

**Transnational NGOs against Child Sex Trafficking – Challenges and Opportunities of
Advocacy Networks for Social Change?**

Deanna Davy

University of Sydney

PhD candidate

ddav5914@uni.sydney.edu.au

Keywords: non government organisations; advocacy networks; trafficking; neoliberal
globalisation

One of the worst transnational crimes that appears to have been facilitated by neoliberal globalisation and its many effects, such as the growing disparity in wealth between the 'North' and the 'South' is the market in enslaved children bought and sold for sex. Child sex trafficking has become, since the 1990s, one of the most highly publicised social issues of our time. As it is a transnational problem by nature, transnational humanitarian and international development NGO networks are well placed to lead campaigns against it. Transnational NGOs and NGO networks in the Greater Mekong Sub-region have been integrally involved in the debate on child sex trafficking through their leadership of transnational campaigns and their work with domestic NGOs, governments and United Nations agencies. Transnational NGO network advocacy against child sex trafficking in this region has arguably led to progress on the issue by bringing the child sex trafficking issue onto the global social policy agenda, resulting in the design and implementation of new national and regional agreements, policies and laws to protect children from trafficking, prosecution of

traffickers and resources for education in local communities about the risks of unsafe migration and human trafficking.

Based on current PhD research this paper will focus on the operation of NGO networks in two Mekong Sub-region countries – Thailand and Cambodia - and the challenges and opportunities they face. Reflecting on the data derived from 21 semi-structured, qualitative interviews with NGO and UN staff in the region, central questions will be addressed. For example, how do NGOs form networks for specific campaigns or purposes? How do NGOs share responsibilities, resources, information, prestige and money within the networks? How are the issues of power and voice represented within the networks and does an imbalance in power and voice lead to contention among the network members? To what extent have the NGO networks influenced regional governments and civil society and raised awareness on the issue of child sex trafficking? To what extent do the NGO network staff perceive that the networks are effective in containing or combating child sex trafficking and protecting victims and potential victims? The paper draws on Keck and Sikkink's important theorisation of NGO networks and will apply social movement theory and globalisation theory as conceptual frameworks for the analysis of NGO networks in a period of neoliberal globalisation and to reflect on the underlying causes of child sex trafficking. Through semi structured qualitative interviews as well as participant observation and process tracing this paper sets out to analyse the anti trafficking work of NGO networks and to explore the perceptions of NGO staff on the effectiveness of these networks.

In recent decades there has appeared an abundance of literature on the issue of governments', NGOs' and intergovernmental organisations' responses to the issue of child trafficking for sexual exploitation. Due to its all-encompassing nature and the fact that it is perceived, at once, as a feminist issue, a poverty issue, a human rights issue, a government policy issue, a legal issue, a criminology issue, and so on, the issue of child trafficking has attracted interest from a diverse range of groups – feminists,

governments, non-government organisations, child protection experts, civil society, and academics, amongst many others. The emerging research area of transnational NGO activism has generated important studies within several different scholarly disciplines including migration studies, human rights studies and poverty studies (Tarrow, 2005; Piper, 2004; Keck and Sikkink, 1999; Caouette, 2006; Bertone, 2004). International Relations scholars, opposing the state-centred paradigm of an anarchical international political system, have analysed non-state actors in international politics (Piper, 2004; Williams, 2004). Rissen-Kappen, drawing on Keohane and Nye's writings in the 1970s, has helped to reintroduce this perspective (Rissen-Kappen, 1995). Other scholars following this tradition have made use of social movement theory and focused explicitly on transnational activism. Keck and Sikkink (1998) provided an innovative new study in this regard that was followed by others (Sikkink, 1999; Khagram, Riker and Sikkink 2002). Sociologists and political scientists interested in social movements have analysed the extent of social movements to a transnational or global level (Rucht 1999; della Porta et al, 1999). Within the fields of politics and development studies there are also a number of studies on transnational non government organisation activities, which seldom draw explicitly on the social movement literature (Hulme and Edwards, 1997). NGOs have, in particular, contributed to the literature on child trafficking by defining the problem, citing frequent though radically different statistics on the number of children trafficked, the modes of trafficking, and information regarding the organisations' advocacy and policy work to combat child trafficking. However, the debate over the universal causes of child trafficking still persists. An emerging trend among NGOs is the perception of child trafficking not as a criminal justice problem, but as a migration issue caused by globalisation – children migrate illegally and clandestinely because poverty forces them to do so. This leads to the argument that trafficking is also a human rights issue. There exists a further significant gap in knowledge on the role of transnational NGO advocacy networks in responding to the issue of child trafficking. In recent years some authors have touched on the effects of transnational NGO advocacy in relation to advances in human rights, but no studies have been done specifically on the role of

transnational NGO network advocacy as a means of combating child sex trafficking in Southeast Asia. Nor have there been any studies on the obstacles, challenges, opportunities and power relationships among the NGO members or the NGOs' perceptions on the networks' effectiveness in combating child sex trafficking. Research into these areas is extremely important for both improving the understanding of transnational NGO networks and how they organise their advocacy and balance their internal relationships, and also for understanding how they can be effective in influencing national, regional and global social policies on child sex trafficking.

Transnational NGO advocacy networks

Transnational NGO advocacy networks have a vital role to play in the child trafficking debate. Advocacy networks represent a tangible form of complex relations outside formal institutions in our society. Over the past three decades they have become influential players in shaping policy in Southeast Asia on child trafficking and other forms of contemporary child slavery. In recent years an increasing number of authors have written about the importance of transnational advocacy networks in shaping policy, though, as Keck and Sikkink state, "scholars have been slow to recognise either the rationality or the significance of activist networks" (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 2). Keck and Sikkink argue that transnational advocacy networks are motivated by values rather than by material concerns or professional norms, thus falling outside the accustomed categories (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 89). Transnational NGO advocacy networks are a relatively new phenomenon, only appearing in the last three decades. They have the important ability to reach beyond policy change to advocate and instigate changes in the institutional and principled bases of international interactions. Allen Nan argues that networks are social structures that connect people to each other (Allen Nan, 2008). In social network analysis, networks are analysed as nodes (people or organisations) connected with each other by weak or strong ties (Granovetter, 1985) that carry flows (such as information, resources, and ideas) among the nodes (Allen Nan, 2008).

Networks can be inclusive or exclusive with inclusive networks allowing the steady flow of trust and the building of relationships while exclusive networks reinforce existing power structures (Allen Nan, 2008). Keck and Sikkink describe transnational advocacy networks as

(including) those actors working internationally on an issue, who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and dense exchanges of information and services (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p.89).

According to Keck and Sikkink the major actors in advocacy networks may include international and domestic NGOs, research and advocacy organisations, local social movements, foundations, religious groups, trade unions, parts of regional and international intergovernmental organisations, and parts of the executive or parliamentary branches of government (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p.92). They are also forms of organisation characterised by voluntary, reciprocal, and horizontal patterns of communication and exchange (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). They are advocacy networks because advocates plead the causes of others or defend a cause or proposition (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 8). Their ability to generate information quickly and accurately, and to employ it effectively, is their most valuable currency; it is also central to their identity (Keck and Sikkink, 1998, p. 10).

Keck and Sikkink argue that “transnational advocacy networks seek influence in many of the same ways that other political groups or social movements do. Since they are not powerful in a traditional sense of the word, they must use the power of their information, ideas, and strategies to alter the information and value contexts within which states make policies” (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 16). Transnational NGO networks’ powers of influence also stem from their ability to operate transnationally, that is, beyond borders, and to extend their advocacy to all groups – governments, civil

society, social movements and other groups. Keck and Sikkink argue that social scientists have barely addressed the political role of activist NGOs as simultaneously domestic and international actors (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 92). There is, on the other hand, an abundance of literature on NGOs and networks in specific countries (Fruhling, 1991; Scherer-Warren, 1993). Much of the existing literature on NGOs comes from development studies, and either ignores interactions with other groups and states or spends little time on political analysis (Korten, 1990). Examining their role in advocacy networks helps both to distinguish NGOs from, and to see their connections with, social movements, state agencies, and international organizations (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 92). It helps to understand how, within an increasingly internationalized and globalised world, a fluid, cosmopolitan, but rooted layer of advocates is developing that uses domestic resources, expertise and opportunities to advance the collective goals of the people it claims to represent (Tarrow, 2005, p. 34). Examining the networks is also a powerful means of assessing the considerable tensions created within the networks, as well as measuring the perceived 'impact' of their collective advocacy and subsequent shifts in social policy in the countries, and on the peoples, targeted by the advocacy efforts. Dominique Caouette suggests that what is particularly challenging is to develop an informed understanding of this modality of activism in relation to the broad range of initiatives and endeavours for social change (Caouette, 2006). This is especially true for international NGOs, in particular Northern NGOs, which find themselves increasingly involved in supporting this type of work in addition to locally-based community organizations and nationwide NGOs (Caouette, 2006). Among international development practitioners and advocates there is some questioning going on in terms of the priorities of advocacy, what types of activities should be given more attention and at what level (local, regional, national or supranational) or even, how integration between these various levels of efforts can be ensured.

Networks and norm building

Allen Nan argues that networks are mechanisms for connecting the parts of an overall peace process, bridging between levels and across segments of society (Allen Nan, 2008, p. 114). Risse and Sikkink argue that the purpose of most transnational advocacy networks is to influence the international norms that can shape domestic politics and society (Risse-Kappen et al., 1999). The diffusion of international norms in the human rights area crucially depends on the establishment and the sustainability of networks among domestic and transnational actors who manage to link up with international regimes, to alert Western public opinion and Western governments (Risse-Kappen et al., 1999). The study of transnational advocacy networks is therefore concerned about the process through which principled ideas ('beliefs about right and wrong held by individuals') become norms ('collective expectations about proper behaviour for a given identity'), (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein, 1996, p. 54) which in turn influence the behaviour and domestic structure of states (Risse-Kappen et al., 1999). While ideas are about cognitive commitments, norms make behavioural claims on individuals (Katzenstein, 1996). To endorse a norm not only expresses a belief, but also creates impetus for behaviour consistent with the belief (Risse-Kappen et al., 1999). Norms have an explicit intersubjective quality because they are collective expectations (Risse-Kappen et al., 1999). Hertel argues that different normative understandings within networks can have a significant impact on both norms evolution and on policy outcomes (Hertel, 2006). Hertel states that "different norms and norm interpretations compete with one another" (Hertel, 2006). The relative power of competing movements and counter-movements will play a major role in determining the norms adopted by states, and more importantly, how those norms are implemented in fact. In the end, norms will represent an amalgam of interpretations and approaches, both domestic and international (Hertel, 2006). Arts further argues that the purpose of NGO activism is to exercise political influence (Arts, 1998). He defines political influence as "the achievement of (a part of) one's policy goal with regard to an outcome in treaty formation and implementation, which is (at least partly) caused by one's own and

intentional intervention in the political arena and process concerned” (Arts, 1998). The aim of NGOs, it follows, is not just the initial impact on decision-makers, but also to influence the collective policy outcome, namely the treaties concerned (Stokman, 1994).

The value of Keck and Sikkink’s approach is that they define transnational advocacy networks as a unified web with overarching aims and strategies. In doing so, they define the concept as a type of political actor worthy of academic and political attention. The transnational aspect, Rucht argues, could refer to various dimensions of a movement, such as issues, targets, mobilisation, and organisation (cited in Della Porta, 1999). This paper will consider transnational NGOs as possessing at least one of these qualities though with an emphasis on NGO networks which are transnational in terms of geographical boundaries and in their mobilisation of resources and campaigns.

‘Northern’ and ‘Southern’ network members

It is important to examine the divide between the two major NGO parties in transnational NGO networks: those NGOs that define themselves as from the ‘North’ that generally incorporate the big western NGOs such as World Vision and Save the Children and those smaller, ‘Southern’ NGOs that may be advocating for child trafficking prevention, victim protection and trafficker prosecution, but that do so on a domestic scale and do not have resources that could ever compare to those of their wealthy Northern counterparts. On this subject Batliwala states that Northern groups and networks – even if they have ‘Southern’ organisations in their membership – occupy much of the space for citizen input at the multilateral institution level, and ‘elite’ NGOs at the national level (Batliwala, 2002). Edwards also argues that NGOs and citizen networks feel they have the right to participate in global decision-making, yet much less attention has been paid to their obligations in pursuing this role responsibly, or to concrete ways in which these rights might be expressed in the emerging structures of global governance (Edwards, 2001). Elsewhere, Edwards writes that “only 251 of the 1,550 NGOs associated with the UN Department of Public Information come from the

South, and the ratio of NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council is even lower” (Edwards, 2000). There is a real danger, as Segaar argues, that Northern NGOs claim to ‘represent’ Southern NGOs without proper consultation, and partnerships being little more than rhetoric in practice (Segaar, 2006). Nonetheless, network theorists point out that whilst the balance of resources is important, actors supply each other with different things, and they do this with greater or lesser intensity (Ritzer, 2008). This can lead to both collaboration and competition (Ritzer, 2008, p. 435). Global NGOs and civil society networks, while representing the issues and concerns of poor or marginalised people in global policy realms, often have few formal or structured links with direct stakeholder constituencies. Their ‘take’ on issues and strategic priorities is rarely subject to debate within the communities whose concerns they represent (Batliwala, 2002). Grassroots constituencies and their formations can therefore often feel ‘used’ by their NGO counterparts in many ways with the smaller, domestic NGOs feeling dominated by the global NGOs, or the ‘mass-base tokens’ used by them to lend credibility (Batliwala, 2002).

The NGO networks generally form in one of two major ways: The Northern NGOs approach the domestic Southern NGOs and offer to lend their voice, resources and funding power; or the domestic, Southern NGOs approach the larger, Northern NGOs and request their ‘help’. Keck and Sikkink refer to this latter approach as the Boomerang Theory. The Boomerang Theory applies where a government violates or refuses to recognise rights, in this case the rights of children to be protected from trafficking, and where, therefore, individuals and domestic groups often have no recourse within domestic political or judicial arenas (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 89). They may therefore seek international connections to express their concerns and even to protect their lives (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 89). Other authors have identified further patterns within networks, such as ‘blocking’ or ‘backdoor moves’ which allow for weaker members of networks to influence the overarching campaign (Hertel, 2006).

Both are called 'mechanisms' by Hertel (2006), drawing from Social Movement Theory (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). Rucht has also identified two different types of advocacy network structures: horizontal and vertical (cited in Della Porta, 1999). Horizontal coordination consists of coordination between groups from different countries and none dominates the other (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). Vertical coordination of advocacy networks refers to a pattern where national groups not only coordinate directly, but do so through an international body which has some say and, therefore, is not just a node of communication. The overall structure could be decentralised, thus limiting the power of the international body and facilitating a flow of communication from the bottom to the top as well as direct communication among national sections (McAdam, Tarrow and Tilly, 2001). Whichever form the advocacy network takes, it is likely that there will be some internal challenges in terms of maintaining a democratic structure and forging strong relationships amongst all stakeholders despite variances of opinion, goals or value systems.

Such advocacy networks are particularly prevalent in the area of human rights advocacy. Scholarly attention has tended to focus on social movement networks for human rights, environmental and women's groups' attempts to influence norms and values in the global system (Keck and Sikkink, 1998). International NGOs seeking social transformation operate on a number of levels to influence global governance – they create and activate global networks, participate in multilateral arenas, facilitate inter-state cooperation, act within states to influence policy and enhance public participation (Alger, 1997). Even in areas often considered to be the sole domain of states such as international security, civil society networks can play a role in shaping the agenda and contributing to policy change (Price, 1998).

Of course, linkages are important for both parties. Networks provide access, leverage, and information (and often money) to struggling domestic groups (Risse-Kappen et al.,

1999). International contacts can 'amplify' the demands of domestic groups, prise open space for new issues, and then echo these demands back into the domestic arena (Risse-Kappen et al., 1999). For the less powerful Third World actors, networks can provide access, leverage and information and often money that they could not expect to have on their own. For Northern groups, they may make more credible the frequent assertion that they are struggling with, and not only 'for' their southern counterparts (Keck and Sikkink, 1999, p. 93).

Globalisation and network proliferation

Contemporary social movements and NGOs have grown significantly since the advent of neoliberal globalisation. As trade has opened up and countries have focused their attention on competing in international markets, communication has increased due to the internet and other new technologies and niche groups have profited from globalisation and become wealthier, the gap between rich and poor has increased in some communities, and the entire concept of 'community' has diminished, especially in some developed countries (Boli & Thomas, 1999). More sinister has been the effect on the poor, who have been marginalised even further by globalisation and some poor families have been reduced to selling children in order to survive (World Vision, 1998). The proliferation of NGOs and social movements since the 1970s is not an accident. It could be argued that the growth of these groups has been in direct response to the negative effects of neoliberal globalisation and the negative impact on community and the further marginalisation of the poor (Conway and Heynen, 2006). NGOs have lobbied governments for sustained economic growth and attention to the negative aspects of globalisation and they have also attempted to address injustices by providing protection for victims, turning their attention to international law as a human rights framework for advocating for marginalised groups (World Vision, 2008; ECPAT 2008; UNIAP 2007). Globalisation, many NGOs argue, is contributing to a whole new era of slavery, and this time it uses the labour of children in order to feed the habits of rich states and

individuals (Anti-Slavery International, 2008; World Vision, 2008; UJNIAP 2007; Save the Children 2006; Bales 2004). NGOs have, therefore, focused their attention on the three P's of trafficking – Prevention, Protection and Prosecution – in their endeavours to ameliorate the negative consequences of contemporary globalisation. Political globalisation such as the growth of civil society with NGOs supporting people all over the world to get justice from their own governments, from big companies and from overseas governments, is of invaluable assistance to the victims of contemporary trafficking and slavery (Van den Anker, 2004).

Organisations interviewed for this research

	Organisation/Network	Country and city	Level of authority of key respondent	Key respondent from 'North' or 'South'?
1	International Labour Organisation	Thailand – Bangkok	High	North
2	International Organisation for Migration	Thailand – Bangkok	High	South
3	International Organisation for Migration	Cambodia – Phnom Penh (phone interview)	High	North
4	UNICEF	Thailand – Bangkok	High	North
5	ECPAT (End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes)	Thailand – Bangkok	High	South
6	ECPAT	Thailand – Bangkok	High	South

7	Plan International	Thailand Bangkok	-	High	South
8	UNESCO	Thailand Bangkok	-	High	North
9	UNESCO	Thailand Bangkok	-	High	North
10	Asia Foundation	Thailand Bangkok	-	High	North
11	Child Protection and Development Centre	Thailand Pattaya	-	High	South
12	Save the Children	Thailand Bangkok	-	High	South
13	UNIAP (United Nations Inter Agency Project on Human Trafficking)	Thailand Bangkok	-	High	North
14	TRAFCORD	Thailand Chiang Mai	-	Middle	South
15	TRAFCORD	Thailand Chiang Mai	-	High	South
16	Chab Dai	Cambodia Phnom Penh	-	High	North
17	Cambodia ACTs	Cambodia Phnom Penh	-	High	South
18	Hagar	Cambodia Phnom Penh	-	High	North
19	Asia Foundation	Cambodia Phnom Penh	-	High	South
20	UNICEF	Cambodia Phnom Penh	-	High	North
21	World Vision	Cambodia Phnom Penh	-	High	South

The table of information on key respondents is included for the purpose of transparency on the organisations included in the research as well as a means of reflecting on the challenges posed by the interview sample. The interviews were conducted in Thailand (Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Pattaya) and Cambodia (Phnom Penh) over the period mid March – end May 2010. All the interviews were face to face interviews with the exception of one telephone interview with IOM. The interviews were, for the most part, conducted at the offices of the key respondents, namely NGO and UN offices which are mostly situated in capital cities. It was explained to the interview participants prior to the interview that the name of the organisation would be listed in the thesis but that the name of the key respondent and his or her comments would remain anonymous. This enabled the key respondents to speak openly on their perceptions of networks and relay any criticisms or concerns they had about the networks and the obstacles and opportunities for network success. While it was envisaged that the interview group would be fairly representative of the different position levels within the organisations this was not the case. The majority of key respondents hold positions of authority within their individual NGOs or NGO networks. This had both good and bad implications for the research. It meant that the balance is shifted somewhat toward a managerial level of responses from people who may not necessarily always understand what is going on on the ground, but it also meant that the key respondents had the capacity to answer some complex questions on networking theory and how this theory applies to the key respondent's organisation or network. As the table also reflects, there is an imbalance in the nationality (i.e from the 'North' or the 'South') of the key respondents. The majority of key respondents are from the 'North'. Again, this had both positive and negative implications for the research. On the one hand I did not have to grapple too frequently with interpreters but on the other hand the responses are not entirely reflective of the opinions of the Thais and Cambodians.

Interview findings

Diversity of networks

As the theory on networks suggests, there is no 'one size fits all' to NGO advocacy networks in the Mekong Sub-Region. The interviews reflected a diversity in structure and organisation of the networks. Some networks like UNIAP and the Asia Foundation's Taskforce on Human Trafficking are extremely organised with a secretariat, committees, sub committees, regular meetings, minutes from meetings, newsletters and are staffed by highly skilled anti-trafficking experts. Other networks such as ECPAT are organised in that there is a central office which acts as a secretariat and organises regular meetings, but the role of the network members is not as clearly defined and network members may participate or contribute as much or as little as they like. Other networks are even more fluid and network groups may simply be 'involved' by having their name on the list of partner names but have very little input at all. Still other NGOs consider themselves as part of a network or multiple networks but their involvement in such networks is defined on a needs basis and while they may consider themselves as part of the network they may only participate when there is a particular task to complete. In reverse, the networks may call on a network member to assist on a campaign or another task when there is a perceived need for that NGO's expertise on, for example, technical consultation, leading a campaign, providing funding, and so on. There was overall agreement that networks need to be organised if they want to survive. A network without a central coordinating body such as a secretariat, will not survive long. Only one key respondent argued against this finding with his comment that 'there is more merit in building an informal network through afternoon drinks' than there is in having an organised network with regular meetings and a sound structure. Although the research is focused on NGO networks, there seem to be rare examples of networks that are purely made up of NGOs. With the exception of ECPAT, Cambodia ACTs and Chab Dai, the other networks have UN or government members. As one key respondent explained, this is essential as it's impossible to be advocating on anti child trafficking

without involving governments and UN agencies. In order to organise rescues, it's essential to network with the police. In order to pursue prosecutions of child sex abusers, it's necessary to liaise with relevant government ministries such as the Ministry of the Interior. And in organising and implementing advocacy campaigns it's necessary to "work with rather than against governments" and "use the expertise of the UN agencies". While there was diversity in terms of the frequency with which the NGO networks work with government and UN, a trend was clear in that the NGO networks seem to be involved in "training government" which may seem a peculiar finding for some. While it may sometimes be assumed that government 'knows what it's doing' and is organised in its anti trafficking work this is not necessarily the case in Thailand and Cambodia. It seems that, according to the key respondents, it is the NGOs and UN agencies that hold the skill and expertise and are responsible for training government agencies and individual government staff in how to identify trafficking victims, work with them, apply laws and other national and regional agreements. As one key respondent put it, "we have to hold the hand of governments to make sure they are doing their jobs". It also seems to be the NGO networks who are lobbying the government agencies to take a continued interest in trafficking. Corruption, particularly among the police, appears rife in Thailand and Cambodia so NGOs have a "responsibility" to "fill the gaps" of governments by providing government counterparts with knowledge and skills and seeing that the government staff implement these new skills in their anti trafficking and child protection work. A complaint of many key respondents was the high turnover of government staff. Time and energy is invested in building relationships with government staff and training them only to have the same staff move to a different job in a different province in '6 months time' and the NGO-government training and relationship building process has to start all over again.

Problems and obstacles within networks

While the key respondents noted many positive aspects of working in advocacy networks, they mentioned various problems associated with having different organisations working together for a common goal. As one key respondent explained, “the more organisations you have in the network, the more problems you have”. Some of these problems included network members not fulfilling their duties, not reporting properly on expenditure and activities (especially a problem with the smaller Thai NGOs), losing interest in the network, or expecting that the network will assist the individual NGO in fundraising or supplying the NGO with financial assistance, which is not necessarily the role of the network. Another problem cited by several key respondents is that of bringing the network together. The majority of communication is done by email and by phone. Getting all the network members together on a regular basis is impossible for some networks, particularly in Thailand where the geographic distance is greater than that of Cambodia. On the whole, Cambodian NGOs seem to be “better organised than Thai NGO networks” as one Cambodian network key respondent explained, “because it is a smaller country and you can easily travel to a meeting in a day” whereas in Thailand and other countries the geographic distance makes regular meetings more of a challenge. Other concerns expressed surround the issues of voice and power. Some key respondents of NGO networks argue that they are, as Rucht’s theory proposes, horizontal networks, not vertical, and that power and voice are even amongst the groups. But even these networks have a secretariat, an organising office and a person who commands the work of the NGOs and their coordination, so the belief that the relationships are vertical and non hierarchical must be challenged. The majority of the networks lamented that it is the larger, generally Western NGOs that control the power and voice of the networks as they are generally the bigger funders and have more expertise and technical knowledge. So even in networks that want to be horizontal or perceive themselves as horizontal, there is an imbalance between goals and reality. The NGO staff are, however, aware of the issue and seem to be making efforts to ensure that the voices of the smaller NGOs are incorporated where possible,

even if they are represented through the network, i.e through ECPAT, which in turn represents the NGOs at larger forums such as the Cambodian Taskforce Against Human Trafficking which is a network of government, UN agencies and approximately 150 NGO partners. In this situation, the network tries to convey the 'voice' of the smaller NGOs by having NGOs as the heads of sub committees and allowing networks such as ECPAT to speak on behalf of its network of NGOs. As no government agencies were interviewed for this research it's impossible to include an analysis of the governments' perspective on the issues of power and voice in advocacy networks. However, UN staff also had interesting insights on these issues. One UN key respondent openly stated that "the UN does not like NGOs", and another mentioned that "UN has good relationships with NGOs" but "there are huge problems concerning voice and power between UN agencies".

Perceptions on network 'effectiveness'

A common theme derived from the interviews is that donors, especially donors such as the US government, other western governments and some embassies, are asking for more networking among anti trafficking organisations in South East Asia. A lot of anti trafficking funding is now going directly to networks such as Chab Dai in Cambodia which is an NGO network and must therefore share the funds amongst the network members. Some networks divide the money evenly according to the number of NGOs in the group, and others divide the money according to the programs in a particular province and the perceived financial needs of the particular program or the particular province. While donors have realised the merits of NGOs working in networks, what do the NGOs themselves think of the effectiveness of working together as opposed to going it alone? Based on the fact that some of the key respondents found some of the interview questions concerning 'networks' challenging to answer, it is questionable whether the NGO staff understand the bigger picture of the networks and the individual NGO's place in those networks. Some of the NGO staff, particularly the Thai staff, would

dodge the questions on networking and instead repeat their mantra on how good their NGO is and the different advocacy activities they are doing on anti trafficking. This leads to an inevitable criticism that some of the NGO staff can't grasp their NGO's place in the network and are too practised in responding to donors. As a white skinned researcher this may be no surprise. One interview in particular left me with the impression that the interview was not so much for me to gather data as for the NGO to request that I pursue funding opportunities for the NGO. On the whole, however, the NGOs believe that the networks are extremely effective. The majority of key respondents mentioned that the key benefits to working as a network are that the NGOs can share resources, ideas and information openly, network with other organisations that are working in the same anti trafficking field, avoid duplication of programs and projects by knowing what each organisation is doing, and access donors and financial aid. It also enables the NGOs to "avoid reinventing the wheel", have a "stronger, united voice" in raising public awareness on human trafficking and for lobbying government. As one key respondent said, "you have a much stronger voice with government when you are many than when you are just one". Some key respondents rightly argued that it is very difficult to measure 'effectiveness'. As one key respondent said,

In a X meeting, 2 people connect, they share notes, they end up friends and support each other. That's not something you can prove when you are writing your annual reports. It's much easier to say 'we've done this training, now 30 organisations have child protection policies', that's something that's easier for us to demonstrate. It's hard to prove effectiveness. We've demonstrated that even though there are big challenges I think we have made an impact on what we're doing.

NGOs that are 'going it alone' in Cambodia and Thailand seem to be ostracised in the NGO community in these countries. It's rare, especially in Cambodia, that an NGO working in counter trafficking activities is not a member of at least one NGO advocacy network.

In conclusion it may certainly be argued that the 21 interviews reveal strong trends in network effectiveness in combating child sex trafficking in Thailand and Cambodia. There are many challenges in achieving network effectiveness but there are also many opportunities. The central enquiry of this paper is about the emergence and operation of NGO network influence that has been instrumental in framing child trafficking as a key social policy issue for Thailand and Cambodia. It is probable that the region will see more NGOs joining the existing anti trafficking networks in the region as donors seem to be demanding it. Cambodia may be a useful case study for the further analysis of NGO networks as the four major networks in that country – Chab Dai, Cosecam, ECPAT and Cambodia ACTs – seem to be coordinating the majority of anti human trafficking NGOs in the country. The key respondents suggest that they have played critical roles in highlighting the issue of child sex trafficking, finding intergovernmental organisation partners and NGO network partners with similar ideologies and forming networks, sharing information, organising transnational campaigns and interacting with and influencing governments in creative ways to address the issue. In addition the NGOs have responded with savvy to the governments' styles of agenda setting. They have managed to navigate difficult political environments and framed the issue in a way to force governments to recognise their role as supply, and/or transit and destination countries of child trafficking and therefore recognise their position as integral players in the battle against child sex trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Transnational NGO networks have also had major successes in educating communities and children about the risks of unsafe migration and trafficking, lobbying governments to recognise the citizenship of stateless children and warning foreign travellers of the legal ramifications of trafficking or sexually abusing Asian children in situations of child sex tourism.

References

- Alger, C. (1997). Transnational Social Movements, World Politics and Global Governance. In J. Smith (Ed.), *Transnational Social Movements and Global Politics: Solidarity Beyond the State*. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- Allen Nan, S. (2008). Conflict Resolution in a Network Society. *International Negotiation*, 13, 111 - 131.
- Anti-Slavery International (2009). No Slavery No Exceptions Retrieved 8 November, 2009, from http://www.antislavery.org/english/campaigns/no_slavery_no_exceptions/default.aspx
- Arts, B. (1998). *The Political Influence of NGOs*. Utrecht: International Books.
- Bales, K. (2004). *Disposable People - New Slavery in the Global Economy*. California: California Press.
- Batliwala, S. (2002). Grassroots Movements as Transnational Actors: Implications for Global Civil Society. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organisations*, 13(4).
- Bertone, M. (2004). Transnational Activism to Combat Trafficking in Persons. *Brown Journal of World Affairs*, 10(2), 9 - 21.
- Boli, J., & Thomas, G. M. (1997). World culture in the world polity: A century of international non-governmental organization. *American Sociological Review*, 62(2), 171-190.
- Boli, J., & Thomas, G. M. (1999). *Constructing World Culture: International Non-Government Organisations since 1875*. Chicago: Stanford University Press.
- Caouette, D. (2006). Thinking and Nurturing Transnational Activism in SouthEast Asia. *Phillipine Journal of Third World Studies*, 21(2), 3 - 33.
- Caouette, D. (2006). *Transnational Activism in Southeast Asia: Adopting a Feminist Perspective on Transnational Collective Action*. Montreal: University of Montreal.
- Castells, M. (2000). *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Chuang, J. (2006). Beyond a Snapshot: Preventing Human Trafficking in the Global Economy. *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies*, 13, 137 - 163.
- Conway, D., & Heynen, N. (2006). *Globalisation's Contradictions*. London: Routledge.
- Della Porta, D. (1999). *Social Movements in a Globalising World*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd.

ECPAT. (1994). *The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children*. Melbourne: ECPAT International.

ECPAT. (2007). *Ensuring Meaningful Child and Youth Participation*. Bangkok: ECPAT International.

ECPAT. (2008). *Caught in Modern Slavery - Tourism and Child Prostitution in Asia*. Chiang Mai: ECPAT International.

Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (1992). *Making a Difference: NGOs and Development in a Changing World*. London: Earthscan.

Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (1996). *Nongovernmental Organisations - Performance and Accountability. Beyond the Magic Bullet*. West Hartford: Kumarian Press.

Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (1999). NGOs in a Global Future: Marrying Local Delivery to Worldwide Leverage. *Public Administration and Development*, 19(2), 117 - 136.

Edwards, M., & Sen, G. (2000). NGOs, Social Change and the Transformation of Human Relationships: a 21st Century Civic Agenda. *Third World Quarterly*, 21(3), 605 - 616.

Edwards, M., & Gavents, J. (2001). *Global Action Citizen*. London: Earthscan.

Fisher, W. (1997). Doing good? The Politics and Antipolitics of NGO Practices. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 26, 439 - 464.

Fisher, J. (1998). *Non-Governments: NGOs and the Political Development of the Third World*. Connecticut: Kumarian Press.

Friedman, B. (2005). *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth*. New York: Vintage Books.

Fruhling, H. (1991). *Determinants of Gross Human Rights Violations by State and Non-State Actors in Brazil, Uruguay, Chile and Argentina*. The Hague: Kluwer Law International.

GAATW. (2007). *Collateral Damage - The Impact of Anti-Trafficking Measures on Human Rights Around the World*. Bangkok: Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women.

Giddens, A. (1990). *The Consequences of Modernity*. Oxford: Polity Press.

Granovetter, M. (1985). Economic Action and Social Structure: The Problem of Embeddedness. *Journal of Sociology*, 91, 481 - 510.

Hertel, S. (2006). *Unexpected Power: Conflict and Change Among Transnational Activists*. London: Cornell University Press.

Hodge, D., Lietz, C. (2007). The International Sexual Trafficking of Women and Children: A Review of the Literature. *Affilia*, 22(163).

ILO. (2001). *The Link Between Migration and Development in the Least Developed Countries*. Geneva: ILO.

Keck, M., & Sikkink, K. (1998). *Activists Beyond Borders*. London: Cornell University Press.

Keck, E., & Sikkink, M. (1999). *Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Khagram, S., Riker, J., Sikkink, K., eds. (2002). *Restructuring World Politics* (Vol.). London: University of Minnesota Press.

Korten, D. (1990). *Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*. Kumarian Press: Connecticut.

Larana, E., Johnston, H., Gusfield, J., eds. (1994). *New Social Movements*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Leidholdt, D. (1994, May). *Sexual trafficking of women in Europe - A human rights crisis for the European Union*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Women, the European State, and Community/International Area Studies and Women's Studies Programs Meeting, Kalamazoo, Mi.

Marshall, P. (2001). Globalisation, Migration, and Trafficking: Some Thoughts from the South-East Asian Region. [Occasional Paper]. *UN Inter-Agency Project on Trafficking in Women and Children in the Mekong Sub-Region* (1), 6.

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., Tilley, C., eds. (2001). *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Melucci, A. (1989). *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society* (Vol. Temple University Press): Philadelphia.

Piper, N., & Uhlin, U. (2004). *Transnational Activism - Problems of Power and Democracy*. London: Routledge.

Price, R. (1998). Reversing the Gun Sights? Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines. *International Organization*, 52(3), 613 - 644.

Risse-Kappen, T. (1995). *Bringing Transnationalism Back In: Non-State Actors, Domestic Structures, and International Institutions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ritzer, G. (2008). *Sociological Theory*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rucht, D. (1997). Social movement organizations. Guide to research on insurgent realities. *Kolner Zeitschrift Fur Soziologie Und Sozialpsychologie*, 49(4), 805-807.

Samarasinghe, V. (2008). *Female Sex Trafficking in Asia - the Resilience of Patriarchy in a Changing World*. New York: Routledge.

Sanghera, J. (1999). *Trafficking of Women and Children in South Asia: Taking Stock and Moving Ahead*: Save the Children Alliance.

Save the Children Cross-Border Project Against Trafficking and Exploitation of Migrant and Vulnerable Children (2006). Bangkok: Save the Children UK.

Scherer-Warren, I. (1993). *Rules of Social Movements*. Lisbon: Edicoes Loyola.

Segaar, D. (2006). *New Dimensions of Multilateralism - The Evolving Role of NGOs in Global Governance*. New York: Centre on International Cooperation.

Stokman, F. (1994). Besluitvormingsmodellen binnen beleidsnetwrken *Methoden van invloedsanalyse* (pp. 165 - 187). Amsterdam: Meppel.

Tarrow, S. (1998). *Power in Movement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tarrow, S. (2005). *The New Transnational Activism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Thatun, S. (2008). *Trafficking in Persons - A Resource Package*. Melbourne: World Vision Australia.

UNICEF. (2005). *Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation and Other Exploitative Purposes*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.

UNIAP (2009). *Mekong Region Country Data Sheets - Human Trafficking*. Bangkok: UNIAP.

Van den Anker, C. (2004). *The Political Economy of New Slavery. Palgrave Texts in International Political Economy*.

Williams, D., & Young, T. (1994). Governance, the World Bank and Liberal Theory. *Political Studies*, 42.

World Vision. (2008). *Traffick Report: Cambodia*

World Vision. (2008). *Traffick Report: Thailand*

World Vision Australia's Human Trafficking Resource Package. (2008). Melbourne: World Vision.

Zirakzadeh, C. E. (2006). *Social Movements in Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan: Melbourne.