 94.

trying to reverse the patriarchal hierarchy by empowering women with new skills, such as computer-technology use.⁴¹

Undoubtedly the increase of rape, trafficking, and prostitution reveal the extremely low status attributed to females in Cambodia. Ung Vanna, poet, activist, and officer of the UN Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP) reflects upon Cambodian society: “We are losing our values and human rights and morality ... We had such problems before the war, but following the Khmer Rouge period, it seems that the misuse and abuse of girls by men is growing.”⁴² In addition to the institutions of politics, religion, the military, and government, contemporary Cambodian women still have unequal access to education, health services, and economic positions. Traditionally women fulfill the *me phtëah* (‘household head’) position by managing the family’s finances in addition to supervising the moral education and physical needs of the children. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs reinterpreted the popular Khmer saying (which likened women to cloth and men to gold) to *Neary Rattanak* (women are precious gems) in 2003. Women have been typically confined to the domestic sphere since men reign in the public sector. Even girls should not leave their homes without a chaperone, according to the *Chap Srey*. As farmers, currency converters, and producers of handicraft,

41. Mona Lilja, “Globalization, Women’s Political Participation and the Politics of Legitimacy,” in *Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society*, eds. Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja (Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009), 140-141.

42. Kate Grace Freison, “No Longer a ‘Happy Balance’: the Decline of Female Status in Khmer Village Culture,” in *Anthropology and Community in Cambodia: Reflections on the Work of May Ebihara*, ed. John A. Marston (Caulfield: Monash University Press, 2011), 171-188.

Khmer women for ages have been pivotal in the flow and development of local markets and the economy.⁴³

May Ebihara studied rural Cambodian life in the 1960s before the devastating forces of the Red Khmer demolished the very foundations of society in Cambodia. Ebihara's research revealed much balance and equality between genders during that time. "The pooling of labour and resources among kinsfolk at crucial times of the rice-growing cycle and women's active participation in agricultural production, coupled with equal opportunities for women and men in petty-trade income-generating opportunities, meant that gender disparities in economic and agricultural production were not evident."⁴⁴ As shown in Ebihara's studies, the family unit formed the most significant sociological pillar of Cambodia's village culture. Since the families lived and worked together, the family unit provided the main identity for villagers. Some Cambodians believe men's attitudes towards women drastically changed during and after the Khmer Rouge era. "Before the war, before Pol Pot, women had status in the family and her parents could protect her if her husband was abusive. But now families are torn apart, women are sometimes forced to marry bad men because there are so few among whom to choose, and who can protect these women when things go wrong?"⁴⁵ Ebihara's work is one of the few scholarly publications indicating the social norms regarding lifestyle, rites of passage, marriage, and social relations of ordinary Khmers prior to the destruction of Cambodian society.⁴⁶

43. Freison, "No Longer," 174-175.

44. *Ibid.*, 176.

45. *Ibid.*, 178.

46. *Ibid.*, 181, 188.

Sexuality

The dramatic showcase of rigid morality in Cambodia often conceals the widespread exploitation of women in Cambodia. The sexual morality of Khmer women reflects the nation's health and strength. Historically, women in Cambodia have been considered the gate-keepers of the nation's morality, restraining the wildness of passion from overruling temperance. Even though living conditions were barely survivable for most people in Cambodia under the governing of Democratic Kampuchea, some women mournfully wish for the return of some of those policies. Notably Democratic Kampuchea imposed puritanical laws on sexual morality by forbidding men to have more than one wife.

Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge indoctrinated the army as well as the Cambodians with many slogans. In particular, the Khmer Rouge imposed strict, militant control over all social relationships among the people, including private areas of civilian life: "*Mit min trou pahpoal nieri: phét laøy*" : 'Comrades, do not touch the female sex' closely matches the purpose of "moral rule no.6" during DK: *Salethoa ti pram muey* : 'Thou shalt not commit any indecent act with a woman.'⁴⁷ The Khmer Rouge party also arranged partners among the people for most marriages while attempting to convince the people that they had personally chosen whom they would marry.

- 1- *a:ch chræ:h ræ:h ku: srâhkâ: daoy khluen aèng*
- 2- *ângka: chattang*
- 3- *min ko:rup ta:m ângka : chattang té, trou bânchhu:n tou rien so :t muey royéak*
- 1- You can choose your spouse yourself.
- 2- *Angkar* endorses [your partner].

47. Henri Locard, *Pol Pot's Little Red Book: The Sayings of Angkar* (Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2004), 265.

- 3- If you do not obey *Angkar's* discipline, you will be sent to a study session for a time.⁴⁸

Perhaps the people wishing for the stringent control of sexuality during the Khmer Rouge have forgotten the society of collectivism. Another of Pol Pot's sayings clearly shows the dissolution of individual identity:

Trou lèah bang kruesa: to:ch chhnang to:ch haæy bânkaæt chnang thom kruesa: thum moha: kruesa: moha: chney prâdit padévoat khpuh! 'Renounce immediate family ties, the hearth's pot, and adopt the big pot, the big family, the immense family; have an extremely high revolutionary consciousness!⁴⁹

While political officials of Cambodia boldly proclaim that the sexuality of the Khmer women must be protected, many government officers indulge in personal mistresses. In 2004, Prime Minister Hun Sen provoked several ministries such as the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Religion, and the Ministry of Women's and Veterans' Affairs to deliberate over laws to improve the morality of Cambodia. In 2006, Hun Sen even proposed a law prohibiting mistresses, legally based on Article 45 of Cambodia's Constitution, which clearly defines marriage as the relationship between a husband and wife based on mutual consent.⁵⁰

Cambodian society believes girls should remain virgins until they marry. Although the age of consent for marriage for Cambodian girls is 15 years, many girls do not marry until they are older than 18 years.⁵¹ Women often become sex slaves as a result

48. Locard, *Pol Pot's*, 266.

49. *Ibid.*, 270.

50. Penny Edwards, "The Moral Geology of the Present: Structuring Morality, Menace and Merit," in *People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia Today*, eds. Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler. Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008, 227-234.

51. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 108.

of the cultural view of shame: regardless of how a woman has lost her virginity, she is considered “used goods.” Slaveholders often personally rape virgin girls to further enslave them to the prostitution industry since their honor will be tarnished.⁵² Like a stained cloth, women who lose their virginity before marriage are subject to scorn by Cambodian society. Cambodian society view men, however, as gold that can be washed off after sexual experiences to retain their original value.⁵³

Education and Career Opportunities

Traditional Cambodian families often encourage sons to attend school while considering their daughters ineligible for schooling since they must tend to household matters. Based on the conservative values of rural Cambodians especially, there still remains a high disparity in literacy levels based on gender. As of 2009, male literacy reached a peak of 82.8 per cent while female literacy remains just at 65.9 per cent.⁵⁴ Because many families cannot afford to send all of their children to school, parents select boys to receive education. Because teachers receive very low wages, often they require bribes, or unofficial fees for enrollment. The ratio of schools to communities remains too low to adequately provide education for the children living outside the major cities.⁵⁵ In 2010, only 2.6 per cent of Cambodia’s GDP was devoted towards education expenditures.⁵⁶

52. Batsone, *Not for Sale*, 34-35.

53. *Ibid.*, 89.

54. “Cambodia,” *The World Factbook*, accessed February 3, 2014, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>.

55. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 94-95.

56. “Cambodia.”

Actors Involved with Forced Prostitution

Recruiters for trafficking girls and women may be family members like uncles, aunts, cousins, husbands, in-laws, and parents or friends and neighbors. Oftentimes these family members or friends promise a good job in another city that will bring in a secure income. In addition to being sold into sex slavery as a result of deception from trusted people, trafficked victims also have been abducted into position by pimps.⁵⁷ Recruiters and traffickers gain much money through the steady supply of women and girls they capture. Undoubtedly a cruel male pimp resonates in the minds of most people when they think about sex trafficking. Women, however, are becoming just as involved as the ones running the enslavement of other women. Some mistresses formerly were also sex slaves now reaping revenge or perhaps are blackmailed to perform such inhumane acts.⁵⁸

The male customers seeking sexual pleasure from prostitution clearly ensure the constant demand for the services of sex slaves. In Cambodia, Cambodians represent the majority of the sex users. Eight different categories of child sex users illuminate the customer basis for the atrocious continuation of child sex slavery:

1) Moto-taxi drivers; 2) male migrant labor from rural areas living alone that use cheap brothels; 3) military/police. ... customers include both high to low ranking law enforcement personnel; 4) sailors and truckers and [f]ishermen. ... 5) employers of domestic workers. They sexually abuse young domestic workers under their employ; 6) traveling businessmen, who accept the hospitality of their hosts in the form of temporary sexual partners; 7) expatriates, especially those ... involved in the tourism industry ... ; 8) aid workers, who have spent a long period of time in Cambodia and may ... view indulging in the sex trade ... as an acceptable behavior.⁵⁹

57. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 107.

58. Bales, *Modern Slavery*, 81.

59. Samarasinghe, 107-108.

According to a 2002 report by international aid agency, World Vision, men constitute 65 percent of all tourists to Cambodia, the sole reason one-fifth of them travel there is to have sex.⁶⁰ Sex tourists, the emerging next type of customer, travel from Thailand, China, Japan, Australia, Switzerland, France, the U.K., and the United States. Aided by international communication technology (ICT), globalization enables a faster connection between the supply and demand for sex tourism in Cambodia. Web sites promoting Cambodia's sex trade boost the "darker side of tourism" by encouraging the "virgin seekers and pedophiles who come in the guise of tourist and who prey upon the young victims, both girls and boys."⁶¹

According to the nonprofit organization End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography, and the Trafficking of Children (ECPAT), Cambodia is one of the most popular destinations for child sex tourism. Situational child sex tourists travel to other countries for many reasons and only purchase sex from children if the opportunity arrives. Preferential child sex tourists, however, travel with the intent of engaging in child sex and may even decide to live in the destination country. Some child sex offenders in Southeast Asia live in those countries long term and use their occupation as the connection to accessing children for malicious, sexual purposes. These exploiters often choose isolated communities to work as teachers or aid workers for such malignant goals.⁶²

60. Batstone, *Not for Sale*, 60.

61. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 110.

62. Alexis A. Aronowitz, *Human Trafficking, Human Misery the Global Trade in Human Beings* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2009), 134-135.

Girls who are trafficked under the age of fifteen years old become victims of pedophilia. Men seeking sex with virgins are willing to pay the exorbitantly high price for such an unmentionable act. Although virgin girls can initially be sold for anywhere between U.S. \$300-700, their value can decrease even to just 5,000 riel, little more than one USD, per act of sex work once after her initial service.⁶³ Men demand virgins for various reasons. Naturally the risk of HIV/AIDS decreases with the less experienced prostitutes. Cambodians also tend to believe that sex with a virgin can invigorate older male customers. In some cases, young girls who already lost their virginity from sex work have been forced to have their hymens re-stitched. *Meabons* then persist to enforce the high price for virgins for those girls after their ‘hymenoplasty.’⁶⁴

Most girls and women living in the bondage of forced prostitution must daily masquerade as enthusiastic, friendly, and seductive women in order to please the guards and pimps and earn profits for the brothel owners. Once trafficked to a brothel, new recruits essentially are prisoners of the pimp or perhaps a high-paying customer. After graduating from being the under complete lock down for work only, sex workers have slightly less restrictions. If the girls do not agree to service any or all of their customers, they will be subject to punishment such as physical beating or denial of meals. The majority of sex slaves do not even know how much of a debt they are trying to pay back to the brothel owner for the original purchasing price from which they were sold from the trafficker. Often the brothel owners add charges from anything they decide the girls owe them in addition to the initial price. Some trafficked prostitutes can retain a portion of

63. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 109.

64. *Ibid.*, 108-109.

their earnings to spend how they would like on personal items or as remittances to send back to their families. According to UNICEF, “any economic gain is accompanied by months, if not years, of inhumane treatment, rape, beatings, ill health, possibly death as well as psychological trauma and nightmares.”⁶⁵

Obstacles to Development in Cambodia

Anti-sex trafficking NGOs focus on several initiatives: developing prevention programs, coordinating efforts with genuine law enforcement officers to rescue trafficked people, sheltering and restoring the lives of the trafficked victims. NGOs fighting sex trafficking in Cambodia face several obstacles such as the corruption of law enforcement and the criminal activity involved with trafficking and prostitution. Some shelters even disguise the institution as an orphanage since brothel owners send their armed guards to raid shelters to reclaim former sex slaves. Networking from the grassroots level, the anti-sex trafficking NGOs in Cambodia fuel the fight against sex slavery.⁶⁶ Western-sponsored NGOs present the truth to rural women that they are intellectually and physically strong, independent, and capable of accomplishing work in leadership roles. This ‘new’ interpretation of the female identity allows Cambodian women to envision a brighter future for themselves as they begin to except these freeing views.⁶⁷

Development workers greatly influence the change in Cambodia’s moral order and religion. Specifically, development workers serve as intermediates between bureaucracy and the local culture. Vandra Harris conducted a comparative study in 2003

65. Samarasinghe, *Female Sex Trafficking*, 110-111.

66. *Ibid.*, 119-120.

67. Lilja, “Globalization,” 144-148.

of the perspectives of development workers in Cambodian and the Philippines. Harris discussed the results of the research in Cambodia after interviewing seventeen Cambodians and four expatriate workers, many of whom worked with religious organizations. Lida, (a pseudonym given by Harris) served as the director of a women's NGO in northeastern Cambodia. She reflected on the unfortunate problems of securing proper funding for the highest needs for the people, such as community development, since funding organizations lack knowledge of the true needs of Cambodian culture. The foreign perspective regarding using specific amounts of money in specific methods on a strict timeline of productivity can clash with the actual manners of accomplishing long-term developmental change in Cambodia. True to the Western vision of work, many funding agencies desire only the feedback of financial project outcomes. Lida resourcefully appropriates the money from funding to projects with focuses on gender, violence, and nutrition issues. Lida also disclosed the hesitation of village women to talk with the development workers. The women often lack confidence to confide since they equate their illiteracy with the inability to effect change. Women in those northern villages now speak out about domestic violence rather than suppressing their struggles.⁶⁸

While foreign culture influence from media contributes to the weakening of respect and the growth of individualism and consumerism among Cambodian youth, Cambodian culture manages to maintain its unique aspects. Cambodian practitioners seek to transform the bad components of Cambodian culture. Cambodians tend to embrace change when they see the positive benefits. Development practitioners must delicately

68. Vandra Harris, "Development Workers as Agents of Cultural Change," in *People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia Today*, 293-309, eds. Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler, (Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008), 293-297.

balance their tasks assigned by the development organizations with the norms of Cambodian culture. For example, an expatriate worker noted that Cambodian villagers view development workers in high regard of status based on their knowledge and assumed authority. The development workers cannot, therefore, always serve in an egalitarian manner since the people would not trust their messages or projects if they lived in the same lifestyle they lived in. The staff of one international organization began living in the slums to be nearer to the people they were serving, but the people were shocked to think that even the workers found themselves back in poverty. The impoverished Cambodians did not desire to follow any international model that could lead to a reincarnation of poverty.⁶⁹

Non-governmental Organizations Fighting Sex Trafficking

The sinful darkness of sex trafficking cannot cloak Cambodia forever. Foreigners have established numerous non-governmental and nonprofit organizations over the past few decades since Cambodia became safe once again after emerging from the Khmer Rouge era. The non-governmental organizations in Cambodia bridge the gap between the government and Cambodians to protect the sanctity and freedom of the Cambodians. These NGOs reflect the freedom of individuals to personally assist others, rather than the state being the sole provider of aid. Although people are responsible for their own selves, the NGOs seek to assist individuals more than the federal government.⁷⁰

Among those organizations that bring hope and freedom to Cambodian women and children enslaved in sex trafficking are the Hagar Shelter, International Justice

69. Harris, "Development Workers," 299-302.

70. Erica Bornstein, "Faith, Liberty, and the Individual in Humanitarian Assistance," in *Nongovernmental Politics*, eds. Michel Feher, Gaele Krikorian, and Yates McKee (New York: Zone Books, 2007), 663-664.

Mission (IJM), Agape International Missions (AIM), and the Somaly Mam Foundation. The famous words from Edmund Burke ring true even two hundred years later: “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men [and women] do nothing.”⁷¹ Without the valiant, genuine efforts of NGOs to stop the progress of the sex trade and restore the lives of former sex slaves, millions of people would remain enslaved in the bondage of sexual slavery.

Pierre Tami created the Hagar Shelter in 1994 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Tami first started his journey in Cambodia in 1990 by working for a nongovernmental aid agency to determine what kind of aid could be made available for the impoverished nation. Even though a communist regime ruled at the time, the Swiss Tami was permitted to remain working in the nation. Inspired by this traditional Khmer proverb, “If Heaven could cry, then Cambodia would never know drought,” Tami sought to address the wails of the ailing masses in Cambodia. By 1994, Tami had enough funding and planning established to enable him to establish the Hagar Shelter. Drawing inspiration also from the Bible, Tami chose the story of Hagar (meaning “the one who flees and is afraid”) to be the theme of his ministry. The Hagar shelter specifically began to serve outcast mothers, as well as their children, in Phnom Penh. Cambodia’s Prime Minister Hun Sen himself attended the opening ceremony for the shelter, claiming its need as a remedy for Cambodian women.⁷²

The Hagar Shelter seeks to train rescued women to re-enter society as self-sufficient, healthy citizens. Tami decided Hagar could not be confined to nonprofit status

71. Bales, *Modern Slavery*, 18.

72. Batstone, *Not for Sale*, 28-29, 50-51.

because by creating meaningful jobs, the women at the organization could become independent and generate wealth to sustain them and the next generation. The Hagar Shelter created a Soya Company as Cambodia's first and primary mass-producer of soya milk. During the early 2000s, the U.S. Department of Agriculture connected Tami to financing from the International Finance Corporation. Today Hagar Soya produces twelve thousand liters per day of soya milk with a shelf life of one year per package. In addition to the success of Hagar Soya, Tami spearheaded several other enterprises from the shelter. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell recognized Pierre Tami in 2004 for his innovative system for rejuvenating the lives of victimized Cambodian women. In 2005, the catering branch of the Hagar Shelter produced a dividend of \$20,000 to be used for funding Hagar's social service outreaches. Noticing the success of his ministries, international investors have implored Tami to utilize the Hagar model throughout the world in other suffering sites along the slave trade trail.⁷³

Founded in 1997, International Justice Mission (IJM) offers a unique approach to humanitarian assistance by seeking to not only rescue the oppressed, but also to punish the perpetrators. IJM works with the local law enforcement authorities in over eleven countries, including Cambodia.⁷⁴ IJM describes the modern slavery of sex trafficking as a business since traffickers use violence to support and maintain the commercial sex trade. Trafficking thrives most in countries like Cambodia whose justice systems do not effectively protect the vulnerable women and children. Perpetrators will continue to engage in their criminal behavior when they perceive the lack of repercussions for their

73. Batstone, *Not for Sale*, 68-71.

74. "Who We Are," International Justice Mission, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.ijm.org>.

own acts. “When the likelihood of serving serious jail time and paying significant financial damages increases, the potential financial rewards are no longer worth the high risk, and traffickers change their behavior.”⁷⁵

International Justice Mission utilizes a four-pronged approach to fight sex trafficking by rescuing victims, bringing criminals to justice, restoring survivors, and strengthening justice systems. The first step IJM undertakes is identifying children and adults who are forced into the sex industry. IJM workers reinforce professional law enforcement rescue missions in Cambodia while treating all people involved with dignity. IJM then develops convincing cases against the traffickers, pimps, and perpetrators to assist the prosecution of the criminals. In order to restore the survivors, IJM designs specific treatment plans for each survivor, including trauma counseling and aiding access to educational and vocational opportunities. Finally, IJM mentors and trains law enforcement, judicial, and medical professionals. IJM advocates for change in the justice systems of foreign countries to ensure the hearing of cases and protection of survivors.⁷⁶

On February 28, 2014, retired U.S. Marine Michael Pepe was finally found guilty and sentenced to 210 years in prison after being arrested in 2006 for sadistically abusing young children in Cambodia. IJM aided in the rescue of a trafficked girl in Cambodia who was forced to work at a brothel masked as a massage parlor. IJM coordinated with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Cambodian National Police to investigate further after hearing from the girl about the foreigner who abused her. After finding Michael Pepe’s house, the investigation discovered three other girls, hundreds of

75. “Sex Trafficking,” International Justice Mission, accessed April 2, 2014, <http://www.ijm.org/casework/sex-trafficking>.

76. Ibid.

pornographic images, drugs, videos, and rope and strips of cloth used to abuse the girls. Pepe deceived the public by working as a college professor during the day only to lure girls into his home so that he could sexually abuse them. Cambodian authorities convicted four others in addition to Pepe.

In addition to aiding the public prosecutor assigned to the criminal case, IJM represented the victims' civil interests by ensuring privacy and comfort for the girls throughout the case. During the first year of the case, Pepe's girlfriend was convicted and sentenced to 27 years in prison for her work in trafficking and pimping the underage girls. Under the PROTECT Act, which criminalizes the act of sexual abuse of children performed by U.S. citizens in foreign countries, Pepe was deported to the United States. Blair Burns, IJM's Director of Operations in Southeast Asia emphasized the commitment of the United States government to stop domestic and foreign sex trafficking since the US takes responsibility even for the violent acts committed by its citizens abroad. Seven out of the eight girls so horrifically abused by Michael Pepe courageously traveled to the United States to testify against Pepe in the trials in a California District Court. After stalling the official ruling for several years, the judge finally declared her ruling on February 28, 2014, ordering Pepe to pay \$247,000 in restitution in addition to the prison sentence of 210 years. IJM Cambodia Field Office Director Christa Hayden Sharpe offered a rewarding summary of the entire process:

This eight-year case has taken hundreds of thousands of dollars, thousands of people praying, hundreds of hours of legal and investigative work, dozens of people from two governments and three NGOs working together, seven astoundingly courageous lives giving their testimony to protect others, a trial in Cambodia, a trial in the U.S., and one revolutionary law that says U.S. citizens

cannot travel to other countries to abuse vulnerable children...and it was all worth it.⁷⁷

After testifying, the girls returned to their aftercare homes in Cambodia to continue therapy and begin taking classes again. Director Sharpe describes the young women as “thriving survivors. They are academic achievers, sisters, friends, artists, travelers, and comforters. They have big dreams for their future and they empower others to stop trafficking and violence.”⁷⁸

In 2006, Don and Bridget Brewster established Agape International Missions (AIM) in Cambodia to provide holistic aftercare for the children and women rescued from sex trafficking. Over fifty girls found safety through AIM in the first two years of the organization’s operation. The Brewsters founded Rahab’s House in 2008 as a community center in Svay Pak, one of the most infamous areas known for sex trafficking. Since the creation of the first Rahab’s House, the Brewsters have built several more centers to increase the accessibility of educational, health, and social opportunities for the communities. AIM even created the Lord’s Gym to minister to pimps and traffickers, understanding their need for transformation as a vital key in breaking down the trafficking system. The AIM Employment Center (AEC) offers career opportunities in the textile industry for the rescued women. Most importantly, AIM cooperates with churches throughout Cambodia to inform the Cambodians of the issue of sex trafficking, as well as to equip them with strategies to fight against the awful problem. Founder Don Brewster motivates the AIM team to “defeat child sex trafficking” and “fight until we’re

77. “Retired U.S. Marine Sentenced to 210 years in American Court for Sexually Abusing Young Cambodian Girls,” International Justice Mission, March 11, 2014, accessed April 2, 2014, <http://www.ijm.org/articles/retired-us-marine-sentenced-210-years-american-court-sexually-abusing-young-cambodian-girls>.

78. “Retired U.S. Marine.”

victorious,” working together with believers since “we need as many soldiers as we can get.”⁷⁹

Agape International Missions witnessed major accomplishments within the last few months. Don Brewster signed an agreement with the Cambodia government permitting AIM to employ an undercover team to investigate and aid in arrests related to sex trafficking. The significant event garnered national attention by being broadcast across Cambodia. Furthermore, AIM purchased land in Svay Pak to begin building an academy for the rescued girls. AIM will open a retail store in Phnom Penh to sell products from all the Employment Centers within AIM. By spreading the word in the capital, more people can join the fight against sex-trafficking.⁸⁰

Former Cambodian sex slave Somaly Mam founded the Somaly Mam Foundation (SMF) in 2007 to liberate victims and empower survivors of sex trafficking in Southeast Asia. SMF rescues women and children by providing them with alternative, healthier lifestyle choices.⁸¹ The Voices For Change program trains survivors to become advocates and leaders for the next generation. Through SMF, the cultural norms of Cambodia already are transforming to a more respectful view of females and a more critical view towards trafficking. The success of SMF can be seen “in a proud network of entrepreneurial female survivors starting businesses and social enterprises, in open conversations on human trafficking in mass media, in strategic government and police

79. “AIM's Story,” Agape International Missions, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://agapewebsite.org>.

80. Stephanie Vantassell, “6 Big Changes. 1 Big God,” Agape International Missions, accessed April 7, 2014, <http://agapewebsite.org/updates3-25-14/>.

81. “Mission & History,” Somaly Mam Foundation, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.somaly.org>.

partnerships, and in a growing trust in the rule of law, critical to combating corruption and protecting the victims.”⁸²

Every person should respond to the alarming increase of sex slaves worldwide based on a “relational social obligation” to aid their brothers and sisters across the globe, rather than fooling themselves into believing they have a choice of whether or not to accomplish anything to combat the sex trade.⁸³ Specifically, Christian NGOs offer more than just temporal hope for rescued victims of the sex trade. The Christian community greatly assists humanitarian aid since the individuals reached have the autonomy and privilege of becoming Christ-followers. As they lovingly demonstrate Christ’s love through their sincere actions and lifestyle of caring for the needs of others, the Christians working for the NGOs do not force the women and children to adopt Christianity as their own beliefs. Indeed, the rescued people may accept physical and emotional aid with or without choosing to be redeemed and born again. As the Cambodians become more independent and healthy on their own, their ‘growing responsibility to care for themselves reciprocally [will supplement] the power of the state by means of individual actions.’⁸⁴

Christian NGOs ministering to Cambodians seek to teach the truth of God’s Word to bring true freedom to the enslaved women and children. Pursuing wisdom through

82. “Victim Services,” Somaly Mam Foundation, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.somaly.org>.

83. Bornstein, “Faith,” 665.

84. Ibid., 663-664.

God's truth breaks the chains deception attempts to use to control people.⁸⁵ "The fact that the rule of Satan begins in our minds, when we choose to believe his deception, and culminates in the oppressive political institutions we build, means that untruth is the foundation of slavery."⁸⁶ By explaining the doctrines of Christ and salvation through Christ's death on the cross and subsequent resurrection, Christians can bring light to the darkness engulfing the victims of sex-trafficking. The Gospel message therefore calls for social and political reform freeing people from the bondage of slavery man imposes upon fellow man. The oppressive system of commercial sex bonds people to the false ideas that they are worthless and insignificant beyond their use for sexual and economic gratification.

Evangelizing all those involved in sex slavery aims to help the enslaved to eradicate the "dehumanizing, oppressive, and exploitative lies on the one hand, and on the other hand accept a new worldview that all human beings share the dignity of being made in God's image."⁸⁷ The oppressive system of sex trafficking cannot thrive by incessantly generating falsehood once evangelism begins to undercut the intellectual and moral foundations of such a system. Christianity constructs a new community and social structure centered on living out the truth of Scripture, making disciples of all the new believers who discover their intrinsic worth as children of God. True evangelism thus

85. Vishal Mangalwadi, *Truth and Transformation: A Manifesto for Ailing Nations* (Seattle, WA.: YWAM Pub., 2009), 132.

86. *Ibid.*, 159.

87. *Ibid.*, 164.

subjects the rulers of society under the kingship of Christ, curtailing the power of the state and requiring the laws of the government to align with the righteousness of God.⁸⁸

The abolition movements of the nineteenth and twentieth century did not terminate the horrific institution of slavery. Many forms of slavery subsist all across the globe. In particular, human trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of forced prostitution remains a growing problem in Cambodia. The type of government and judicial system Cambodia has had in the past indicates the current tendencies of the administration to preserve a patriarchal society. Non-governmental organizations, both Western-based as well as Cambodian-run, have been making significant efforts to end modern slavery in Cambodia. The actions of these NGOs offer freedom to the Cambodian women and girls whom they rescue, but many political and social obstacles continue to contribute to the difficult battle ahead. Although people have become slaves on earth, God delivers man from sin and slavery and bestows His authority to rule in the hands of human beings. “We have to act in obedience of faith if we want to see God’s power to deliver.”⁸⁹ Understanding the depth of the problem of sex trafficking in Cambodia highlights the first step towards effecting true, restorative change in the modern society of Cambodia.

88. Mangalwadi, *Truth and Transformation*, 170.

89. *Ibid.*, 227.

Bibliography

- “AIM’s Story.” Agape International Missions. Accessed March 3, 2014.
<http://agapewebsite.org>.
- Aronowitz, Alexis A. *Human Trafficking, Human Misery the Global Trade in Human Beings*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2009.
- Bales, Kevin. *Ending Slavery: How We Free Today's Slaves*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007.
- , Zoe Trodd, and Alex Kent Williamson. *Modern Slavery: The Secret World of 27 Million People*. Oxford: Oneworld, 2009.
- Batstone, David. *Not for Sale: The Return of the Global Slave Trade – and How We Can Fight It*. New York: HarperOne, 2007.
- Bornstein, Erica. “Faith, Liberty, and the Individual in Humanitarian Assistance.” In *Nongovernmental Politics*. Edited by Michel Feher, Gaelle Krikorian, and Yates McKee, 658-667. New York: Zone Books, 2007.
- Boucher, David. *The Limits of Ethics in International Relations: Natural Law, Natural Rights, and Human Rights in Transition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Brinkley, Joel. *Cambodia’s Curse: The Modern History of a Troubled Land*. New York: PublicAffairs, 2012.
- “Cambodia.” *The World Factbook*. Accessed February 3, 2014.
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. “Theologizing Human Rights: Christian Activism and the Limits of Religious Freedom.” In *Nongovernmental Politics*. Edited by Michel Feher, Gaelle Krikorian, and Yates McKee, 673-687. New York: Zone Books, 2007.
- “CNN: Everyday in Cambodia ជីវិតនៃការរស់នៅក្នុងប្រទេសកម្ពុជា ភាគ.” Khmer-News.org. Accessed April 7, 2014. <http://khmer-news.org/videos/vdetail.php?vid=1458816644351523>.
- Ebihara, May. “Interrelations Between Buddhism and Social Systems in Cambodian Peasant Culture.” In *Anthropological Studies in Theravada Buddhism*, 175-196. Edited by Manning Nash et al. Detroit, MI: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1966.
- Edwards, Penny. “The Moral Geology of the Present: Structuring Morality, Menace and Merit.” In *People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia Today*, 213-237. Edited by Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler. Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008.

- Freison, Kate Grace. "No Longer a 'Happy Balance': the Decline of Female Status in Khmer Village Culture." In *Anthropology and Community in Cambodia: Reflections on the Work of May Ebihara*. Edited by John A. Marston, 171-188. Caulfield: Monash University Press, 2011.
- Ghai, Yash P.. *Human Rights and Governance: The Asia Debate*. San Francisco, CA: The Asia Foundation's Center for Asian Pacific Affairs, 1994.
- , *Human Rights and Social Development: Toward Democratization and Social Justice*. Geneva: UN Research Institute for Social Development, 2001.
- Gombrich, Richard F. *Theravāda Buddhism: A Social History from Ancient Benares to Modern Colombo*. 1988. Reprint, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2006.
- Gottesman, Evan. *Cambodia after the Khmer Rouge: Inside the Politics of Nation Building*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.
- Harris, Ian Charles. *Buddhism, Power and Political Order*. London: Routledge, 2007.
- Harris, Vandra. "Development Workers as Agents of Cultural Change." In *People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia Today*, 293-309. Edited by Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler. Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008.
- Hoefinger, Heidi. *Sex, Love and Money in Cambodia: Professional Girlfriends and Transactional Relationships*. London: Routledge, 2013. Accessed April 1, 2014. <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/liberty/docDetail.action?docID=10728188>
- Hoksbergen, Roland G. *Serving God Globally: Finding Your Place in International Development*. Grand Rapids, MI.: Baker Academic, 2012.
- Kaplan, Robert D. *The Ends of the Earth: from Togo to Turkmenistan, from Iran to Cambodia - Journey to the Frontiers of Anarchy*. New York: Vintage Departures/Vintage Books, 1997.
- Kara, Siddharth. *Sex Trafficking: Inside the Business of Modern Slavery*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Karbaum, Markus. "Cambodia's Façade Democracy and European Assistance." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 30, no. 4 (December 2011): 111-143. Accessed September 12, 2013. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost.

- Ledgerwood, Judy, and Kheang Un. "Global Concepts and Local Meaning: Human Rights and Buddhism in Cambodia." *Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 4 (December 2003): 531-549. Accessed October 23, 2013. *Political Science Complete*, EBSCOhost.
- Lilja, Mona. "Globalization, Women's Political Participation and the Politics of Legitimacy. In *Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society*. Edited by Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja, 136-150. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009.
- Locard, Henri. *Pol Pot's Little Red Book: The Sayings of Angkar*. Chiang Mai, Thailand: Silkworm Books, 2004.
- Vantassell, Stephanie. "6 Big Changes. 1 Big God." Agape International Missions. Accessed April 7, 2014. <http://agapewebsite.org/updates3-25-14/>.
- Mam, Somaly, and Ruth Marshall. *The Road of Lost Innocence: The True Story of a Cambodian Heroine*. Trade paperback ed. New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2009.
- Mangalwadi, Vishal. *Truth and Transformation: A Manifesto for Ailing Nations*. Seattle, WA.: YWAM Pub., 2009.
- Marston, John, and Elizabeth Guthrie. "Khmer Identity Theravāda Buddhism." In *History, Buddhism, and New Religious Movements in Cambodia*, 40-62. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004.
- McCargo, Duncan. "Cambodia: Getting Away With Authoritarianism?" *Journal of Democracy* 16, no. 4 (2005): 98-112. Accessed September 11, 2013. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jod.2005.0067>.
- McNeill, Desmond, and Asuncion Lera Clair. *Global Poverty, Ethics and Human Rights: The Role of Multilateral Organisations*. London: Routledge, 2009.
- "Mission & History." Somaly Mam Foundation. Accessed March 3, 2014. <http://www.somaly.org>.
- Overholt, William H. *Asia, America, and the Transformation of Geopolitics*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- "Retired U.S. Marine Sentenced to 210 years in American Court for Sexually Abusing Young Cambodian Girls." International Justice Mission. March 11, 2014. Accessed April 2, 2014. <http://www.ijm.org/articles/retired-us-marine-sentenced-210-years-american-court-sexually-abusing-young-cambodian-girls>.
- Samarasinghe, Vidyamali. *Female Sex Trafficking in Asia: The Resilience of Patriarchy in a Changing World*. New York: Routledge, 2008.

Shelley, Louise I. *Human Trafficking: A Global Perspective*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

“Sex Trafficking.” International Justice Mission. Accessed April 2, 2014.
<http://www.ijm.org/casework/sex-trafficking>.

“Trafficking in Persons Report.” U.S. Department of State. Accessed March 3, 2014.
<http://www.state.gov>.

Un, Kheang. “The Judicial System and Democratization in Post-Conflict Cambodia.” In *Beyond Democracy in Cambodia: Political Reconstruction in a Post-Conflict Society*. Edited by Joakim Öjendal and Mona Lilja, 70-100. Copenhagen: NIAS Press, 2009.

------. “State, Society and Democratic Consolidation: The Case of Cambodia1.” *Pacific Affairs* 79, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 176-245. Accessed September 12, 2013. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40022690>.

U.S. Department of State, “Trafficking in Persons Report,” 2013.

“Victim Services.” Somaly Mam Foundation. Accessed March 3, 2014.
<http://www.somaly.org>.

“Who We Are.” International Justice Mission. Accessed March 3, 2014.
<http://www.ijm.org>.

Zucker, Eve Monique. “In the Absence of Elders: Chaos and Moral Order in the Aftermath of the Khmer Rouge.” In *People of Virtue: Reconfiguring Religion, Power and Moral Order in Cambodia Today*, 195-212. Edited by Alexandra Kent and David P. Chandler. Copenhagen: NIAS, 2008.