

Migration And Human Trafficking

The case of Cambodia

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Introduction

Globalisation is one of the most influential phenomena of our time and while bringing many positive changes to the world's society, there is also a negative side to it: uncontrollable dynamics in markets and society, combined with environmental issues or political crisis may all contribute to a person's decision to migrate. The gap between rich and poor is constantly growing, forcing underprivileged families and individuals to find possible solutions to improve their livelihoods. For many, the answer to this problem is to seek employment in a different place, whether in their native country or somewhere abroad. Many migrants have no problems moving, others might face massive problems and dangers during the act of moving: where there is vulnerability, there are also third parties trying to exploit the weaker and to make a profit from the situation. The victims of human trafficking are mainly migrants coming from desperate situations and seeking for better futures. Even if the act of migration was a conscious choice even not voluntary, and its organisation proceeded legally, it may happen that it ends in illegal conditions. The victims are facing inhumane working and living conditions often including humiliation, violence up to murder and a lack of basic rights. Human trafficking may occur through professional traffickers, parents or other relatives, intimate partners or kidnappers who sell the victim into those conditions.

Human trafficking is one of the most widespread crimes worldwide. According to the Global Slavery Index there are an estimated 29.8 million people caught in modern slavery across the world.² In this report 162 countries were ranked based on the estimated rate of modern slavery by population, the levels of child marriage and levels of human trafficking into and out of the country. Cambodia was ranked 38th out of all countries. The report states that there is an estimated number of 110,000 enslaved people in Cambodia.³⁴

This paper sheds light on the negative sides of migration in general terms and gives examples of the migration and human trafficking situation in Cambodia. The section Push and Pull Factors will specify which reasons might influence an individual's decision to migrate, while the Demographic Transition Theory will help to clarify the economical and social transition within a society drawing on the example of Cambodia. The following chapter will aim to explain the occurrence of trafficking especially in Cambodia, complemented with examples of trafficking. As migrants also often lack information on where to look for help or where to get different kinds of support, this paper also offers some recommendations.

² Walk Free Foundation 2013, p. 1

³ Walk Free Foundation 2013, p. 8

⁴ Walk Free Foundation 2013, p. 122

Migration and Human Trafficking

Migration

The UN Convention on the Rights of Migrants defines a migrant worker as a "person who is to be engaged, is engaged or has been engaged in a remunerated activity in a State of which he or she is not a national." From this a broader definition of migrants follows: "The term 'migrant' in article 1.1 (a) should be understood as covering all cases where the decision to migrate is taken freely by the individual concerned, for reasons of 'personal convenience' and without intervention of an external compelling factor."⁵

Following this definition, the term “migrant” only applies to people who made a conscious choice about their conditions for leaving. Time and destination are set by themselves, but nevertheless it still has to be considered that these choices might happen to be extremely constrained under certain conditions. A distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration can be made: This can be on the one side a migrant’s choice which is driven by desperate conditions or on the other side a voluntary choice where the migrant does not face any external pressure. The term migration does not only describe the act of moving from one country to another. Migrants might also be moving within a country’s borders for example when moving from rural to urban areas which is then described as internal migration.

Reasons and types of migration

In times of globalisation where national economies interact on a global level, local communities get impacted by foreign companies and social transformations occur, migration is often a result of those developments. In search of better living conditions in less poverty, better security or social and economical conditions, not only migrants themselves face essential changes, but also the ones living in communities which are touched by departing or arriving migrants. Migration is not only affecting the countries of origin, but also the countries of destination by the resulting changes: cultural traditions or national identity may be two examples of many areas that are being impacted. Positive or negative consequences depend very much on the nature of migration and the way those in charge, like the government deal with it. Therefore, the sensitive topic migration has to be addressed very carefully.⁶

The following section explores the variety of reasons for migration and what drives the citizens of a certain area to make this life changing decision and leave their original home. Nevertheless, the different types of migration often overlap as personal circumstances and

⁵ UNESCO International Migration and Multicultural Policies 2014

⁶ Castles 2000, p. 269

the purpose of migration are very individual and might make a clear distinction difficult. However there are various types of migrants that are worth knowing:

- International or temporary labour migrants are people who migrate only for a limited period of time with the purpose of sending money back to their families who remained home.
- Highly skilled or business migrants have usually very high education and qualifications in professional positions. This type of migrant usually moves within the international work market, seeking for extraordinary career possibilities and is usually very welcome by destination country.
- The term 'illegal migrant' describes those types of migrants who usually seek urgently for employment and economical security but who do not have the required documents to do this legally. This circumstance makes them very prone to exploitation. In some cases immigration countries tacitly permit such migration since it allows mobilisation of labour in response to employer demands without social costs or measures for protection of migrants.
- According to the definition of the term 'refugee' of the 1951 United Nations Convention a refugee is someone residing outside his or her country of nationality, who is unable or unwilling to return because of a 'well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion'. Even though there is a clear distinction between migrants and refugees, they share many common characteristics with regard to social needs and cultural impacts in their place of settlement (UNHCR 1997).
- The term asylum-seeker describes a type of migrant entering a different nation than her or his own in search of protection. This may have various reasons which might be interconnected such as personal persecution, lack of economic or social infrastructure.
- Forced migration may include a broad range of reasons hidden behind the act of migrating. Affected people can be not only refugees or asylum seekers, but also citizens being forced to move because of climate change, environmental catastrophes or development projects like new factories or dams.
- Migration for reasons of family reunion describes the act of moving to a destination country where one or more family member has already entered due to one of the described reasons, where the remaining relatives follow.

- Return migrants are people who return to their countries of origin after a period in another country.⁷



Apartments of labour migrants in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. Photo: Sonja Barwitzki

The occurrences of migration and human trafficking are both very complex and often the separating line between the two problems might blur. Even though being of distinct difficulty, migration and human trafficking are also interconnected. Within the topic of migration it is helpful to distinguish between regular and irregular movement as well as to examine the type of decision, whether the choice to move was made freely or was forced by external circumstances. If the migration process is irregular, the migrant might seek help from a smuggler, who will - after being paid a horrendous fee - bring the migrant to the place of destination. This can be either another country or a destination within the same country. Even though the migrating person might face many difficulties and dangers while being smuggled to the destination, once arrived the migrant is then free to leave and part ways with the smuggler.

However trafficking differs essentially from the act of migration or smuggling. As stated above in the definition of trafficking, its main purpose of “helping” people to move is to exploit the

⁷ Castles 2000, pp. 270–271

work force. Therefore people who have been trafficked can be seen as victims. As migrants are mostly facing unfavourable conditions which they try to escape by taking employment under better conditions they are generally very prone to fall for the lies of “recruitment agencies” or other individuals which offer to make the travel arrangements to a well-paid job abroad. Due to their vulnerable and desperate situation it is mainly migrants who are being trafficked. But instead of improving their living conditions it is only once they arrive in the place of destination that they realize they have been tricked and sold into jobs where they have to face living and working conditions that they did not agree to.⁸ These might cover a wide range like absent payment, inhumane living conditions, violence, even murder, or the lack of basic human rights.

Summarising the above section the private motives of migrants to leave their home are clearly very individual and yet related. These might cover reasons like economic or social marginalization, poverty, unemployment, political or social unrest or even war. Due to progressing globalisation, nations are increasingly interconnected. This simplifies migration and, in addition, various push and pull factors encourage people to move. In turn, the steadily growing numbers of migrants have to overcome many legal barriers entering more developed countries. As the possibilities to enter a country in a legal way can be severely limited, more and more migrants choose illegal ways and rely on the help of smugglers, middleman or traffickers. The high level of despair makes them extremely vulnerable. Individuals find themselves being driven into dangerous positions where they have to face the risk of being exploited by criminals.⁹



Village at the Kampot river bank, Cambodia. Photo: Sonja Barwitzki

⁸ Kaye 2003, p. 3

⁹ Babha 2005

Push and Pull Factors

Push factors are incentives for people to leave their homes and move to a different place in search of better living conditions. Pull factors are determinants which attract migrants to come and settle in a certain area expecting an improvement of their own living situation.



Push and Pull Factors that can be reasons for migration¹⁰

Other push factors might be the lack of education and therefore a lack of prospects. Especially migrants from rural areas are confronted with inadequate employment opportunities. Once illnesses emerge, health provision which can be limited in many less developed countries will become crucial and might therefore become a push factor. Especially a family breakdown caused by the sickness or death of earning family members can force the remaining ones to send away the children from their homes in hope of better working and/or living opportunities. The political or economical breakdown of a country or area might threaten the ability to sustain people's families or even themselves in a direct or indirect way. Crises like the mismanagement of economies or structural adjustment policies lead to higher unemployment rates, fewer public services and a higher cost of living.

Pull factors are aspects which are attracting potential migrants to a certain place. Most of them can be connected directly to push factors as it can be seen in the graphic above.

¹⁰ BBC

Determinants like global media and the access to internet might boost high expectations of opportunities and paint an unrealistic picture of foreign places. A high demand for so called “guest workers” or migrant workers is also enormously appealing as it promises employment and therefore higher salaries and better living conditions.¹¹ Nevertheless established migration routes and communities will attract more migrants as they provide security, information and perspectives. Furthermore a higher freedom of movement and an easier access to a passport are positive incentives. The active presence of “recruitment agencies” or other individuals promising to organise work and the journey to the new location are another attractive plus.

The majority of more developed countries have an ageing population due to low fertility rates and a mortality decline. In the long run this leads to shortages in the areas of labour and skills, concomitant with an increased tax burden on the working population in order to support and provide social benefits to the wider population.¹² The demographic change is a natural transition of societies which are progressing towards development and modernisation of their economies. This progress can be described through the Demographic Transition Theory applying examples of Cambodia.

Demographic Transition Theory

According to the Demographic Transition Theory there are four stages which describe the process of transition. The first stage is the pre-industrial one in which the birth and death rates of a country are high. For the society this means to have a very young population which grows slowly as only few live very long. In countries on the pre-industrial stage children play a key-role for the economic benefit of a family. They can act as cleaners, cooks, babysitters for younger siblings, workers in fields or support the water and firewood supply. Reaching a higher age they play an important role as major supporters of the family’s income or become a primary form of insurance for older family members. The second stage refers to the industrial revolution of a country. Due to the industrialisation of production processes, agricultural outcome can be increased which leads to an decrease in death rates. This can be explained as follows: through a sufficient supply of food to the society an early death due to starvation or lack of water can be avoided. At the same time a better food and water supply leads to improved health conditions through sanitation, sewerage, hygiene and medical progress. As birth rates remain constant but mortality rates have gone down, more children in the critical age (5-10 years) survive. This in fact makes the population explode on a very

¹¹ Kaye 2003

¹² Kaye 2003, p. 13

young level of age which can be seen through the example of Cambodia. The average age in Cambodia in 2011 was 22, 9 years.¹³ This stage is followed by the Post-Industrial Revolution in which the birth rates drop significantly. As a consequence of stage two the industrialisation leads to a decreasing need for agricultural labour, which brings various changes to the life of rural people in Cambodia: first of all, the fact that they do not have a farm to take care of means that they also no longer need large families to work the land. They start to desire fewer children than in the past as the value of children's work is reduced and a higher investment into the child's education is requested. Falling birth rates coincide with many other social and economic changes, including better access to contraception, higher wages or urbanization. And second, individuals are free to move to the cities where they can expect higher wages for their labour. The population's age structure changes again and grows older in total. Even though a connection between fertility decline and the changes mentioned above has been widely noticed, researchers are not sure which factor has more influence: is it the industrialisation and the higher incomes that lead to a lower population or is it the other way around. The *Migration in Cambodia Report 2012* states that urbanisation and decreasing birth rates are interconnected and furthermore are also linked to economic growth. The change in a society's values often leads to a person's desire to be individually successful. This might increase societal productivity in general, but lower the rates of workers who are willing to take employment which involves hard manual labour, low payment or other bad conditions. The demand for migrant workers increases. During the fourth stage stabilisation is taking place as birth and mortality rates fall into line. Once the population growth is decelerating, the older generations which were born during one of the previous stages put a growing economic burden on the smaller and younger working generation. This in fact might support migration processes.¹⁴¹⁵

In 2008, Phnom Penh had by far the lowest fertility rate in the entire country. A woman had estimated 2 children in Phnom Penh (estimated rate in total in urban areas is 2.2) and therefore more than one child lower than in rural areas, where a woman has estimated 3.3 children.¹⁶ Since much of Cambodia's population maintains an agrarian existence (75% according to more recent estimates), relatively high numbers of migrants are moving into the city. The percentage of the Cambodian population living in cities is low relative to neighbouring countries where the percentage of people living in cities is very high. Compared to other Southeast Asian regions where more than 40% of the citizens live in urban areas,

¹³ Barzel

¹⁴ Demographic Transition Theory 2014

¹⁵ Migration in Cambodia Report 2012

¹⁶ Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey 2010, p. 58

Cambodian cities nevertheless are growing fast: while nearly 20 years ago one out of 20 Cambodians lived in Phnom Penh, it is 20% of the Cambodians in 2010.¹⁷ Especially in Phnom Penh economic growth has taken place very clearly. Urbanization rates keep growing in Cambodia and as almost the entire growth is taking place in one city, this makes Phnom Penh one of the fastest growing urban centres in the world.¹⁸ Coupled with an age structure which is a legacy of the Khmer Rouge regime there are many young migrants in their 20s who are more likely to be moving than the older generations.¹⁹ Researchers have shown that the majority of the migrants moving to Phnom Penh are between 20 and 34 years old and therefore younger than the already existing population. Given the massive level of migration this has the effect of making Phnom Penh a ‘younger city’. Another clear difference can be found in the sex distribution. Especially within the younger migrants there are more women than men. While migrants are less likely to be married, this might be another reason for the low number of children living in the city. Finally it can be said that a vast number of migrants coming to Phnom Penh have a higher education level than the existing population. One reason for this is that a part of the migrants moving to Phnom Penh do this for the purpose of achieving a higher-level education.²⁰

¹⁷ Migration in Cambodia Report 2012, p. 1

¹⁸ Migration in Cambodia Report 2012, p. 8

¹⁹ Migration in Cambodia Report 2012

²⁰ Migration in Cambodia Report 2012, pp. 21–22

Trafficking

Human trafficking is a global problem and a massive violation of human rights. Every year, thousands of men, women and children fall into the hands of traffickers, in their own countries and abroad. Almost every country in the world is affected by trafficking, whether as a country of origin, transit or destination for victims.²¹ According to the US Department of Health and Human Service, it is the second largest criminal industry in the world and furthermore the fastest growing.²²

Trafficking differentiates essentially from migration or smuggling as the main purpose of it lies in the exploitation of labour or services. The majority of humans who have been trafficked are migrants which found themselves in difficult conditions in their home country. Various reasons like poverty, discrimination or the wish to support family drive them towards the traffickers who in exchange for payment offer well-paid jobs abroad and support for the organisation of travel to the employment destination. As soon as the victims arrive at the destination they realise the promised work does not exist and instead they find themselves being forced into jobs under conditions where they for example have to face exploitation, a lack of payment and inhumane working conditions. The vast majority of people who are trafficked are migrant workers. They are seeking to escape poverty and discrimination, improve their lives and send money back to their families. They hear about well-paying jobs abroad through family or friends or through “recruitment agencies” and other individuals who offer to find them employment and make the travel arrangements. For most trafficked people it is only once they arrive in the country of destination that their real problems begin as the work they were promised does not exist and they are instead forced into jobs or circumstances to which they did not agree.²³

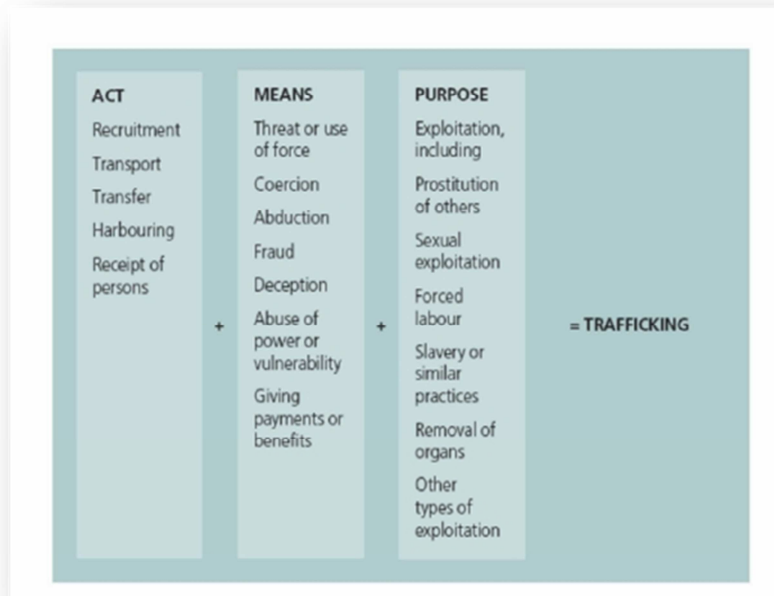
Since 2000 the term ‘human trafficking’ has been defined internationally in the Palermo Protocol by the United Nations as follows: “Trafficking in persons shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual

²¹ UNODC

²² William Spindler 2010

²³ Kaye 2003, p. 3

exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.”²⁴



The components of trafficking²⁵

Reasons for Human Trafficking

Human traffickers are aiming for a special type of person to exploit. The perfect victim is poor, isolated and weak. Through policies and practices entire groups of people are forced into vulnerable situations, causing issues such as disempowerment, social exclusion and economic vulnerability. Low education, financial pressure and despair also worsen the situation. Other examples for increased migration while compounding the migrant’s situation are natural disasters, conflicts or political disturbances. Human trafficking in Cambodia is, according to the International Labour Organisation, an aftermath of the Khmer Rouge rule. Citizens still suffer both psychologically and economically from what has happened. As a late result, the forced displacement of the urban areas has led to a return to the cities in huge numbers. During war time those were emptied and people were relocated to rural areas where they lacked opportunities. A socio-economic imbalance between the rural and urban areas occurred. Various factors like poverty, unemployment and bad education as well as increased tourism, added to the fact that human trafficking has increased in Cambodia over the past years. The deaths of nearly 2 million Cambodians under the Khmer Rouge regime (1975-1979) contributed to the country’s population being very young now with nearly 50% being under 20 years old. Consequently, another problem is arising: the youth is edging into

²⁴ Unknown 2000, pp. Article 3, Paragraph a)

²⁵ UNODC

the already weak job market. The limited education possibilities have generated a large pool of unskilled workers seeking for employment and the job creation rate is currently not meeting the constantly growing labour supply. Due to the lack of sufficient decent work the drive towards cross-border and internal migration for employment is increasing and perpetuating the vicious circle of vulnerability leading to human trafficking.²⁶²⁷²⁸

But vulnerability of migrants does not only arise under unfortunate conditions in the country of origin. The relentless demand for inexpensive goods and services and the hope for economic safety are weakening already tenuous social protection measures to a considerable degree. Human trafficking is a market-based economy that exists on principles of supply and demand. It thrives due to conditions which allow for high profits to be generated at low risk. A constantly recurring pattern is that victims are more likely to be trafficked from relatively poorer to comparatively richer areas. However trafficking from richer to poorer places is less common.²⁹ The General Assembly of the United Nations states that poverty, unemployment, lack of socioeconomic opportunities, gender-based violence, discrimination and marginalization are some of the contributing factors that make persons vulnerable to trafficking in persons.³⁰³¹³²

Examples for Trafficking

According to UNIAP human trafficking is more or less new to Cambodia, especially to Cambodian men. While men are only recently recognized as victims of trafficking in persons, it is predominantly women and children being mistreated in Cambodia, mainly for the reason of commercial sexual exploitation or domestic work. There are also cases of women being sold as brides or factory workers to other countries or children being used as street beggars.³³

Example Children: Cambodian children are being sold into sex industry or domestic work

Many of the trafficking victims in Cambodia are children. The majority of those victims are getting exploited as domestic workers or in the sex industry. But also cases of forced child begging or children being exploited as workers in construction or garbage collecting are

²⁶ International Labour Organisation

²⁷ humantrafficking.org - A Web Resource for Combating Human Trafficking 2014

²⁸ United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking

²⁹ Kristiina Kangaspunta 2008, p. 44

³⁰ Kristiina Kangaspunta 2008, p. 3

³¹ Polaris Project 2012

³² United Nations, p. 1

³³ United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking 2011

known. Researchers found out that the path of migration for child domestic workers is dominated by decisions of various adults and rarely by the child or young individual themselves. While critical family circumstances like domestic violence or abuse may cause children to leave their homes, problems like debt bondage or poverty might force parents to send their children away. Child victims described that only in a few cases were they asked for their opinion, while knowing that their parents commonly expect them to support the family anyway. Often the recruitment is also led by the owners of the houses in which the children will later live in.³⁴

Furthermore, there is a strong connection between migration into domestic work and later into commercial sexual exploitation. The IOM (International Organisation for Migration) detected that 51% of the child sex workers are former domestic workers. Due to their distinct basis of comparison it is hypothesized that former domestic workers which are working now in the sex industry, have suffered extreme examples of exploitation such as physical and sexual abuse, working excessive hours and low social status within the employer's household. Their road of life shows repeatedly the appearance of a high social vulnerability within their families. This fact makes them an easy prey for traffickers as they are more likely to be recruited into commercial sexual exploitation or even ending up “voluntarily” in some form of sexual exploitation due to the lack of options.³⁵

With UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) estimating that 35% of Cambodian prostitutes are under the age of 16, the number of undetected cases is probably higher. It is no secret that the brothels in Cambodia flourish because of their friendly relations with influential officials in the Hun Sen government. High-ranking military officers, politicians, businessmen and foreign tourists are among the customers. But the western tourists are only the tip of the iceberg. The largest source of demand for child prostitution is still formed by Cambodian men, even though men from other Asian countries, the US or Europe support the growing business of child prostitution.³⁶ Much of this lucrative industry is controlled by senior police and military officers, and successful prosecutions are rare. Evidence is mysteriously lost, brothels are tipped off before raids, and pimps slip their handcuffs off on the way to court.

The 14 year old Chantala was given away by her aunt when a woman came and promised her a live-in cleaner job in Phnom Penh. Instead, she ended up in a brothel in Svay Pak where her first customer – a Chinese man – beat her unconscious when she refused to have sex with him, then tore her clothes off and raped her. Every day she had to work shifts from 9 am to 3

³⁴ Brown, p. 31

³⁵ Brown

³⁶ Department of State USA, p. 121

am and was often taken to another village where she found several man waiting for her, often up to ten, who she had to have sex with every time. Another girl named Avy was 8 years old when she was sold into child prostitution. This happened right after she was being raped by her stepfather and nine other men. When refusing sex, she was beaten across her face and given electric shocks. When getting sleepy after the extraordinary long shifts her pimp thrust chillies into her eyes.³⁷

Many other girls are suffering similar tortures when their families, often their mothers decide to sell the girl's virginity. After corrupt doctors examine the girls and prove with a certificate that they are virgins and disease free, each girl is brought to the man who bought her and has to stay with him for a few days up to a week. There the perpetrator is raping the girl as many times as he wishes, often without the use of condoms. During that time the girls often suffer from additional violence, forced drug-abuse or have to face long-term consequences like STD, pregnancy or forced abortion. After the girls have their virginity taken away, they are often forced into regular prostitution in brothels by their families.³⁸



Children working as garbage collectors at the beach of Sihanoukville, Cambodia. Photo: Sonja Barwitzki

³⁷ Asian Child Rights 2003

³⁸ Haworth 2014



Child street vendor at Angkor Wat, Cambodia. Photo: Sonja Barwitzki

Example men: Cambodian men are being sold into the fishing industry as slaves

Human trafficking is a widespread problem which is not only concerning woman and children, but also men. They are often promised well paid factory jobs abroad in countries like Thailand. The traffickers organise the journey but once the men arrive at the new destination, they realise they have been sold into slavery. This happened to Vannak Prum: a Cambodian man who was planning to work for two months so that he could pay a hospital bill for his wife who was expecting their baby. A few days later he found himself being trafficked to a port in Thailand where he was kept locked in a room until he was freighted onto a fishing boat. There he had to stay for three years before he could manage to escape. As the boats are part of a network of shuttle boats which pick up the fish and provide them with supplies, they can stay at sea for extended periods. This makes it very hard for the enslaved to escape their captors. Victims like Vannak who have been sold to such fishing boats report inhumane working conditions with 20 hours of work each day, barely having access to food or fresh water and being forced to abuse drugs to keep going. All of them also reported suffering major violence especially when they were too weak to work or ill. Every victim gave reports of torture and being beaten unconscious, nearly 60% witnessed cruel murdering by their captain during

their time on the boat. Men are decapitated, shot or punished to death. One victim reported seeing another trafficked worker being tied to four different boats and being torn apart. Compared to historical standards nowadays “slaves” cost 95% less than they did in the 19th century which illustrates that their value has changed from being an investment to being a disposable commodity.³⁹⁴⁰⁴¹



Fishermen near Kampot, Cambodia. Photo: Sonja Barwitzki

Example women: Cambodian women get trafficked into marriage with Chinese man

When Khai Sochoeun was 29 she was still not married. In her opinion a marriage would not have brought any improvement because she would have had to marry a poor farmer. As she made the observation that Cambodian men get drunk a lot, the idea to wed became less appealing. This was until she visited her uncle, where she met a woman who told her about moving to China and marrying a rich Chinese man. There she could also get a job in a factory and earn around 500 dollar per month – five times more than in Cambodia. Ms. Sochoeun said she only knew China from TV shows, but in her imagination it was lush landscapes and modern cities, inhabited by sophisticated people. Two weeks later she found herself in a plane together with other Cambodian women. After arrival they were brought to a small, impoverished city ten hours away from the airport where she and the other women had to

³⁹ IRIN - Humanitarian News and Analysis 2011

⁴⁰ Service, Palmstrom 2012

⁴¹ Hodal, Kelly 2014

dress up. Then they were presented to strangers which were allowed to pick a wife for a dowry of 15000 dollar, this is half as much as they would have had to pay for a Chinese wife. Khai Sochoeun was picked by a farmer where her sole purpose of being consisted of cleaning the house for the seven family members and being available for intercourse any time of the day when demanded. Her husband turned out to be very aggressive. Especially when Ms. Sochoeun tried to refuse sex he used violence against her. “From the beginning, I don’t know if it was rape or not, but he forced me to have sex with him many times a day. When I refused to sleep with him he hit me,” she said. After weeks of being held like a slave, she managed to make a phone call in a moment where she was alone in the house. Ms. Sochoeun called a Cambodian radio station which helped her get in touch with a local NGO. They helped her sister to fill out a human trafficking complaint with the immigration police and contacted the Cambodian embassy in Beijing. Until today she doesn’t know the name of the city she lived in or the name of her husband, but at least returned safely to her home village in Cambodia.⁴²

In other cases where woman tried to escape they report being choked, beaten nearly unconscious or having suffered from inhumane practices like being pressed under ice cold water or having the clothes confiscated to prevent another escape. The victims were living in constant fear of death. Often when women managed to escape and searched for help from local authorities, they were returned back to the violent husband and his family as authorities did not realize the victim has been trafficked. The police considered the situation to be a violent family conflict and brought them back to the place they tried to escape from. Many of the trafficked women ended up being pregnant and delivering a baby, but when being rescued they had to leave their child with the Chinese family and had to return without it to their home country. As the women are very poor and the experiences they made with the Chinese family were extremely traumatic chances are very low to see their child ever again.

The one-child-policy in China has led to a massive imbalance between boys and girls. As Chinese families traditionally prefer having a boy, many female fetuses died through abortion or infanticide. This makes it difficult for many men to find a wife in their own country. Estimated 32 million single Chinese men are searching for a suitable – and affordable – female partner. It is widely known that there have been women trafficked from Burma or Laos to China, but it is just recently that Cambodia joined the list.^{43 44}

⁴² Bartlett 2014

⁴³ Naren, Hruby 2014

⁴⁴ Titthara 2014

Conclusion and Recommendations

What this all amounts to is that the reasons for migration are manmade to a big extent and so are the reasons for trafficking in persons. Oftentimes supported through corrupt systems and little to no support or protection of potential victims, exploitation is taking place in many areas and many countries all over the world, including Cambodia. Nearly one third of Cambodia's population is living below the poverty line and most of them live in rural areas where there are limited future prospects for the mainly young population.⁴⁵ The difficult past of the country has led to many major shortcomings in Cambodia's economy and also in its society. The Khmer Rouge regime weakened the country in an extraordinary way. The murder of nearly 2 million people, reallocation of city residents to rural areas and the long term lack of higher education and intellectuals who could lead the following generations has led to a socio-economic imbalance in Cambodia. Furthermore the remaining youth of Cambodia is now pushing into the weak job market causing another imbalance between supply and demand for work.

While the country is still recovering from the violations it suffered, trying to find its way back to the lost identity and strength, Cambodia has developed certain weaknesses through those traumas which enable exploitation by others. The combination of inescapable poverty and the lack of prospects are the main drivers for migration and make people especially vulnerable. This is the fertile soil for trafficking in persons as it brings out the perfect victims. Due to the fact that there is barely support for migrants or measurements for combating unemployment or poverty, individuals are left alone with their problems and are therefore prone to exploitation by third parties. Traffickers can find easy prey and follow their trade without major disturbances as problematic elements like police can be bribed without problem with the right amount of money. With Cambodia as one of the least developed countries in the world those circumstances lead to a high rate in trafficking and exploitation of the weak. As the abuses are only followed by enormous misery in private and economic areas, it is crucial to combat this ongoing developing occurrence as soon as possible.

Human trafficking can and should be addressed appropriately by different institutions like the government or the industry. But also the public and especially potential victims should be implicated. To combat human trafficking successfully, it is important to think of possible measurements which could be implemented. In particular powerful and affected institutions must get involved as they are often in the way of fighting human trafficking and prevent further action.

⁴⁵Deutsche Botschaft Phnom Penh

1. Recommendations to the police

- Educate and hire more female police officers which can specialize in trafficking cases concerning women and children in particular
- Fight corruption through providing special educational programmes. In this way the identification with the role of a police officer who stands out due to honesty, respect and courage, but also understands the idea of serving the society is strengthened
- Offer rewards for the recognition and revealing of bribes within the system, raising the (social) status
- Raise awareness for criminal action and its consequences for the victims; educate the officials to identify victims actively
- Sensitize law enforcement authorities to the prevalence of trafficking
- Increase efforts to make raids and court processes more effective
- Exploitative sites (fishing boats, factories, homes) should be given more attention to give a warning sign to the sector

2. Recommendations to the government

- Fight corruption by trying to make governmental decisions more transparent and show incomes publicly
- Raise the salary of police officers so private poverty and the temptation of receiving a bribe might get reduced
- Make more services for victims available: support NGO's and own projects which do explanatory work, legal aid, drop-in-center, psychological aid, reintegration and similar projects
- Implement measurements to make police stations and embassies a safe harbour in case of emergency or first aid, provide special trainings to the employees
- Develop measurements to tackle human trafficking which involves improved education for the poorest, improved working conditions
- Search and improve cooperation with neighbouring countries, police stations, court officials, NGO's and other governmental institutions
- Specially trained research and independent third party teams should be sent unannounced into companies to investigate the production process.

- Raise the level of investigation in case of crime with specialised, well-paid professionals to avoid repeating problems like the mysterious loss of documents or traffickers being warned before raids
- Enforce criminal penalties for labour recruitment companies which are engaging in criminal acts that may contribute to human trafficking
- Raise public awareness for the problem of human trafficking

3. Recommendations to migrants

- Get information about the act of moving from local NGO's or governmental institutions that have informative programmes running
- Avoid giving your passport to the employer or any unauthorised person
- Try to prove if the documents you are provided with are official and legal
- Make sure you have a contract and try to receive a copy of your contact persons passport or at least see it to know the person's identity
- Be critical. If working conditions sound too good to be true, they mostly are.
- Bring contact details of your family, the Cambodian embassy of the country or area you are going to and a NGO or radio station

4. Companies

- Fight corruption through implementing transparent decision processes that are monitored by an independent group
- The production process of each commodity within the supply chain should be documented by an independent third party, consisting of members of the government, NGOs, industry and academics to ensure human exploitation or trafficking has not been part of the production process
- Companies have to invest in the development, education, health and security of the communities whose low-cost labour they source
- Companies have to implement the core labour standards that the ILO (International Labour Organisation) has developed. When people face fair working conditions, they will be less vulnerable to trafficking if they decide to migrate.

- Integrate the idea of Corporate Social Responsibility and Sustainability into the company's principles.⁴⁶⁴⁷⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Department of State USA

⁴⁷ Siddharth Kara

⁴⁸ United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking

Links for further reading

- Migration in Cambodia
<http://countryoffice.unfpa.org/cambodia/?publications=5857>
- Royal Embassy of Cambodia
<http://www.embassyofcambodia.org/>
- Cambodian Human Rights and Development Association
<http://www.adhoc-cambodia.org/>
- UNIAP Cambodia
http://www.no-trafficking.org/cambodia_who.html
- Human Trafficking in Cambodia
<http://www.humantrafficking.org/countries/cambodia>
- SMART – Safe Migration and Reduce Trafficking Program
<http://www.cwcc.org.kh/?p=28>
<http://www.care-cambodia.org/#!smart/c5b2>
- Cambodian Women Crisis Center
<http://www.cwcc.org.kh/>
- Legal Support for Children and Women
<http://www.lscw.org/>
- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Woman
<http://www.gaatw.org/>
- US Department of State – Human Rights Reports
<http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/>

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