

CHAPTER I



INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

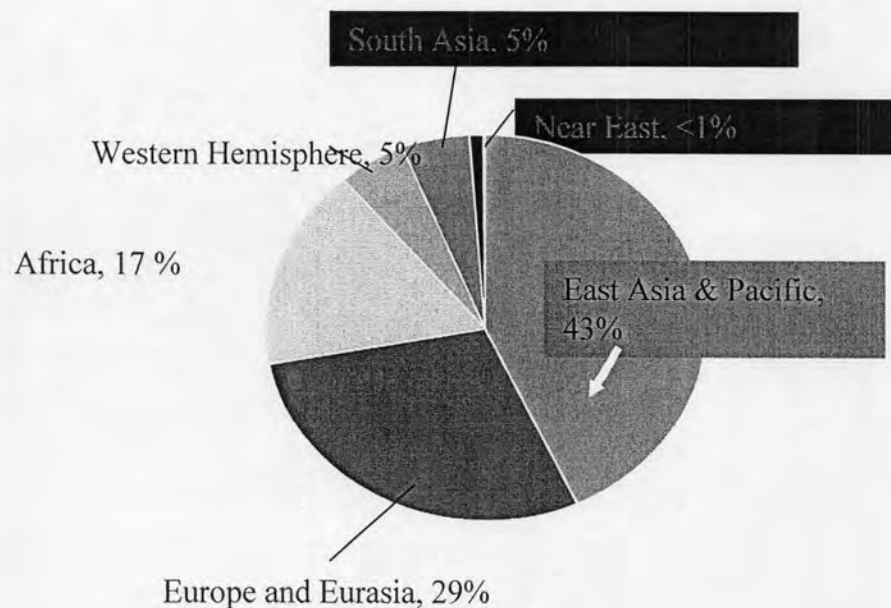
Following the 1997 Asian financial crisis, the economies of Southeast Asia have been recovering. Many foreign investors have seen this time as a chance to increase their investments, especially in the processing industries. Such investments attract a great deal of cheap labor and channel it from the less-developed to the more-developed countries. For instance, Thailand has received many cheap laborers from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and so forth. The exact number is difficult to ascertain, but according to the estimates from Bruno Maltoni (2007) there are around 2-2.5 millions migrant workers (both documented and undocumented). Of them, in the figure of Ministry of Interior in 2004, there are around 1.2 million documented migrants. 71 % are Myanmar, 14 % Cambodian, and the rest are Laotian¹. Furthermore, these developments lead to an increase in the number of entertainment places that attract not only regional or international tourists but also local people. Among these entertainment businesses, sexual establishments have very quickly become very large and profitable.

Despite the booming economies – which please many people, especially businessmen and governments – many problems are also occurring, particularly those concerning illegal immigration and human trafficking, both of which lead to human rights violations, labor exploitation, and slavery. According to existing knowledge from many sources, due to the problems associated with poverty – which include low levels of education, lack of job opportunities, and poor living conditions in the original countries – many people are deciding to move to other countries where they expect more job availabilities and higher salaries. In addition, since migration is feminized and related to

¹ However, according to Chantavanich, Supang et al. (2007) the documented migrants declined to only 705293. The reasons can be the expensive fee of registration and the complicated procedure which sometime confuse the migrants and sometime make them miss it.

gender inequality, women often leave their home to find jobs in other countries. Without much traveling experience or education, without having access to good legal mechanisms, and without adequate law enforcement to facilitate migration from the sending country, these women are often easily deceived and trafficked. Moreover, since the destination countries often have loose law enforcement, corruption, and poor criminal prosecution procedures – and even negative stereotypes against the foreign migrants – women who migrate to that country are made more vulnerable by the traffickers. Ultimately, they are often forced to work as sex workers or forced laborers. According to World Vision (2005), trafficking of women in Southeast Asia has become a major concern. Some 200,000 to 250,000 women and children² annually are victims of trafficking, both from and within this region. In other words, approximately 60 percent are trafficked to big cities in Southeast Asia, while the remaining 40 percent are sent to other countries around the world (Isabel Horteiter, no date); this number is equal to one third of the global trafficking trade³.

Figure 1: The Percentage of Trafficking by Continents



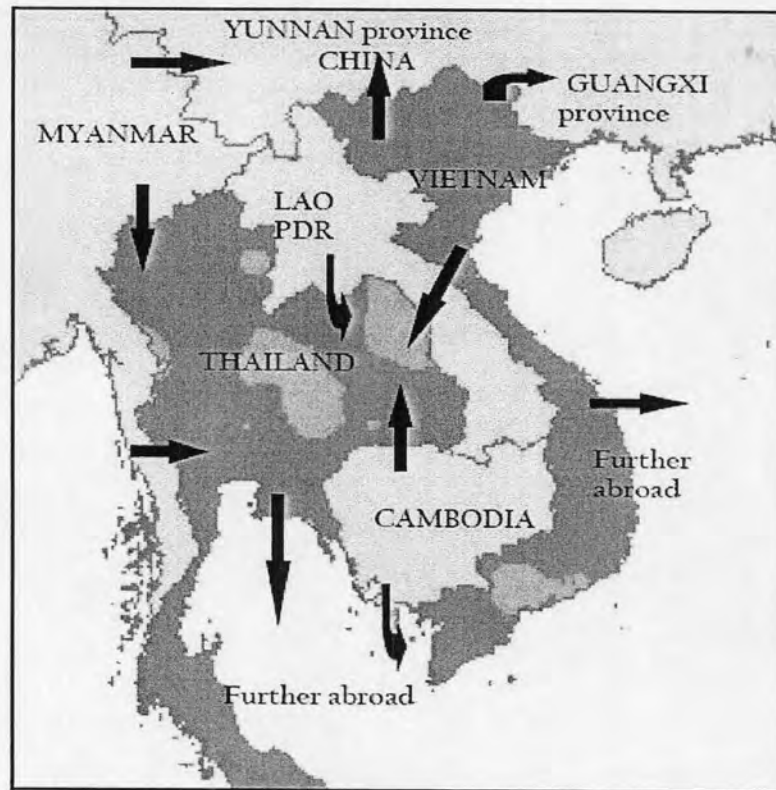
Source: Matt Friedman (2009)

² According to Jerrold W. Huguet and Varamon Ramangkura (2007), the estimate of the number of the Trafficking victim in only GMS ranges from 200000 to 450000 much more than what is described above.

³ According to Ratchada, U.S. official estimated that more than 700000 people are the victims worldwide, however, according to Matt Friedman, the number is not clear, the estimate is around 1000000 victims.

Cambodia, as a part of Southeast Asia, is included in all facets of trafficking, including as the origin, the transit point, and the final destination. According to Kim Sovankiry et al. (2006), in Cambodia around 40,000⁴ people are estimated to be victims of trafficking. Among those victims, many are trafficked to other countries, particularly Thailand, due to their shared border. According to IOM statistics, the number of Cambodian trafficking victims returned from Thailand increases every year: from 151 in 2004, to 186 in 2005 and 252 in 2006 (Jerrold W.Huguet and Varamon Ramangkura, 2007). The reasons those women are trafficked are assumed to be the same as what has been mentioned above.

Map 1: Trafficking Routs in GMS



Source: UNIFEM (2007)

Indeed, there is no official data on the trafficking of women. Usually, the number of cases received by various agencies becomes the tool for those agencies to measure increases or decreases in trafficking. Therefore, as already mentioned, women being

⁴ It is not sure if this number includes the voluntary prostitutes and other form of trafficking or not.

trafficked from Cambodia to Thailand are believed to be growing. However, assuming this growth becomes a question posed to the involved agencies, both the government and NGOs in Cambodia. The question is why the number of trafficking victims is still growing if the root causes have been identified for a long time. The Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LICADHO) has investigated the constraints that lead to its ineffective role, and has determined that poverty, insufficient protection legislation, lack of law enforcement, and impunity are the main factors contributing to the increase in women who are trafficked; therefore, LICADHO believes that even though the problem has been addressed for a long time, the current situation remains unresolved. This finding is supported by Mikel Flamm (2003) in an article published in the UN chronicle Online Edition. According to him, among the Southeast Asian Countries, Cambodia is considered a Tier 3 and sometimes a Tier 2 country, which means that the government's role in female anti-trafficking programs is still limited.

Furthermore, there is an issue of a lack of adequate funding. According to Mam Somaly, who was awarded by *Glamour* magazine as Woman of the Year in 2006 and named a directrix of *Agir pour les Femmes en Situation Précaire* (AFESIP), she said, "As for me, I almost stopped my work due to lack of funding sometimes, but I cannot stop working because I feel sorry for them." (Nailine Pea and Kem Sos, 2007) Therefore, according to this group, even though trafficking problems have already been known for many years, the ebb and flow between Tier 2 to Tier 3, clearly illustrates how inconsistent those anti-trafficking measures taken by the Cambodian government have actually been.

As for Thailand, the destination country, Ratchada (2007) found similarities in her Ph.D thesis on "An Analysis of the Selected Governmental Measures against Sex Trafficking in Thailand." According to this report, while there is a lack of general knowledge and guidelines among police officers and other law enforcement, corruption and a limited budget hamper anti-trafficking initiatives.

However, recent criticism suggests that not only do governments not have effective strategies for combating human trafficking, but NGOs also have not provided

effective ways of reducing these crimes. For example, Derks et al. (2006) have reported that NGOs are not performing their roles effectively because they are employing unqualified research staff as well as ineffective administrative personnel. A comprehensive review of 72 reports on NGOs concluded that those reports are not reliable and contained too many assumptions. Furthermore, without proper literature review and cooperation among the various NGOs, many of their research findings often overlapped and were conducted in the same specific area.

Additionally, some NGOs believe that the creation of a coordinated group can be a more effective method of combating against the trafficking of women. However, it has been reported that NGO collaboration still lacks in many areas, including trust and openness, regular meetings, the discussion of respective roles, and skill development to fit the changing forms of trafficking. As a consequence, it is believed that the higher numbers of anti-trafficking projects in Cambodia have not had a significant impact on the reduction of human trafficking.

Therefore, with the limited studies on the NGOs and in order to clarify doubts about whether the above assumptions are true or not, this research is designed to investigate the roles of NGOs in combating the trafficking of Cambodian women to Thailand. The study will seek to answer the following questions:

1. What is the reality of trafficking Cambodian women?
2. What roles do NGOs play in combating this trafficking?
3. What difficulties do the NGOs face?
4. How can NGOs develop better prevention and rehabilitation solutions to reduce the vulnerability of women?
5. How can coordination be improved between the government and NGOs, as well as among NGOs, in order to combat the trafficking of Cambodian women?

1.2 Research Objectives

The general objective of this research is to investigate the roles of NGOs in combating the trafficking of women from Cambodia to Thailand.

Specific objectives include:

1. To understand the reality of trafficking Cambodian women.
2. To identify and examine the roles, challenges, and obstacles facing the NGOs in combating trafficking of Cambodian women.

1.3 Research Methodology

1.3.1 Data Collection

This research employs both secondary and primary data. Secondary data has been collected from libraries, the Asian Research Center for Migration (ARCM) of Chulalongkorn University of Thailand, and Cambodian Development Resource Institute (CDRI) where are full of documents on trafficking in Cambodia or other countries. Moreover, in the training workshop on Learning Anti Trafficking Policies and Measures: Good Practices in Thailand (2-13 Feb) directed by Prof. Supang Chantavanich, many useful documents and lectures of the researchers from ILO, UNIAP, GAATW, CWD, DSI etc. on the updated anti-trafficking situation in Thailand or Southeast Asia were provided. Furthermore, many useful online sources, especially the MA and PhD theses provided by some Universities are also collected. All these material, especially the book by Ernesto U. Savona and Sonia Stefanizzi (2007) are very influential and help to set this thesis structure. While many studies have been done to address the causes of trafficking for long time, trafficking is still believed as increasing and the root causes are still the same; so, like Ernesto U. Savona and Sonia Stefanizzi wrote, question should be asked back to the involved agencies if they really function well or need to be improved. With such guide, this thesis choose three points to be investigated. Firstly, the definition of trafficking which is believed that is not generally adopted by all the agencies; and with that different interpretation causes the problem of misidentifying the victims and

recording the unreliable data. And the last point is the fund which more or less influence the two aforementioned points.

Primary data includes structured and unstructured interview with NGOs program managers and staffs who are actively involved in implementing women anti-trafficking programs. Indeed, there are at least 200 NGOs currently involved in implementing anti-trafficking programs but not all of them are actively involved. Therefore, in the selected study area, Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, this research is designed to interview only 10 NGOs who are actively involved in anti-trafficking programs.

Interview guide is used to give direction to personal interviews in order to collect relevant data and information to answer the research questions. The plan was to conduct face-to-face interviews with 10 NGOs; however, since some interviewees were difficult to gain access to, some interviews were conducted via telephone call. The interview starts from 8th to 30th of January in each headquarter of NGO. The in-depth interview is used by firstly asking the NGO staffs or managers to describe about the history of their NGO. Then asking about the operational definition of trafficking those NGOs use and the reason why they choose to use that definition. After that, the next question is about the roles of NGOs in helping the victims and the reason why those victims were trafficked. Moreover, the question also asked to the NGOs about the recent situation of trafficking and if it is decreasing or increasing and what they think about the recent reports from some NGOs or Government that trafficking is decreasing. Moreover, those NGOs are also asked if they face any difficulties in implementing their programs such as raising awareness, rescue, protection, rehabilitation, and integration. The cooperation with other NGOs or IOs to combat against trafficking and what they think about their cooperation NGOs also included in the interview guide. Finally, recommendation or any opinion are asked to them if they want to contribute more. During the visits to those NGOs, some observation is also done to learn how they work or train the victims. Furthermore, on 16 April 2009, while traveling back to Thailand, the researcher met a group of Cambodian migrant (4 men and 1 woman) in Thailand, so that's why the informal discussion was

conducted to learn about their lives, works, problems, and the expectation from their works.

1.3.2 Data Analysis

In this research, researcher firstly tries to analyze the documents collected to learn about the general situation of trafficking in Cambodia and Thailand. To do this, firstly the researcher does not want to repeat his work with the others and secondly would like to find out the gaps not being mentioned or mention very little in those works. Honestly, the review shows that both the causes of trafficking have been addressed a lot. However, such finding also becomes the question that if trafficking has been addressed by any NGOs for long time, why there is still the belief that trafficking is increasing. In the review, there are some gaps mentioning. In addition to the criticism on the ineffective roles of governments in addressing trafficking, the NGOs's roles are not good either since they are constrained by the different usage of definitions of trafficking, disputed statistics of trafficking, and the limited fund. And during the interview with the NGOs, those constraints becomes clear as the negative factors contributing to the failure of tackling the trafficking. Therefore, general analysis is to find the issues and reasons why those NGOs use the definition of trafficking differently. Correlated with the different usage of definition of trafficking, it is believed that statistics are unreliable and disputed one to another. Moreover, this analysis also tries to find out the scope of the fund and its obstacles to any programs in those NGOs since they are heavily depended on the donation from the foreign countries. To sum up, the analysis is based on the data from both the documents and interviews in order to explore the themes related to what mentioned above. Codes also used in this research to highlight the patterns in the text and transcribed interview, then, combined the same themes and draw the conclusion.

1.4 Scope of Research and Study Area Description

The research study area is confined to Phnom Penh. However, additional data has also been collected from other parts of Cambodia in order to show the broader picture of the trafficking problem. The reason for choosing Phnom Penh as the primary focus of the

research is because it is the capital city of Cambodia and houses the majority of NGO headquarters and resource centers. Another reason is because of the short period for research and a limited budget, both of which were significant constraints.

Additionally, accessibility to some reports and other information has been restricted by some NGOs citing confidentiality. Therefore, the entire picture of the groups' operations could not always be completely uncovered. This study ultimately serves as an outline of the most significant NGO roles and challenges. Having investigated only 10 NGOs, the study does not represent a complete portrait of NGOs in Cambodia. Finally, because some NGOs asked not to be named, this study will not reference them by their names in order to respect their request; this will help to avoid any negative impact on their current activities.

1.5 Expected Results

The research is expected to provide detailed information about the roles of NGOs in combating the trafficking of Cambodian women in Phnom Penh. It identifies the major problems that face NGOs in their implementation of anti-trafficking programs. It is hoped that these research findings will enable the NGOs to draft more appropriate and effective anti-trafficking programs, including work between government and NGOs, and among the NGOs themselves. This should ultimately reduce the number of Cambodian women being trafficked. Additionally, it is hoped that the results will be useful for the NGOs and organizations/agencies dealing with Cambodian trafficking victims, as well as to other countries. Furthermore, this research will provide relevant information to policy makers so they may design more effective laws and regulations to combat the trafficking of vulnerable Cambodian women.