

# Measuring the Extent of Sex Trafficking in Cambodia–2008

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## SIREN Trafficking Estimates



**UNIAP**

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UNIAP Trafficking Estimates

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# Foreword

The problem of human trafficking may be well defined, but less well understood is the scale of human trafficking. The glaring gap in our knowledge of the prevalence of human trafficking in different areas and industries affects responses at all levels and makes identifying the impact of counter-trafficking work nearly impossible.

Further, counter-trafficking responders are rightly being asked to show how efforts in programming help people. It is therefore crucial for them to understand exactly how their contributions and efforts are making a difference.

With no empirical starting point, however, how can results be measured or demonstrated?

In 2007, UNIAP held a competition with the ambitious goal of driving innovation and rigour in human trafficking research. NGOs, academics, and government and non-government research institutions were invited to submit proposals for methodologies that could estimate the numbers of trafficking victims in a given geographic area and/or industry.

The methodologies were required to be comprehensive, relevant to the information priorities in the sector, technically sound, practical, original and replicable in other regions.

The initiative had two purposes:

First, to address the need for accurate estimates of trafficking victims.

Second, to create a competitive format aimed at attracting quality statistical and research expertise to the field of human counter-trafficking – a field where the lack of reliable quantitative statistics has been widely acknowledged as an inhibiting factor in counter-trafficking programming.

The competition's many impressive entries went through two rounds of review and a shortlist of six proposals was selected to present and defend their methodologies before an audience of UN, NGO and donors engaged in counter-trafficking in the region. The final reports were selected by a panel of three judges including David Feingold, from UNESCO; Lisa Rende Taylor, from UNIAP, and Jiang Jie from the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences.

As hoped, the approaches set out in the proposals were diverse, innovative, and most importantly, locally specific, practical, and feasible.

In 2008, UNIAP provided direct funding and technical support to the top three selected methodologies. Their resulting reports are presented here with an expectation that sharing them will encourage replication and further innovation in other regions.

It is our hope that initiatives like this further the development of reliable systems for quantifying human trafficking not just in the Mekong Region, but in many regions of the world.

UNIAP would like to thank the authors for their contributions to human trafficking research. Their findings are not only innovative, but may give counter-trafficking practitioners the means to respond more precisely and more effectively to the sale and exploitation of human beings.

United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking (UNIAP)  
Regional Management Office  
Bangkok, Thailand

## Measuring the Extent of Sex Trafficking in Cambodia – 2008



### UNIAP Human Trafficking Estimates

**Final Report**  
Contract RCB9/2008

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Views expressed in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations

All photographs in this report were taken during trafficking research in Cambodia by Thomas Steinfatt.

## Synopsis

This paper presents the results of research conducted during the summer and fall of 2008 across the 24 provinces of Cambodia to measure numbers and locations of women and children who are destination trafficked within or into Cambodia for commercial sex. Results presented are empirical counts and estimates from venue management and workers of numbers of trafficked women and children throughout Cambodia, province by province. These empirical counts and management and worker estimates are provided by persons who directly observed sex venue management and sex workers in addition to obtaining information from them. The results are compared with findings of earlier studies. Funding for this study was provided by UNIAP Contract RCB9/2008 and is gratefully acknowledged.

## Introduction

Trafficking in persons (TIP) occurs in every country. It is based on economics, on the desire to profit from the work of others without providing just compensation to the workers. It may involve various forms of deception and illegal behavior in order to achieve this profit. One form of TIP is trafficking in women and children. The economic activity involved in such trafficking is often sex work. Sex trafficking occurs when persons are induced to engage in sex work through force, fraud, or coercion, or when the sex worker is under 18 years of age. It may involve cases where the worker does not receive just compensation for her voluntary labor. In any society female domestic laborers such as maids may be subject to abuse. Some societies have institutionalized these practices with children in the form of *mooi jai*, *restavek*, and related practices (Jaskchok, 1988; Steinfatt, 2006). Baker (2007) discusses related issues on children in Thailand. Spousal abuse also occurs in Cambodia as elsewhere and may take the form of trafficking in some instances. The present study does not attempt to measure the number of either of these domestic cases, or to determine whether any of the persons so situated have been abused or trafficked. Similarly, trafficking for maritime labor, for begging, and for factory labor, are not studied in this research. Derks, Henke, and Ly (2006) provide a review of many of the reports on sex work and human trafficking in Cambodia conducted since 1995. Reviews of additional studies may be found in Steinfatt (2003) and in the Discussion below.

Trafficking often involves a process that is discussed in terms of source, transit, and destination trafficking. Source trafficking concerns the origin of trafficked persons, in-transit trafficking concerns persons in transit between source and destination points, and destination trafficking concerns trafficked persons at their present location. Source and transit trafficking are often more difficult to detect than destination trafficking as there may be little visible evidence to enable their detection and they often appear to be normal human activities. Each destination trafficked person goes through each stage, however briefly. The difficulty of detection of the source and transit stages leads to our concentration on destination trafficking specifically because it is the easiest to detect and is thus more likely to provide an accurate count, and a greater possibility of rescue. References in the text to the Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey study of 2002, and the Steinfatt study of 2003 may be abbreviated as 'the 2002 and 2003 studies' when such usage is clear. The present study is referred to as the 2008 study.

## International and National Definitions of Trafficking

**The United Nations' definition of trafficking** is contained in Article 3 of its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons:

- (a) "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 exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered "trafficking in persons" even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- (d) "Child" shall mean any person under eighteen years of age (UN, 2000, p. 2).

To summarize, the United Nations definition of trafficking involves obtaining or controlling the services of a person by threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power, the person's vulnerability, or the use of payments in order to exploit them. Such trafficking involves the use of force, fraud or coercion to induce the performance of work, consent of the victim is not a defense, and the exploitation of children in this manner constitutes trafficking regardless of the means through which it occurs. This definition was adopted for use in the present study.

**The United States definition of trafficking** is similar in intent. The U.S. government defines **trafficking** in terms of knowingly obtaining by any means – often by force, fraud, or coercion – any person for involuntary servitude or forced labor. **Trafficking for sexual exploitation** is defined in the (U.S.) Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 as trafficking in which a commercial sexual act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such act has not attained 18 years of age (Department of State, 2001). To summarize the US definition of sexual trafficking, it involves the use of force fraud or coercion to induce the performance of sexual work, or any sexual work in which the induced person is under 18 years of age.

## Problems in Applying the Definitions of Trafficking

**Unanswered questions and blurred lines.** Despite these well considered definitions, problems remain in attaining agreement on the concept of human trafficking in practice, as expressed by Derks, Henke, and Ly (2006).

While notions of deception, debt bondage and sale are commonly used to label various ways in which women are trafficked into prostitution, there exist hardly any detailed studies exploring the actual meanings and limits of these concepts. Statements about "debt-bonded" or "indentured" women, or women who are "sold," may appear straightforward at first, but in fact leave unanswered many questions regarding the practices, contracts, people and implications involved. Some of the more descriptive studies point out that, in the case of sex work, local perceptions of "buying" and "selling" do not necessarily concur with perceptions of outside observers (e.g. CARAM 1999; Derks 1997). CARAM (1999: 17) writes that the

“lines of differentiation between ‘buying’ a sex worker and giving ‘a loan’ are... blurred for both the sex workers and the brothel owners.” Moreover, the status of a woman in sex work may change over time, as in the case of women who, after working off their debt, do not quit the business as soon as they are declared free to go (Derks 1998a; CARAM 1999; Steinfatt 2003). The ambiguity of real life situations calls into question the dichotomies between “voluntary” and “forced”, and between “choice” and “coercion”. These dichotomies are not necessarily consistent with the diversity of views and experiences of the sex workers themselves (Derks 2005: 133).

This makes it all the more important to be explicit in determining how to identify trafficking for prostitution. Is a woman who was deceived into sex work but chooses to stay (still) a “victim of trafficking”? Is a woman who indentures herself “trafficked”? While such distinctions may appear irrelevant, they are crucial if the research is to be rigorous in estimating the magnitude of the problem and helpful in considering program and policy responses (Derks, et al, 2006, p. 16).

Derks, et al.’s fundamental point is important and well taken. While the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the US Constitution prohibits slavery, including persons selling themselves into slavery, advances on salary or earnings from management to a worker are commonplace in small business. Equally commonplace is the expectation by management that the worker receiving the advance will continue to work long enough to repay it. What is not commonplace is the virtual imprisonment of the worker receiving an advance, not allowing them to leave the workplace until it is repaid. The lack of ability to leave often signifies trafficking, as well as evidence of force, fraud, or coercion or the existence of underage workers.

Some students of human trafficking regard all sex workers as trafficked, arguing that no one has ever entered prostitution voluntarily, and if any person engaging in sex work had another choice they would not enter prostitution. This position argues that at some point all sex workers must have been tricked or forced into the business, and thus they are trafficked. Kapur (2002) and Agustín (2003) caution against the similar view emanating from Barry (1979) that sees all women who are seeking a better life as “victims” possessing less agency than women from financially better circumstances. Barry’s (1979) argument suggests that the sex worker has been forced into prostitution by the economy and society. Weitzer (2010) argues that applying such “oppression” paradigms to sex workers is based on flawed research, which he reviews. Flawed research is considered further in the *Discussion*, below.

If sex workers are to be labeled as trafficked purely on the basis that they would not chose voluntarily to enter prostitution if they perceived another possible choice to be economically viable, then any person laboring at any job consisting of perceived drudgery would also be considered trafficked, and the entire meaning for the term is changed. The heart of concern with human trafficking is the use of force, fraud, or coercion to produce labor, and the victimization of children. Defining voluntary sex work of persons over 18 years as trafficking because the individual involved would rather earn a living in another way, creates a denial of the reasons most human beings abhor human trafficking: the use of force, fraud, or coercion. It removes the focus from sex workers trafficked through force, fraud, or coercion, and attempts to direct spending toward persons who neither need it nor want it. In doing so, this attempted redirection leaves many truly vulnerable persons with less of the assistance that they need. An auto worker with pay and full benefits might prefer to be a well paid executive, but it is difficult to argue in the auto worker case or the sex worker case that such preferences should be used to confer trafficked status and direct anti-trafficking funds toward such cases.

## Operational Definition of Trafficking

Conceptual definitions are often difficult to define operationally in terms of the behaviors and situations that, when observed, are held to constitute trafficking. Prototypical visions of trafficking, perhaps of a woman being abducted or someone chained in a dark room, are unlikely to be observed when they occur. For purposes of the present research a sex worker was considered to be a victim of human trafficking if either or both of two conditions apply in a venue where sex was available for sale: a person clearly under 18 who is available for sex; and/or, control over an adult sex worker's freedom of movement by venue management such that the worker is not allowed to leave the venue. In previous studies (Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey, 2002; Steinfatt, 2003) trafficking was operationally defined in terms of the existence of a debt contract between the worker and the potential trafficker, and/or as a worker under 18. Debt contracts usually involve payments to the indebted person's family that require that person to remain on the job until the debt is paid. Following the American Civil War, such contracts often served to keep former slaves in a permanently indebted position to their former masters. The payments might also be made to a kidnapper who sells the person to a brothel, or to the person who will perform the work.

The information on debt contracts used in our 2002 and 2003 studies produced estimates of numbers of workers and number trafficked that corresponded closely to independent estimates, as discussed below under *Cross Validation*. At that time, sex venue owners and managers often spoke openly with data gatherers concerning such contracts if the right questions were asked. This began to change with increased enforcement against sex venues in Cambodia since that time. The increased enforcement efforts between 2003 and 2008 made obtaining reliable information through the direct questioning of management concerning underage workers and indentured status considerably less certain in terms of the veracity of the information provided. The operational definition of trafficking for obtaining data during the present study was modified to account for this problem. Data could be obtained readily on young workers and other trafficked women through the use of trade euphemisms and practices that refer to underage workers and currently indentured workers. Questions about "small ladies," and whether a worker could leave the venue with a customer were readily answered by most management employees and by available sex workers in 2008. These questions inquire about the "under 18" and "indebted" information, respectively, through conversations that normally occur in the course of business at a sex venue. "Small lady" is a euphemism for young workers. While interviewers who were not part of the research team used their own language terms to obtain this information, Western foreigners obtained these data in venues with customer demographics similar to them by using questions about "small ladies," and about whether specific workers can leave the venue with a customer.

In any business workers are expected to remain on the job during working hours and are not supposed to leave. But sex workers are normally both allowed and expected to try to leave with a customer, especially when the venue has no on-premises location for sex. In some karaoke, bar, and restaurant venues, the worker cannot leave with a customer until a bar fine is paid, which is part of the venue's take from the transaction, but the worker can indeed leave with the customer in non-trafficked situations if the bar fine is paid.

In addition to being free to leave with a customer, the majority of sex workers in all sex venues, including brothels, are free to work or to quit at any time. Those who do not have this freedom meet the definition of being trafficked. A sex worker who cannot go with a customer unless escorted by a management employee normally implies an indentured or otherwise trafficked woman. This is in line with the UN definition of trafficking as controlling the freedom



of a person. Yet the presence of a management escort when a worker leaves the brothel with a customer does not always mean the worker is trafficked. Occasionally a new worker may be frightened by the prospect of leaving the brothel with an unknown male and may request a management escort for her protection. This is not common except among novice workers in their first weeks of work (Steinfatt, 2002, p. 129 -134, 259). This may slightly inflate the number trafficked, but by a negligible amount.

A greater problem in operationalizing trafficking occurs with workers who are trafficked because they have a debt contract, but are still allowed to leave freely with customers. These workers are trafficked, but if they are over 18 they will not be recognized in the data as trafficked without information on the existence of a debt contract. Data from our 2002 and 2003 studies provides information on the proportion of workers with a debt contract who were and were not allowed to leave with a customer. Following data collection in 2008 we applied this proportion to the observed numbers who could not leave, as a correction for workers with a debt contract who might have been missed due to the necessary change in operational definitions between the 2002 and 2003 studies and the current study. A discussion of the effects of these definitions may be found below under *Analysis of Variation in Numbers Across Studies, Definitional Change*.

Thus during data collection, and prior to the application of correction factors for missed workers, trafficking was operationalized as:

- (1) The worker was under 18 as judged by appearance, manner, self report, or report of others familiar with the person; or
- (2) The worker could not leave the premises, according to management, self, or other workers.

## **Target Population**

The purpose of this study is to survey entertainment places throughout Cambodia, obtaining numbers of entertainment workers and their trafficked status at these locations. The methods used to obtain these data sought to identify and count women and children who are destination trafficked for commercial sexual purposes.

## **Definitions of Sex Venue Types**

The selling of sex occurs at locations that vary in the way it is presented. This variation is principally due to the cultural comfort level of the customer. Western male customers are culturally familiar with a bar or restaurant where they might meet a woman, sometimes a waitress, and leave with her. Northeastern Asian customers often feel at home in a karaoke setting. Others may prefer a massage setting, while others are familiar with brothels. None of the definitions of venue types listed are fixed, but most venues in Cambodia can be classified into one of these forms.

**Indirect Venues.** In indirect venues, some form of communicative social interaction between worker and customer normally occurs prior to pairing and sex. Women approach the customer and talk for a while. Separate payments may be required for venue services such as food, drink, and a payment to the venue ostensibly for temporarily removing the worker from her venue work. Payment for sex is often negotiated with and given to the worker directly. Typical patrons of indirect venues are men either alone or in small groups who are out for an evening. They are motivated by a desire for sex, but want the aura of meeting an attractive person of the



Beer promotion workers in Central Cambodia

desired sex with whom they converse and have a good time and who chooses to leave with them.

**Beer Promotion** workers are specialized waitresses in mid to upscale restaurants, usually paid by the company or distributor of the brand of beer promoted according to amount of beer purchased by the customer. Several such workers, each representing a different brand, appear at the table of customers shortly after seating. If customers select a particular brand the promotion worker for that brand remains near the table, opening bottles as needed and refilling partially empty glasses. If the promotion worker and a customer agree to go and agree on a price, the worker will often leave with that customer following dinner.

**Karaoke** parlors feature booths with at least audio playback equipment where customers can sing along with music having no lead singer or group, often using a microphone. Karaoke parlors involved in sex work employ women who are often seated near the entrance or in the center of an area surrounded by the booths. A woman seated there may be engaged in conversation and asked by a customer to accompany him to a booth where sex may occur after singing and talking, or more often to a small room away from the center area, for a fee plus negotiation with the woman.

**Bars** were defined as places where the selling of some form of alcohol is presented as the principal business conducted at that location. Bar based sex workers may be in the employ or otherwise under the control of the bar, or may be freelance customers seeking business. Few bars employing sex workers for any purpose such as waitresses or entertainers will allow entry to freelance workers.

**Restaurants** were considered to be places where the selling of food is nominally the principal business conducted. As with bars, restaurants may employ sex workers as waitresses or entertainers, and if so, normally restrict entry of freelance sex workers.

**Freelance** workers are often streetwalkers or are seated in bars, restaurants, or other venues that do not employ sex workers. Venues that employ sex workers seldom allow entry to freelancers. Hotel and Guest House workers are included in the freelance numbers.

**Direct Venues.** In direct venues the customer usually has little or no form of communicative social interaction of any type with a worker prior to selecting her. Women are seated in a group at a distance from the customer. The worker approaches the customer only after he selects her by informing management. Payment usually goes to the manager or mamasan, not to the worker, though this may vary with the trustworthiness of the worker. During slack business hours, familiar customers may pass the time of day with workers without buying. Typical patrons of direct venues are men who are often alone but sometimes out with a group of male friends. If they enter a brothel as a group they are likely to have been drinking, sometimes heavily. They are motivated by a desire for sex, and if alone, often do not want to be seen by others outside of the brothel. Lone male customers of brothels are often in a hurry, having limited time before they must return home. They want sex quickly and then want to leave. If in a group they often remain in the brothel for a while, until everyone is finished, and leave together. They will usually represent their actions as something they are accustomed to doing even if that is a front, and will tease any in their group who appear hesitant about selecting a woman.

**Brothels** are prototypical direct venues. Women are often seated in a room out of sight of the street. The portion of the building behind and/or above the viewing room is usually partitioned into numerous small rooms with a mattress or bed.



Stand in brothel room with *Number One* condom ads used as decoration

**Massage** parlors are similar to brothels in operation, but vary in terms of expense and opulence. In upscale venues the women are seated in “the glass room” on the other side of a glass wall where they can be viewed by customers who make a selection and pay management. In large venues workers may be seated in sections indicating special skills, and may be dressed similarly within a section. A few expensive venues may have a bathtub that the worker fills and in which the customer is immersed prior to an extensive massage of

various forms followed by sex. In lesser venues these attributes are not present and only a brief massage, which may also occur in a brothel, precedes sex. In such places the principal differences between massage and brothel venues often take the form of a sign on the front of massage venues that says “massage” and the response of massage workers who say that they work as a masseuse when asked.

## **Theory and Rationale**

The assumptions below outline a theoretical position providing the rationale for the methods used in this study to obtain data on sexual trafficking in Cambodia.

1. The motivation of traffickers is primarily to obtain money, usually from third parties, for the services of those trafficked.
2. Sex work is a business. Its goal is to make money.
3. Sex work normally occurs only at or near geographic points where a sufficient population of males in the 16 to 60 age group exists permanently or sporadically or travels past the point, has sufficient disposable income to support sex work, knows of the norms and existence of sex work, and, where limiting factors such as noisy neighbors and relatives do not present a limiting communication constraint.
4. The higher the population density at or past a point and the lower the probability of communication of the frequenting event beyond the participants, the more likely a male with these properties will engage in sex work.  
The lower the population density at or past a point and the higher the probability of communication of the frequenting event, the less likely a male with these properties will engage in sex work.
5. Thus, sex work is far less likely to occur in rural areas that are not gathering places, than in more populated locations or along transportation routes
6. Sex trafficking occurs in the context of the sex business. It is not a separate enterprise, but a part of the sex work business.
7. The motivation required for sex trafficking to occur is commercial and monetary.  
Sex trafficking is not motivated by evil people who set out to do harm. It is motivated by greed, among people who do not care about the harm they cause to others or who are willing to create such harm if needed in order to satisfy their monetary greed.
8. Sex traffickers are evil because they do not care about the harm and suffering they create.  
Evil is incidental in their malicious behavior, a result, not a cause.
9. The primary motive of traffickers is always to make money, not to enslave. Enslavement is a method of making more money, not a primary goal.
10. Workers who are trafficked and over 18 are either not paid, or are grossly underpaid compared to the earnings of paid workers.
11. Cases of kidnapping, or enslavement without a profit motive, are best regarded and treated as kidnapping, not trafficking.
12. Workers who are under 18 cannot give consent and are statutorily trafficked regardless of remuneration or agreement.
13. The greed motive with underage workers is fulfilled through a much higher payment received from the customer than with of-age workers, combined with only slightly higher remuneration given to underage, versus of-age, workers.
14. In addition to the increased profit per visit with underage workers, such workers also attract the different customer category of pedophiles who are often not interested in of-age workers.

15. Repeat customers provide at best a minimal level of sustainability for a sex venue. A much larger customer base is required in order to achieve high profits, which are the primary motive for trafficking women and children.
16. Commercial enterprises wishing to maximize profits must advertise. There must be a way of informing potential customers of the existence, purpose, and location of the business.
17. Typical methods of advertising for sex work businesses include word of mouth, and personal contact with local transportation and lodging workers who are likely to encounter potential customers.
18. Taxi drivers are particularly useful to sex businesses since they serve to pre-screen potential customers for interest, seldom bringing a passenger to the business who is not believed by the driver to be interested in sexual services on some level.
19. Sex work businesses typically inform taxi drivers of the kickback they will receive if they bring new customers interested in their particular services to their enterprise, amounts usually varying between 5% to 20% of the cost for sex, per customer.
20. Taxi drivers are aware of such kickbacks and are motivated to know many sex work locations in their coverage area in order to satisfy customers, receive tips, and receive kickbacks from sex businesses.
21. New male arrivals in an area often ask taxi drivers to take them to a place where sex is available.
22. Thus, taxi drivers are an excellent source of information concerning the location of sex work.
23. Since sex trafficking occurs within sex work venues, all sex trafficking venues ought to be found within the set of sex work venues located, within any given area.
24. "Hidden Brothels" – brothels that "cannot be found" but contain trafficked women and children – are not economically viable. If few people know of their existence, and if the word of their existence and how to locate them is not spread, then they will not approach the profitability of a brothel that can be found by potential customers. If internet sites openly list a venue and its location, it is not hidden.
25. While hidden brothels may exist, they will either fail rapidly as a business, or will have a very small but wealthy customer base able to adhere to unusually rigid communication norms, or will have to begin advertising their existence in a way accessible to large portions of their potential customer base.
26. Understanding the method of advertising of sex work services, and of other illegal enterprises requiring customers for profitability including sex trafficking, provides a method of locating such services.
27. Some brothels, such as those with children, will be far more cautious in admitting customers than others, and will provide information on their existence only to other individuals that they trust, usually including some taxi drivers.
28. Location information on such brothels will exist, but with fewer persons and places to act as sources where the information can be obtained.
29. Research efforts that seek to find these more difficult to locate venues need to be diligent in seeking out both taxi drivers who know of their existence, and persons highly likely to have visited such brothels.
30. Sources in these two categories can be located by asking
  - (a) a large sample of taxi drivers, and/or by
  - (b) conversations with multiple unattached males who are visiting the country and are encountered at bars and restaurants.
31. Management personnel in locations with trafficked women and children know who is underage and who is otherwise trafficked.



32. Most sex workers in a bar, brothel, or other sex venue are available to leave with a customer. One measure suggesting trafficking is the inability of a sex worker to leave a venue.

### **Summary of Rationale**

From the theory and rationale above, sex trafficking is a commercial enterprise. Its purpose is to make money. Repeat customers keep a sex venue afloat, but they alone can not form the sizeable customer base for the level of profits which are its primary motive. In any society some individuals are willing to provide sexual labor in exchange for something of value if the monetary reward is sufficient given their current economic position. As the cost of sexual labor – the money received by the sex workers for their labor – increases, the desire of management in sex work venues to lower labor costs becomes more apparent. Using underpaid or unpaid labor – persons forced to work at lower than the going rate, or children who provide a greater profit margin – is one solution. This desire and its solution lead to the trafficking of sex workers.

Greater profits are dependent on a constant stream of new customers. Some form of advertising is required in order to provide new customers. Such advertising for sex venues often occurs by word-of-mouth and consists of contact with a population likely to be interested in the purchase of sexual services. One efficient method of such contact is through local persons who normally encounter this population and also serve to prescreen it for sex venue interest. Locals generally make up the majority of the customer base for most sex venues. Local customers know both local price structures for sex and alternative locations where sexual services can be obtained. Thus they provide less revenue per customer than traveling businessmen, military personnel, transportation workers such as truck drivers, and tourists who may not know prices or know of the availability of similar services nearby. Increased profits are often related to the ability to contact this potential customer base. Due to the nature of sexual services such contact requires a level of discreteness and privacy. Public advertising, such as the media and announcements made by a bus driver carrying a load of passengers into town from an airport, do not provide this discreteness and privacy. Taxis and Limo services encounter the desired populations of traveling businessmen, military personnel and tourists. They normally carry a small number of passengers, providing the desired level of discreteness and privacy. Thus taxi drivers provide an ideal medium for word of mouth advertising of sex businesses and are a principal source of new customers for sex venues in any area large enough to support a taxi business. This position leads to the method of locating sexually trafficked women and children of this study. Danailova-Trainor and Belser (2006) provide an extended supply/demand analysis consistent with the thinking inherent in our analysis.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The most serious and difficult ethical problem in obtaining data on human trafficking is to determine and follow through on the most ethical course of action if trafficking victims are observed directly. Using the method of this study, the existence of trafficking victims is usually inferred from the information obtained rather than directly observed. It is seldom the case that a specific individual known to be trafficked is observed. Using our method, it is normally not possible to determine specifically who has been trafficked at the time that data is collected, unless a person obviously under 18 is observed as a sex worker. Many workers support themselves and their families through their work and do not see it in their interests to be forcefully removed from their current situation. In the case of workers over 18, without fairly definite knowledge of who is and is not trafficked it is often difficult to justify or to create a case on which local authorities might act.



The collective concern of Khmer people for the welfare of children is illustrated in this impromptu rural gathering. A young girl has fallen from a fishing boat in rural Koh Kong Province. Boom on the far side of the boat is being used for dragging. Her body was found shortly after this picture was taken.

Ethical questions that occur include: Is the person in question actually trafficked? If of age, does the person see it in their best interest to be rescued? Are they accurate in this perception? What negative consequences might happen to this person and others if this person is “rescued?” Will the intended course of action create greater dangers for the person in question or for others, possibly members of the research group? What happens if the rescue goes bad and workers are injured or worse? What are the probabilities of success of the intended course of action, and of failure? What are the potential unintended consequences and the probabilities, costs, and benefits of success, and of failure? What are the potential dangers for members of the research team if this action is taken? The same or similar questions apply if the person is not “rescued.” It is often impossible to determine a solution that is ethically satisfactory from all perspectives. That does not mean the ethical implications of finding a trafficked person should be ignored. It also does not provide an unambiguous ethical course of action. The case of children is different since identification is clearer, though some of the ethical problems are similar.

The value of research and for data so gathered are a consideration for their potential in creating understanding of the extent and nature of trafficking and the creation of an informed climate of discussion of how best to reduce trafficking. But children cannot be allowed to remain in circumstances of abuse. Teams in the field were given hotline numbers for reporting suspected child abuse, and for their own safety, and were trained to use these numbers immediately if workers under 18 were suspected and/or recorded, and any actual knowledge of a specific trafficked person was to be forwarded immediately to the team leader and the PI (Principal Investigator).



Ways of reporting suspected child sex tourism are not difficult to find, as in this billboard in Siهانoukville

Concern with which authorities to notify is always problematic. Any person or group believing that the appropriate course of action is to call in the police, rather than other authorities, if trafficking is even suspected need only follow location and observation procedures similar to ours in order to find such places. Yet many though not all sex venues in Cambodia are either run by or protected by some elements of the police. As in any police force there are honest and dishonest elements, and 'Calling the police' or other authorities operating in a given locality is often not ethically appropriate. Many other notification possibilities exist, and a better alternative may be the reporting of trafficking results to an agency such as the child sex tourism hotline or the human trafficking section of the Embassy of the United States of America. Embassy personnel insure the careful investigation of all reports of suspected trafficking.

Clearly, proscribed reactions that disregard the situation in specific cases are to be avoided. The Hippocratic Oath in medicine says, first, do no harm. A similar ethical point might be, do not potentially add additional layers of harm to the situation of adult people who are already in trouble, especially if one does not know what the outcome may be of what one is about to do.

### **Cambodia's History**

The history of any country affects its present, both through the individual and collective memories of its people and through the cultural artifacts that serve as reminders of earlier periods. The single most important historical period during the past century in shaping the Cambodia of today is that of the Khmer Rouge from 1975 to 1979. As a result of the chaos during and following this period the current sex industry arose in an uncontrolled fashion in the 1980s and 1990s that allowed trafficking to flourish. It is unlikely this would have occurred without the





Former Royal Retreat in Saen Momourom near the central highlands of Vietnam  
bombed by US planes during the US-Vietnam War in the early 1970s



Remnants of the 1975-1979 Vietnamese War against the Khmer Rouge, not far from a brothel area in Western Cambodia

unconscionable actions of the Khmer Rouge. In addition to locations in Phnom Penh, reminders of that past that cannot begin to capture the horror of the time remain scattered across the rural landscape of Cambodia.



Many areas in Western Cambodia were heavily mined during the Vietnamese incursion against the Khmer Rouge. Literacy is not required to understand today's common billboard warnings of uncleared landmines in Western Cambodia from that period.

## Method

### Locating Sex Venues

#### Research Teams

Five research teams were initially assembled, A, B, C, D, and E, each with four members: an expatriate as team leader and three Khmer assistants. The team leader and the primary Khmer research assistant were experienced in trafficking research and were made aware of the purpose and nature of the research concerning trafficking. Khmer laborers on any job typically are not informed of why they are asked to do a task, nor would they normally have the status or temerity to ask. In this research they are given the task of collecting certain information in a setting with which they are familiar. The two other Khmer assistants on each team are hired as day laborers by the team leader with advice from the primary research assistant based on the two assistants' familiarity with the sex venues in a specific area. They are not hired if they are not familiar with sex work venues that cater to Khmer males of their economic and socio-demographic class. On each research team the team leader and the primary research assistant each led a two-person research pair composed of themselves and one of the Khmer assistants.



The team leader and the primary research assistant for three of the five research teams were trained in separate sessions by the PI concerning the data to be obtained and the general method used to obtain it. The leader of Team B worked together with the PI on the desired method of locating venues and of obtaining data and conducted training of that team. The PI trained teams A, C, D, and E. These teams did not meet each other and did not share information. Training consisted of discussion of the methods of location and data collection that had proved fruitful in the past, and a give and take discussion of likely methods that would obtain the best data at this time, as well as methods of insuring the privacy of all individuals involved, particularly that of the women and children in the venues studied. This included the duty to report immediately any person or persons in distress or in imminent danger, or any children observed serving as sex workers, to the PI. If the PI was not present in the area, the team leader was to initiate immediate cell phone and e-mail contact procedures to discuss the observation and determine the most appropriate course of action. Only the team leader and the principal Khmer assistant were intended to receive and did receive this training in teams A, C, D, and E. The research purpose was stated as locating all venues selling sex in the areas assigned to their team, finding the number of sex workers at each venue, and finding the number of those who are trafficked either by age, by inability to leave the venue, by debt contract if possible, and obtaining this information from management and workers. In addition to the team leader and the primary research assistant, all research assistants on Team B were aware of the research purpose. Trafficked workers were defined as those under 18 years or as workers who wanted to leave the venue but were not allowed to do so.

Conversations with sex workers in Cambodia occurring since 1996 support the view that workers are usually free to leave the workplace with a customer, and free to return to their homes when their work hours are completed for the day. Many sex venues do not have a place where sex can occur on premises, and workers are expected to leave with customers, such as freelance workers, most restaurant and bar workers, and restaurants with beer promotion girls. Brothels have an on-premises location for sex and are always open for business 24 hours, even during times when the doors are shut and locked and everyone inside is asleep. One definition of a brothel is a 24 hour sex venue. Non-brothel venues are seldom if ever open 24 hours. Venues operating as brothels and massage provide greater opportunity for controlling and secreting the location and actions of sex workers than do most other venues, where the relative openness of the interaction with customers and the greater choice so provided on the part of the worker make such control more difficult, though not impossible. A sixth team, Team F, was used only to locate sex venues throughout Cambodia in both the areas studied and not studied by Teams A-E. This Team F data allowed determination of the proportion of coverage achieved by other teams, through locating essentially all sex work venues since that team could move far more rapidly.

### **Location Methods**

Upon arrival in each of the areas assigned to a given research team, taxi drivers are initially sought out as a principal source of information about the locality. These drivers usually operate motorbikes, referred to as motodops or simply motos. Moto drivers are among the principal customers of brothels, and are aware of most entertainment venues in their service area as well as receiving kickbacks for customers they bring to them. They are often called upon by local customers to transport them to a location where sex is sold. In areas where taxis are scarce or currently unavailable, location information is sought from individual local males, ideally in the 30-50 age range who are encountered on the street by one of the Khmer team members. If the individual expresses familiarity with local entertainment places when asked, he is also asked for

the location of those that might be nearby. Three to seven such informants are sought out each day over several days in larger locations. A map of Cambodia is available in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Cambodia, with national roads in red, provincial roads in yellow and white, minor roads in gray.

Not all villages have a sex work venue. Teams noted that the probability of a sex work venue existing increases both with the size of the population of the village and with increasing distance to the nearest village with a sex work venue. GPS coordinates are obtained unobtrusively for each potential sex venue so located. The mapping of sex venue locations obtained is ruled essentially complete when five independent informants in a row who are familiar with sex work locations in a given area produce no new venues in that area. The product of this method is a GPS mapping of potential sex work locations for each area. This location method was used by teams A, C, D, and E. Team B used a different location method as discussed below.

**Moto Driver Location Method.** The moto driver method used as one method of venue location in Steinfatt, et al., 2002, and Steinfatt 2003, was employed to locate additional possible venues, especially in Phnom Penh. In this method, a moto driver passing by in traffic is hailed by a lone team member and asked if the driver knows where sex can be purchased. Drivers who are waiting for passengers are not selected. The answer is invariably ‘yes.’ The driver is then asked to transport the passenger to that location. On arrival, the team member clicks the GPS unobtrusively in order to record the location, looks briefly at the venue from the outside, and asks

if the driver would like to be paid or whether he would like to show the passenger another venue. In almost all cases the driver wishes to continue. The driver is encouraged to drive to "hidden" locations in addition to popular locations, perhaps those not often visited, or visited only by people with money, or with sex workers who were unusual in some way, or young. After several such locations have been recorded, the passenger pays the driver what is owed, but asks if the driver would like to work with him longer for a set amount. The driver usually accepts. If accepted by the driver, the process continues until the driver wants to stop or when the driver can think of no new places. If the driver does not accept he is paid. If there is time left in the day, the team member then walks one block, hails another moto that is driving down the street, never one parked at a location, and continues the process. This provides a clean break between each successive moto driver on a given day and none know of the other's work, or of any prior



Brothel in Northeast Cambodia - Moto driver waits while passengers inquire and negotiate. These individuals are not part of the research effort.

actions of the researcher. While there are hundreds of moto drivers in Phnom Penh, in areas such as small villages there are few drivers and they know each other. In such cases, one driver passing by is hailed and employed. The assistance of two or more local males, depending on the population size, is then requested. If the male says he knows the sex outlets in the area when approached by a Khmer assistant, he is asked to show the location to the assistant if it is not far. If it is some distance away the male is then asked for specific directions which are recorded. This process continues between 8 am and 4 pm, seven days. Location data so obtained were transferred at the end of each day to both a GPS and a hardcopy map.

Khmer team members were successful in locating many places with predominantly local clientele, usually brothels, massage, and karaoke, and occasionally common evening meeting areas for dating, and at times with freelance workers. Expatriate team members were also shown such venues, but often were shown considerably higher priced establishments as well, such as large expensive clubs. In some areas, particularly Bavet, Phnom Penh, Battambang, Pailin, and Poipet, the clubs were occasionally part of a complex involving a hotel, or hotel and casino.





Brothels, such as this one several hundred meters west of the main channel of the Mekong just north of the Vietnamese border, may be set back from the street behind several other structures.

### Methods in Specific Areas

**Phnom Penh.** Studies by Teams A and B located sex venues in Phnom Penh. The studies were conducted independently using different research teams, and employing different start points, start dates, and location methods. The time periods for data gathering of these two studies partially overlapped during the summer of 2008. Team A began in May 2008 and concluded collection in August. Team B collected all of their data in July. The teams worked in different sections of the city on given days and no street was studied by one team closer in time than 30 days since the other team had observed it. This was done in order to avoid possible effects of the first data gathering upon the second. Data were collated independently by each group each evening using GPS and hardcopy maps for recording.

Team A began its location study of Phnom Penh sex venues using the GPS mappings created for the 2002 and 2003 studies (Steinfatt, et. al, 2002; Steinfatt 2003). The team employed the methods described above under *Locating Venues* and *Moto Driver Location Method* to modify these maps, adding new locations and removing those no longer operating as sex venues.

Team B did not use the methods described above in *Locating Venues* and *Moto Driver Location Method*. Rather, two weeks before beginning interviewing, the chief researcher and one moto driver from Team B traversed every street in the city, going building by building and mapping all potential locations. Such venues were located by observing the nature of the business



Moto driver waits for customer, while workers and mamasan await more customers near a small town in Western Cambodia close to the Thai border. Much sex work is quite open. Child is the daughter of a worker. Women and men often take entire families to work with them, or live where they work.

as advertized, and the clientele entering and leaving. While Team A marked potential sex venues based on the testimony of the moto driver or other informant, Team B used the sense of the main researcher and the street knowledge of the Khmer assistant to make this determination. Following the creation of the map, a team of moto drivers were employed to enter the located establishments so as to determine the number of sex workers, their age, their nationality and whether they could leave the establishment. Interviewers for Team B were aware that they were working for a researcher who was interested in obtaining the data they were asked to collect. In the case of large venues such as The Building, a long rambling six story decaying structure near the Mekong known as a major low-priced sex work venue, all apartments were marked as potential sex venues.

**Provinces.** Studies of the provinces outside of Phnom Penh were conducted independently by teams A, C, D, and E, each employing different start points and start dates during July 2008. These teams each used the methods described in Locating Venues and Moto Driver Location Method. The teams located potential sex venues independently and mapped them via GPS and hardcopy maps, then gathering data on numbers and ages of sex workers, and numbers unable to leave the venue. Teams C and D studied the Northern and Eastern provinces, roughly north of Route 1 from the Vietnamese border at Bavet to Phnom Penh, then north and east of the Tonle Sap from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap, then along and north of Route 6 to Route 5 and the Thai border at Poipet. Team E concentrated on the provinces and areas south and west of this line. Teams A and F studied all provinces, but in different manners and with different objectives. Outside of Phnom Penh, Team A used the methods and objectives of teams C, D, and E, locating venues and gathering data from within venues, and covered areas of any province that had been surveyed by only one team by the mid July 2008. Teams studying the provinces were



far more likely than the Phnom Penh teams to search in areas sufficiently rural that motodop taxis were in limited supply. When this occurred, location information was obtained from individual local males, as described under *Locating Venues*, above. In this regard, Lainez (2010) provides a discussion of Vietnamese migrants from An Giang entering Takeo.



A stream forms part of the Vietnamese border near the “Parrot’s Beak” area of Svay Rieng. Cattle are on the Cambodian side. People cross with no border controls. Paved road in Vietnam near the top follows the stream. A dirt road leads to this point in Cambodia. Most of the border between the two countries is uncontrolled.

Site visits to a specific area by a team usually involved (a) the initial location of potential trafficking sites, followed by (b) later visits to areas near those sites to observe working hours, customer demographics, and still later (c) to collect trafficking data within the venue. In some cases (a) and (b) were accomplished on the initial location visit. This was always the case with research Team B in Phnom Penh. Data collected by each team remained independent of data collected by each other team: None of these teams had contact with nor received information from any other team prior to returning their final report to the PI. Venues were identified, and data from the teams were collated, by their GPS coordinates.

Team F was formed in late July and began work in early August, finishing in December 2008. Their task was to follow the routes of teams A, C, D, and E through each province outside of Phnom Penh (a) to locate the venues already mapped and check the type of venue listed at each point for accuracy; (b) to search areas of each province where the teams covering that province had not reported coverage; and (c) to count the numbers and types of places appearing to be sex venues that do not appear in the reports of any team. Team F did not gather data from within these sex venues due to time and money constraints. Rather, Team F counted the total number of venues of each type in each unreported area. These data could then be compared with the data located, mapped, and reported in the data set produced by teams A, C, D, and E, creating a basis for an estimate of the extent of trafficking in the venues located by Team F.

Each team worked independently of the others. None of the teams knew the assignments of other teams, and none were assigned to the same areas in any province, or in any section of



Phnom Penh, within 30 days of each other. All areas within each province that contained a population large enough for purposes of this study to be classified by the research teams as cities, towns, or large villages were visited by at least two research teams. Some smaller isolated villages and rural areas were visited by only one team in the present study.

The population classifications employed by the National Ministry of Planning for cities, towns, villages, etc., do not provide useful categories for this work. In this regard:

The General Population Census of Cambodia 1998 (NIS 1999a; 2003) reports population counts using the traditional province/district/commune/village divisions as the geographic frame. These geographic divisions cover the entire land area of Cambodia. While data collection for the census was done professionally and carefully, the definitions used in reporting the census make the results difficult to apply to the present study. All persons residing within the surveyed section of the traditional geographic boundaries of an area designated as a district, commune, or village were counted in the census as residing in that demographic unit. Thus, census designations such as “village” do not necessarily refer to collections of dwelling units in close proximity and visible to the eye, but often to a sizeable geographic area with widely scattered dwelling units. The census report definitions make the census difficult to use in locating and in designating sex work venues, since the location of such venues is sensitive to population density, not to the number of dwelling units scattered across a sizeable geographic area.

In addition, the entire land area of whole provinces such as Kep, Pailin, and Sihanoukville is classified as “urban” in the census reports, in keeping with these provinces’ classification as “towns.” “Town” and “city” are not census defined terms, and are not used in the census reports aside from noting, for example, that three entire provinces – Sihanoukville, Kep, and Pailin – are defined as “*Krong*” (towns) (NIS, 2000, p. xv), and in a reference to “provincial headquarter towns” in explaining that the entire districts containing these towns will be treated as “urban” (NIS, 2000, p. xvii). In other words, the census designates entire *districts* within the *province/district/commune/village* divisions, the largest geographic subunit within each province, as either entirely “urban” or entirely “rural.” Vast areas of entirely rural landscape in most provinces are thus “urban,” while relatively large population concentrations may be found in some districts designated as “rural.” All ratios, percentages, and numerical comparisons involving rural and urban differences provided in the census must be understood with these definitions of “urban” and “rural” in mind. (Steinfatt, 2003, pp. 7-8).

## Province Boundaries

Provinces were defined by their geographic boundaries, as determined by the *Cambodia Road Network Map: RSP Version 06-02*; and additionally if near a provincial border, by GPS coordinates, local signage, and if needed, reports of local citizens.

## Obtaining Data from Venues

At different times during the day, two team members went separately to the area of each venue – or venue area if several locations were in close proximity – to determine the operational hours of the location and to observe the demographic characteristics of persons entering and exiting the venue. For each mapped venue, two interviewers were selected to match the demographic characteristics of typical customers of the venue. The interviewers visited that venue during normal working hours and, in populated areas such as a city, town, or large village, at least one day apart. In smaller villages and rural areas only one interviewer entered and collected data. The expatriate team member entered and obtained data from those venues with an expatriate customer base. If one of the Khmer team members matched the venue’s customer demographic, that team member served as interviewer. If no team member matched the customer

demographic, a local individual, usually a moto driver who had not been encountered previously, was engaged in conversation by a Khmer team member and asked if he was familiar with the venue in question. Potential interviewers were selected for the task only if they were reasonably talkative and responsive in their meeting with the team member, as they were to talk with the workers and with management about typical brothel information as to whether particular workers could leave the brothel, and if small ladies who were not currently visible also worked there.

These interviewers were hired as day laborers were given the specifics of the information desired. We asked them to bring us: the number of workers observed, whether any worker who was selected could leave with the interviewer to go to a local hotel, and whether any “small ladies” might be available. They could obtain this by discussion with workers or management and by observation. Interviewers were not told how to obtain the information or why it was being requested. The specifics of how to request or obtain the desired information were left to the personal style of the individual data gatherer. Informants received no instructions in terms of specific questions to ask or scenarios to present in obtaining the requested information, as an intentional part of our method. Training observers on how to ask questions may create a ‘clerk’ or



Interviewer in Southern Cambodia provides information to data recorder using notes on his hand, several blocks from venue to which it refers.

‘actor’ mindset within the data gatherer and this mindset can become obvious in the data gatherer’s behavior. The informant may begin to ‘act’ rather than to behave normally when asking for information. Measurement of the reliability of the information so obtained occurs through the use of multiple observers, with data obtained several weeks apart.

The Khmer interviewers were given a single location and asked to confirm by observation whether sex was being sold at that location. If so, the interviewer was to visually determine the number of sex workers present and their ethnicity; the number of “small ladies” (workers apparently 17 or younger); and whether any worker of the informant’s choice would be able to leave the establishment with them or if some could not and how many. He was encouraged to talk with the workers and management informally, just as he would in entering any brothel or other such venue. Informant reports to team members were often brief, and in a simple form such as ‘five Vietnamese, one small and she cannot leave.’ They were told to memorize the information rather than take notes, and were never to take notes within or near any venue they surveyed. If notes were needed they could write them out of sight of the venue, especially if this were some distance from the recording team member.

Most brothels and massage venues continue to be worker segregated such that all sex workers are of the same ethnicity, thus somewhat simplifying the informant’s task. Interviewers who requested to use notes in the specified way, or who did not so request but appeared with them at any point, were tested for memory by giving them three scenarios at the same time, each with complexities in the data and each with different data such as “all five Khmer but not sure on one, two small cannot leave, one other cannot leave, management said seven, ladies said six.” After hearing the third scenario each was asked for a repetition of the second scenario, and then the first. Interviewers were not used if they could not complete this task accurately. If a second listed venue was nearby the next interviewer was assigned to it. If a third or additional venues were nearby data was obtained from them on a different day, usually at least several days later, and by a different interviewer. Western interviewers used the same process in their assigned venues.

## **Phnom Penh**

Using maps of potential sex venues created by two different methods, teams A and B used similar methods to gather data. The two data gatherers on each team were not trained beyond asking them to repeat the information they were to gather, and were used for venues frequented primarily by Khmer customers. Interviewers were given the items of information they were to obtain. Each item of this information was gained through observation, talk with workers where possible, and through information from management if needed. Questions concerning this information can be overheard from customers on occasion in many sex venues that have a location for sex on the premises, as some customers prefer to leave with the worker while others prefer to stay in the venue, and many customers seek a greater choice of partners.

In venues without such a location the ability-to-leave question is not a concern, though it is sometimes asked by customers unfamiliar with the nature of the particular venue. Data gatherers who seemed unsure of the task or showed any hesitancy in conducting it were not used. If there was any question whether trafficking was involved in any given case, the case was always included as trafficked. Interviewers for Team A were not told that they were working for a researcher, but were simply asked to obtain the information without further explanation. Venues not open for business during the first data gathering attempt, which was rare, were noted, and interviews were conducted to obtain data at a later date. Freelance workers at identified gathering locations were observed and interviewed by team members for the required information. Beer promotion workers were similarly observed and interviewed by team members at their work places. Counts of sex workers in The Building and similar structures are included in the data for freelance workers.

## **Provinces**

Data gathering in the provinces followed the methods used by Team A in Phnom Penh. The maps produced by each of the four research teams in the provinces, teams C, D, E, and F, were employed in a somewhat different manner than the Phnom Penh maps. Once located, potential sex venues in cities

and towns were visited in the few days after location. In villages they were often visited on the day they were located. Each venue in a city or town was visited at least twice by different data gatherers on each team. Venues in villages, when they existed, were visited only once by a given team, by data gatherers who are demographically similar to the customer base of that venue. If the Khmer data gatherers on a team did not match the demographics of the venues in an area for some reason, another data gatherer matching the characteristics was sought, and was paid the standard rate for his work. This occurred occasionally in rural areas, particularly in special settlement areas, where the population often differs in some way from the surrounding local population. Some of these areas are former Khmer Rouge concentrations. Venues in all cities, towns, and large villages were visited by each of the two research teams assigned to their province, usually at least a month apart. It was more common than in Phnom Penh for some provincial venues where sex is available to be closed during the day or evening hours of the visit by the research team. Brothels and a few massage parlors, the most likely locations for trafficking to be found, are 24 hour businesses. Sex workers at guest houses often arrive for work in the evening hours though the guest house is always open. In small localities in remote areas venues may be open only on weekends or weekend evenings, and a research team may encounter the area early in the week. In such cases information was obtained from at least three local males, interviewed independently. Data from each team was collected independently, and remained independent until all data collection was complete. Teams were not aware of the numbers obtained by other teams, but were aware that other teams existed.



Hard copy map of Phnom Penh used during early stages of data collection by one team in 2008, at this point indicating several venues of potential interest.

### **Integrating Team Data on Venues**

Taken together, these data provide multiple independent point-in-time counts of the number of women and children trafficked for sexual purposes in the places studied in Cambodia. In urban areas at least two or more data points are available for each venue. In rural areas usually two to three data points are available for each venue, but with some rural venues observational data from only one is available. Data from teams A, C, D, and E were matched for location by GPS coordinates, description, and signage.

### **Phnom Penh**

Data obtained by the teams were compared for each venue as identified by GPS venue location, signage if any, and address. High rates of correspondence were obtained between the reports of members of independent teams across brothel and massage venues. At least two such reports were available for each sex venue in



Phnom Penh, with the exception of small street work areas. Data were obtained from each venue from 30 to 45 days apart between the two teams, and this may partially account for slight differences obtained for different teams with the same venue. That is, the differences may reflect true variation in the data rather than error. In each case, the discrepancy was resolved by accepting the higher of the two numbers, in line with the practice in our earlier studies of preference given to an overestimate rather than an underestimate. The natural variation in the actual number of sex workers over time may be examined by way of five concepts related to worker turnover, as discussed below under *Point-in-Time Estimates and Estimates Over-Time*.

## Provinces

Data obtained from teams assigned to the provinces were compared by venue located, as identified by similar GPS coordinates, road information and signage, village and town names given by the local population when signage was unavailable, and establishment name. The comparison process for data from a given venue across teams was conducted as in Phnom Penh. All cities and towns and all major national and provincial roads were fully covered by at least two teams. Figure 2 shows in black the major routes outside of cities and towns that were covered by at least two of teams A - E, and in blue the routes covered by at least one of the teams. All side roads intersecting with the black and the blue routes were studied within 500 meters off of those routes as well, if the side road extended that far. The side roads studied are not represented in Figure 2. Correspondence of 75% or greater was obtained between the numerical reports of the independent teams across brothel and massage venues with 10 or more workers.

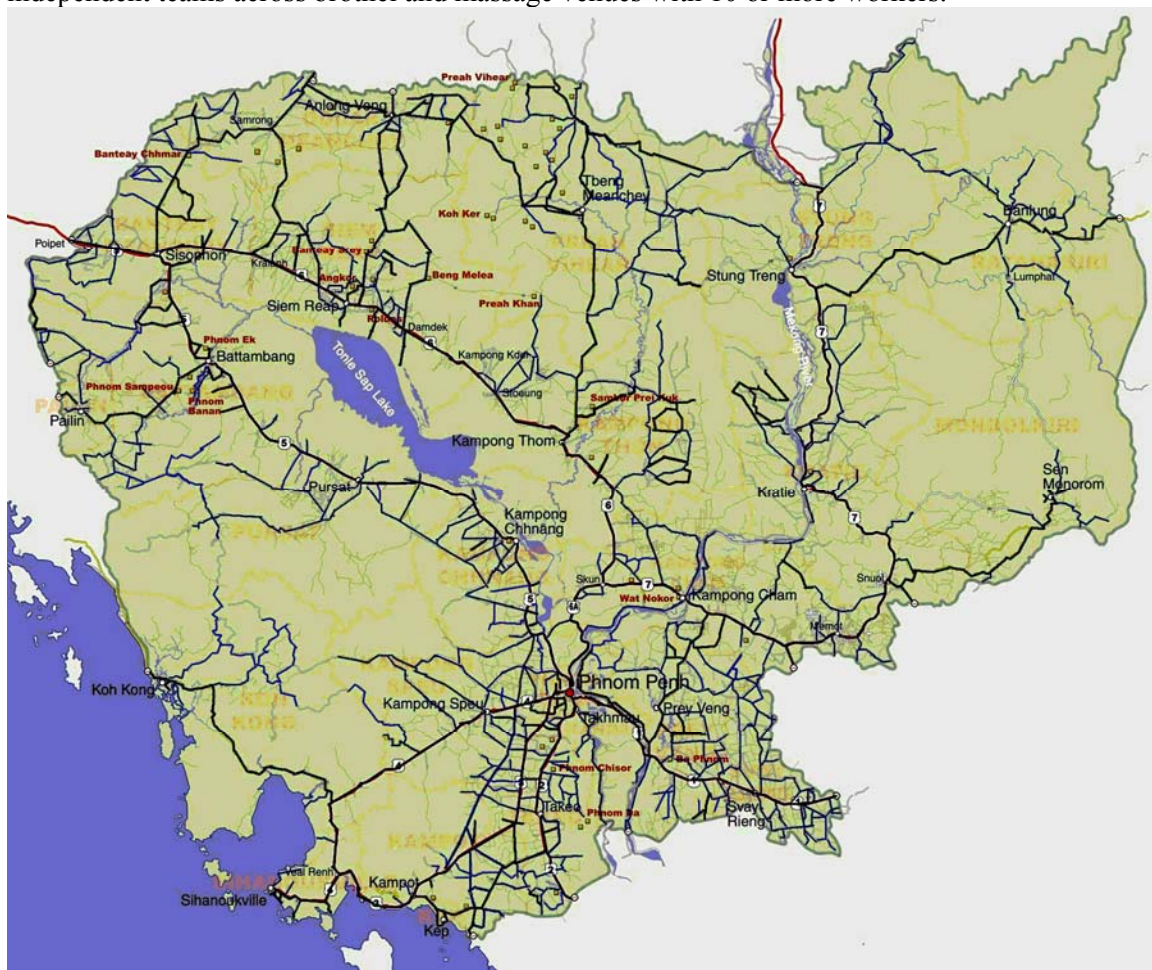


Figure 2. Routes covered by research teams A, C, D, and E.

### **Areas Not Studied**

The Preah Vihear Temple was under threat from or occupied by Thai troops each time a research team was in that area, with occasional shots exchanged with the Cambodian military. While possession was settled in favor of Cambodia in 1908 and reconfirmed in 1962 by the International Court of Justice, the dispute over the temple continues. Research teams did not attempt to enter the temple area, and no data were obtained within five kilometers of the temple complex by any team. Impassable roads limited data collection across many rural areas. This was particularly true in the area of southern Ratanak Kiri and northern Mondul Kiri, in portions of Odar Meanchey and Koh Kong, and across all mountainous and remote areas in any province. Roads to several mountain areas in southern Cambodia were blocked by armed guards wearing Cambodian military uniforms. Research teams did not challenge their orders to turn and leave.

### **Correction for Areas Not Studied**

While all major national and provincial roads and areas near them were studied, figure 2 illustrates the areas that were and were not covered by any team. While the population of the unstudied areas is relatively small, and sex work at any point, and thus sex trafficking, is directly related to the size of the male population near that point, the unstudied land area itself is substantial. An estimate of the extent of trafficking in the under-interviewed areas was sought, based on the number of venues of a given type in each such area, and the extent of trafficking in such venue types that was observed in the interviewed areas.

Team F followed the routes of each of the provincial teams through each province, and also traveled into each area not covered by the teams, to the extent possible via motorbike. Team F essentially blanketed the populated area of the country between late July and mid December 2008. This travel was time consuming and difficult, and did not allow time for the procedures needed to gather interview data. Team F gathered data only on the existence of a sex venue of a particular type at a given location and made no attempt to gather or verify data from within any of the venues encountered. The team's function was to verify that the locations mapped by any other team were in fact venues of the type specified, and then to locate and count any unstudied venues in areas showing no previous data gathering on the coverage map.

## **Results**

### **Numbers of Venues and Sex Workers: Table 1**

Data from Teams A-E provided counts of workers present at the time of observation and management information on total number of workers employed. Two corrections were applied to these observed totals for each venue type in each province to estimate the actual number of workers in each venue type in each province. First, for every three sex workers available in a given venue at a given point in time about four are actually employed in that venue, with one worker absent for various reasons for every three workers present. This average difference of four persons working for every three persons available is in agreement with extensive observations between 1988 and 1999 of Thai sex venues similar to those studied in Cambodia (Steinfatt, 2002, p. 140). The second correction is from Team F data.

### **Correction for Workers Not Present**

In the first correction, (1) the observed total number of sex workers (OTNSW) for each venue type for each province was multiplied by 1.333 to correct for absent workers ( $4/3 = 1.333$ ), producing a corrected total number of sex workers (CTNSW) for that venue type and province.

For each venue type from each province:

$$\text{OTNSW} * 1.333 = \text{CTNSW} \quad (1)$$

### Correction for Missed Venues

The second correction (2) occurred in two steps. The total for each venue type (CTNSW) was divided by the observed number of such venues (ONV-AE) from teams A - E for that province. This produced the corrected mean number of sex workers (CMN) for a given venue type for each province.

$$\text{CTNSW} / \text{ONV-AE} = \text{CMNSW} \quad (2a)$$

(2b) The CMNSW was then multiplied by the best estimate of the total number of venues (ONV-F) of that type in that province, as observed by Team F. ONV-F data are the values in the *#venues* rows in Table 1. This provided the estimated total number of workers (ETNSW) for each venue type in each province, including those in sex venues in areas of each province not reached by teams A-E. Equation {A} combines corrections (1) for Workers Not Present and (2) for Venues Not Studied to produce the sex worker and venue numbers in Table 1.

$$\text{CMNSW} * \text{ONV-F} = \text{ETNSW} \quad (2b)$$

$$\text{Or, in summary, ETNSW} = [\text{OTNSW} * 1.333] * [\text{ONV-F} / \text{ONV-AE}]. \quad \{\mathbf{A}\}$$

The estimated total numbers of sex workers (ETNSW) employed in each venue type within each province are the numbers provided in rows marked *#Workers* in Table 1, including numbers of sex workers in karaoke, beer promotion, freelance, bar, and restaurant venues in addition to direct venues where trafficking was most likely to be found, brothels and massage venues. The operations employed in (1), (2a), and (2b) above and summarized in equation {A} assume that the average number of workers in the additional venues observed but not studied by Team F is similar to the average observed in Teams A-E's studies of brothels.

The best estimates of the total numbers of sex venues (ONV-F) and sex workers (ETNSW) in each of the Cambodian Provinces, corrected from observed data only for workers not present, are presented in the rows of Table 1. Provinces are numbered and ordered by the Cambodian governmental system. All sex workers observed were of Vietnamese, Khmer, Thai, Filipino, or Chinese ethnicity. Ethnicity was defined in terms of language and culture of origin, the way the term is normally used in common language terms of reference and in self identity. Ethnicity, as employed here (e.g. "Vietnamese"), does not imply knowledge of country of birth or of citizenship.

### Brothels

Among direct venues, brothels averaged about five workers per venue throughout Cambodia with 4.64 workers per brothel in the countryside and 6.38 per venue in Phnom Penh. Only 34 of the 377 brothels were found in Phnom Penh, with 343, the great majority, found in the countryside including provincial cities. Far fewer massage venues were found in the countryside than brothels, but in Phnom Penh massage venues outnumbered brothels 219 to 34. Massage venues averaged more workers per venue than did brothels with an average of 10.71 masseuses per venue in Cambodia, and an average of 11.7 masseuses per venue outside of Phnom Penh. Trafficking appears to occur more among brothels than any other venue type.

**Table 1**  
**Observed Number of Venues and Estimated Number of Sex Workers**  
**by Venue Type and Province**  
**Corrected for Workers Not Present and Missed Venues**  
**2008**

No.	Province	Variable	Direct <sup>1</sup>			Indirect <sup>1</sup>					Total
			Brothel	Massage	Total	Karaoke	Bar/Rest	Beer P	Freelance	Total	
1	Banteay Meanchey	#Venues <sup>2</sup>	15	13	28	36	40	3	15	94	122
		#Workers <sup>3</sup>	79	72	151	696	411	21	75	1203	1354
2	Battambang	#Venues	23	11	34	46	81	4	9	140	174
		#Workers	139	30	169	891	578	91	113	1673	1842
3	Kampong Cham	#Venues	34	2	36	43	13	2	1	59	95
		#Workers	144	101	245	427	118	19	6	570	815
4	Kampong Chhannng	#Venues	12	2	14	10	6	2	9	27	41
		#Workers	103	17	120	81	26	35	29	171	291
5	Kampong Speu	#Venues	23	1	24	21	2	2	1	26	50
		#Workers	69	4	73	158	8	11	6	183	256
6	Kampong Thom	#Venues	9	0	9	25	18	3	8	54	63
		#Workers	21	0	21	188	111	18	53	370	391
7	Kampot	#Venues	10	2	12	11	2	7	1	21	33
		#Workers	33	7	40	59	9	61	7	136	176
8	Kandal	#Venues	6	8	14	11	70	1	1	83	97
		#Workers	16	25	41	337	155	3	5	500	541
9	Koh Kong	#Venues	9	2	11	27	6	2	0	35	46
		#Workers	60	11	71	159	87	6	0	252	323
10	Kratie	#Venues	11	1	12	14	2	2	0	18	30
		#Workers	33	3	36	126	5	22	0	153	189
11	Mondul Kiri	#Venues	5	2	7	9	2	0	0	11	18
		#Workers	10	7	17	91	8	0	0	99	116
12	Phnom Penh	#Venues	34	219	253	136	317	13	49	515	768
		#Workers	217	2277	2494	4986	6416	361	813	12576	15070
13	Preah Vihear	#Venues	33	4	37	47	29	4	5	85	122
		#Workers	101	9	110	64	46	15	34	159	269
14	Prey Veng	#Venues	17	1	18	36	1	0	0	37	55
		#Workers	54	3	57	188	4	0	0	192	249
15	Pursat	#Venues	7	3	10	9	12	2	5	28	38
		#Workers	42	14	56	42	61	23	56	182	238
16	Ratanak Kiri	#Venues	9	1	10	13	4	0	0	17	27
		#Workers	37	9	46	135	25	0	0	160	206
17	Siem Reap	#Venues	18	8	26	55	22	9	0	86	112
		#Workers	104	434	538	1560	621	306	0	2487	3025
18	Sihanoukville	#Venues	23	3	26	55	17	3	2	77	103
		#Workers	114	62	176	766	267	49	37	1119	1295
19	Stung Treng	#Venues	1	1	2	20	2	1	0	23	25
		#Workers	5	2	7	74	9	6	0	89	96
20	Svay Rieng	#Venues	13	0	13	22	2	0	0	24	37
		#Workers	69	0	69	131	5	0	0	136	205
21	Takeo	#Venues	38	2	40	41	8	0	0	49	89
		#Workers	145	5	150	175	46	0	0	221	371
22	Odar Meanchey	#Venues	12	0	12	21	9	0	0	30	42
		#Workers	67	0	67	145	45	0	0	190	257
23	Kep	#Venues	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	2	3
		#Workers	0	3	3	9	0	0	0	9	12
24	Pailin	#Venues	15	3	18	6	6	0	0	12	30
		#Workers	147	12	159	36	143	0	0	179	338
Outside Phnom Penh		#Venues	343	71	414	580	354	47	57	1038	1452
		#Workers	1592	830	2422	6538	2788	686	421	10433	12855
Cambodia		#Venues	377	290	667	716	671	60	106	1553	2220
		#Workers	1809	3107	4916	11524	9204	1047	1234	23009	27925

1. See Definitions of Sex Venue Types above

2. Observed number of venues, the number of venues of a given type observed by Team F during 2008.

3. Estimated number of workers



## **Karaoke**

Karaoke establishments had more workers than any other venue type, with 11,524 singing partners available throughout Cambodia in 716 different venues for an average of 16 workers per venue, with a very large 36.7 average in Phnom Penh, but only 11.3 outside of Phnom Penh. Several of the 136 locations in Phnom Penh were very large venues with 100 or more workers available on weekend evenings.

## **Restaurants, Bars, and Beer Promotion Workers**

Restaurants accounted for the next largest number of sex workers with 9204 in 671 venues throughout the country, an average of 13.7 per venue. This average dropped to 7.9 workers per venue in the countryside but was 20.2 within the 317 bars and restaurants noted in Phnom Penh. The number of beer promotion workers in restaurants and restaurant/bars was large enough to warrant a separate category with 1047 such workers operating in 60 such restaurant venues across Cambodia, 13 of them in Phnom Penh with 361 beer promotion workers, and another 47 venues with 686 workers in other Cambodian cities. All restaurant venues with beer promotion workers were located in or quite near the population center of the province.

## **Freelance Workers**

Freelance workers were found at 106 primary locations throughout Cambodia, 49 of these in Phnom Penh with 813 workers, and 57 outside of Phnom Penh with 421 workers. An average of 16.6 freelancers was found at each of the Phnom Penh venues while freelance venues outside of Phnom Penh averaged only 7.4 workers at each. No correction was made in the Table 1 data among freelance workers for a possible overlap among those who also worked in other venues. Street based freelance workers came under increased enforcement by the police in Phnom Penh during the 2006-2008 period, and were removed from many traditional street work areas such as the median park east of Independence Monument. Many moved to bars and some to other venues. Street workers were counted and noted as to age. Conversations with street workers gave no suggestion that they were forced to work or knew of anyone who was. Traffickers do not generally trust persons under their control to the relative freedom of open areas such as those frequented by freelance workers where their control is reduced and they are free to speak with others.

Street workers' principal concerns were with (a) police sweeps where their money might be taken, (b) rape and customers who refuse to pay, and (c) the dangers of *bauk*, where one person hires them but many are present to rape and rob them at a destination. No street workers verifiably under the age of 18 were observed, perhaps due to police enforcement. Street workers made up 5.4% of all sex workers in Phnom Penh, which was 6.5% of all indirect sex workers. Outside of Phnom Penh these figures are 3.3% of all sex workers and 4.0% of indirect workers. Of the 1,234 street workers listed for Cambodia 1,145 or 92.8% were ethnic Khmer.

## **Casinos**

Casinos have rules against others distracting players from gambling. Sex workers were always restricted to the bar, massage, dance, or similar areas of the casino, where they were free to come and go. In conversations with sex workers in casino bars, workers claimed freelance status. Observations suggested this was accurate and these workers did enter and leave the casino grounds unescorted and apparently at will. Given both the economics of casinos, which make much more money from gambling than they could from sex trafficking, and the small number of casinos relative to the number of sex venues, trafficking within casinos seems unlikely, especially given the risk to the casino if such trafficking were to be found and exposed. Any payoffs involved in order to reduce this risk would detract further from any economic advantage for a

casino that might be provided by sex trafficking. If trafficking should exist in some form in some casinos and escape detection, its limited size should not materially affect the number of trafficked individuals. The sex workers observed in or near casinos proper are listed as freelance.



While casinos often discourage sex workers near the tables, some advertise typical sex work venues as part of the casino complex.

## Management/Worker Estimates of Trafficked Women and Children: Table 2

Just as Table 1 presents numbers of sex workers, the numbers of trafficking venues and victims obtained by teams A-E are summarized in Table 2. The Table 2 data represent raw numbers of venues observed with trafficking, by type, together with the estimated numbers of trafficked women and children obtained from workers and management and corrected for workers not present by using the 4/3 ratio, and for missed venues by integrating information from team F. These observed and estimated numbers are presented in Table 2 by ethnicity and reason for classification as trafficked, under 18 or cannot leave the workplace, as discussed under *Operational Definitions* above. The great majority of trafficking both in the provinces and outside of Phnom Penh was reported as occurring in brothels and secondarily in brothels labeled as massage. Trafficking was not distributed evenly across massage and brothel venues in Phnom Penh with most locations that were recorded as having at least one trafficked worker also having several such workers. Most massage and brothel venues in Phnom Penh did not have trafficked workers. In Phnom Penh, 25 venues accounted for all 200 cases labeled as trafficking, averaging eight trafficked women per venue among venues with trafficking. Thirteen of these venues were brothels, seven were brothels labeled as massage, and the remaining five were bars and restaurants. Of persons labeled as trafficked in Phnom Penh, 142 were Khmer and 35 were Vietnamese with the remaining 23 Chinese.

In provinces outside of Phnom Penh, 44 observed venues indicated trafficking. The great majority of these (38) were brothels, three were brothels labeled as massage, and two were restaurant/bars. Some 233 workers were labeled as trafficked in these provinces, 107 Vietnamese and 126 Khmer. Throughout Cambodia 433 workers were labeled as trafficked within 68 trafficking venues, averaging about 6 trafficked workers per venue among venues with trafficking.

**Table 2**  
**Observed Number of Venues with Trafficking**  
**and**  
**Management/Sex Worker Estimates of Trafficked Women and Children**  
**by Ethnicity and Trafficked Status**  
**2008**

Area		Obsvd	N of Venues with Trafficking			Number Trafficked				Trafficked Status <sup>1</sup>				
No.	Name	Total	Venue Type			Total	Ethnicity <sup>3</sup>			< 18 <sup>2</sup>		C L <sup>2</sup>		
			Brothel	Massage	Other		#V	#K	#Ch	#V	#K	#V	#K	#Ch
1	Banteay Meanchey	3	3	0	0	12	0	12	0	0	7	0	5	0
2	Battambang	2	2	0	0	11	0	11	0	0	5	0	7	0
3	Kampong Cham	7	7	0	0	43	4	39	0	4	3	0	36	0
4	KampongChhanng	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5	Kampong Speu	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	Kampong Thom	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	Kampot	1	1	0	0	5	5	0	0	5	0	0	0	0
8	Kandal	4	2	2	0	16	12	4	0	0	3	12	4	0
9	Koh Kong	2	2	0	0	11	5	6	0	0	0	5	6	0
10	Kratie	1	1	0	0	4	1	3	0	0	0	1	3	0
11	Mondul Kiri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
12	Phnom Penh	25	13	7	5	200	35	142	23	22	37	28	129	23
13	Preah Vihear	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
14	Prey Veng	1	1	0	0	4	4	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
15	Pursat	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	Ratanak Kiri	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	Siem Reap	6	5	1	0	39	15	24	0	15	5	12	19	0
18	Sihanoukville	6	4	0	2	29	7	22	0	3	8	7	20	0
19	Stung Treng	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
20	Svay Rieng	4	4	0	0	21	16	5	0	3	3	14	4	0
21	Takeo	6	6	0	0	38	38	0	0	4	0	38	0	0
22	Odar Meanchey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
23	Kep	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
24	Pailin	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Outside Phnom Penh		43	38	3	2	233	107	126	0	34	34	93	104	0
Cambodia		68	51	10	7	433	142	268	23	56	71	121	233	23

1. Numbers under *Observed Trafficked Status* are not always independent as the same individual can be classified as both under 18 and cannot leave, and will not necessarily add to numbers under *Observed Number Trafficked*.

2. (< 18) = less than 18. (C L) = cannot leave.

3. V = Vietnamese. K = Khmer. Ch = Chinese.

The *Trafficked Status* columns in Table 2 provide the number of trafficked sex workers by province and by trafficked status and ethnicity for Khmer, Vietnamese, and Chinese workers. No other ethnicities were identified as trafficked, and none of the Chinese who were identified as trafficked were under 18. Totals for under 18 and *Cannot Leave* in Table 2 need not add to the *Number Trafficked*. These two categories are not independent, since a person may be defined as

trafficked due to either or both criteria, and thus may be counted twice. This varies from the reporting system used in the 2003 and 2003 studies where workers under 18 who were indentured were listed as underage but were not listed again as indentured. The number of Khmer or Vietnamese who were both under 18 and who could not leave, may be obtained from Table 2 as the difference between the sum of the two *Trafficked Status* columns for a given ethnicity (*Under 18* and *Cannot Leave*), and the number for that ethnicity under *Number Trafficked*. For example, in Banteay Meanchey there were no Khmer persons under 18 who could not leave since  $7 + 5 = 12$ , and  $12 - 12 = 0$ . But in Battambang, one Khmer person was identified as under 18 and could not leave ( $5 + 7 = 12$ ;  $12 - 11 = 1$ ).

Trafficking of women and children for sexual purposes was concentrated in direct venues. Indirect venues such as karaoke, bars, and restaurants exhibited trafficking in a total of five specific venues in Phnom Penh and two venues outside of Phnom Penh. No trafficking was observed among any bars or restaurants involving beer promotion or any freelance venues in Cambodia. Table 2 provides the management/sex worker estimates of the number of trafficked women and children. These are listed by venue type, ethnicity and trafficked status. Correction (1) above, for sex workers who are presumed missing at time of observation, was employed with the raw data in creating Table 1. That correction does not apply to estimates of trafficked women and children since the *sex worker* data in Table 1 are based largely on workers present and then corrected for absent workers, while the *trafficking* data in Table 2 are based on the estimates of total numbers given by management and workers.

### **Trafficking Estimates Corrected for Missed Venues and Initially Indentured Workers: Table 3**

Data from Team F were integrated with the Table 2 data from Teams A-E and with data on initial debt contracts, in order to create Table 3. This was done in three steps, the first two integrating the data from Team F and the third correcting for initial debt contracts.

Step 1) integrates the data from Team F for provinces outside of Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville.  
Step 2) integrates Team F data for those two provinces, due to the existence of venues other than brothels and massage in those two provinces where trafficking is suspected.  
Step 3) integrates initial debt contract data with the estimates from 1) and 2).

Steps 1) and 2) are used to compile Column F of Table 3.

Step 3) is used to create Column E of Table 3 from Column F.

#### **1) All Provinces except Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville**

Within each province, (3) the results for number trafficked (NT, found in the Number Trafficked columns of Table 2) were divided by the number of brothel and massage venues studied by Teams A through E (NBMV-AE, found in Table 3, column C) to produce the mean number trafficked per venue studied among brothel and massage venues, which are the two venues types with apparent trafficking (MNTPVT). This was done both for ethnic categories and for the total number trafficked.

For each ethnicity from each province:

$$NT / NBMV-AE = MNTPVT \quad (3)$$

(4) This mean number trafficked per venue studied (MNTPTV) was then multiplied by the number of brothel and massage venues recorded by Team F (NBMV-F, found in the # *venues* rows in Table 1, and in column D of Table 3) to produce the estimated total number of trafficked persons and the trafficking totals by ethnicity (ETNTP, found in columns F, G, H, and J of Table 3).

$$\text{MNTPTV} * \text{NBMV-F} = \text{ETNTP} \quad (4)$$

Equation {B} combines corrections (3) and (4) to produce the trafficked worker and venue numbers in Table 3 and their totals in Column F.

$$\text{ETNTP} = [\text{NT} / \text{NBMV-AE}] * \text{NBMV-F} \quad \{\mathbf{B}\}$$

For example, Table 2 lists 12 as the Total Number Trafficked for Banteay Meanchey, with 21 A-E brothel and massage venues and 28 such venues recorded by Team F. Thus,  $[12/21] * 28 = 16$  in column F of Table 3. Values for others provinces are calculated in the same way. The numbers for Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville in column F of Table 3 are slightly elevated above these calculations, as discussed below.

## 2) Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville

(5) The same procedure used for the 22 provinces outside of Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville (equation {B}) was used to estimate an initial value for ETNTP for those provinces.

For Phnom Penh and for Sihanoukville:

$$\text{Initial value of ETNTP} = \{\mathbf{B}\} = [\text{NT} / \text{NBMV-AE}] * \text{NBMV-F} \quad (5)$$

These initial ETNTP values for Phnom Penh are 224 total, with 39 Vietnamese, 159 Khmer, and 26 Chinese. The initial ETNTP for Sihanoukville is 34 total, composed of 8 Vietnamese, 26 Khmer, and no Chinese persons.

(6) The final value of ETNTP (found in the Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville rows of columns F, G, H, and J of Table 3) was then obtained by adding the estimated number trafficked among all restaurant/bar venues, to this initial value of ETNTP (5) for brothels and massage venues. The estimate for restaurants/bars was obtained by the same procedure as the initial estimate for brothel and massage venues, providing the proportion of Team A-E observed restaurants/bars with trafficking.

**Phnom Penh.** Teams A-E recorded 5 of the 298 restaurants/bars with sex workers that they studied in Phnom Penh as having trafficking, which is 1.68% of those venues. Team F recorded 317 restaurants/bars in Phnom Penh. By equation {B},  $[5 / 298] * 317 = 5.33$ , which rounds to an estimated 5 trafficked persons in restaurants/bars within Phnom Penh. Together with the initial value of 224 from step (5), step (6) produces an estimate of 229 total trafficked in Phnom Penh, composed of 41 Vietnamese, 169 Khmer, and 28 Chinese persons. These values may be found in the Phnom Penh row of Table 3 under *Estimated Total Number Trafficked*, Col. F.

**Sihanoukville.** Teams A-E recorded 2 of the 15 restaurants/bars with sex workers studied in Sihanoukville as having trafficking, which is 13.33% of those 15 venues. Team F recorded 17 restaurants/bars in Phnom Penh. By equation {B},  $[2 / 15] * 17 = 2.27$ , which rounds to an estimated 2 trafficked persons in restaurants/bars within Sihanoukville. Together

with the initial ETNTP value of 34, step (6) produces an estimate of 36 total trafficked in Sihanoukville, composed of 8 Vietnamese, 28 Khmer, and no Chinese persons. These values may be found in the Sihanoukville row of Table 3 under *Estimated Total Number Trafficked*, Col. F.

<b>Table 3</b> <b>Numbers of Venues With and Without Trafficking</b> <b>and</b> <b>Estimated Number of Sexually Trafficked Women and Children by Ethnicity</b> <b>Corrected for Missed Venues and Initially-Indentured Workers</b> <b>2008</b>										
Area		Numbers of Brothel and Massage Venues				Estimated Total Number Trafficked				
No.	Name	With Trafficking		With and Without Trafficking		Total		Estimated N of Ethnicities		
		Observed N of Venues with Trafficking	Estimated N of Venues with Trafficking	Observed N of Venues Teams A-E	Observed N of Venues Team F	Column F # + Initially Indentured Estimate	Sum of Cols' G H J	#V	#K	#Ch
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	J
1	Banteay Meanchey	3	4	21	28	21	16	0	16	0
2	Battambang	2	3	23	34	21	16	0	16	0
3	Kampong Cham	7	9	28	36	72	55	5	50	0
4	Kampong Chhannong	0	0	11	14	0	0	0	0	0
5	Kampong Speu	0	0	20	24	0	0	0	0	0
6	Kampong Thom	0	0	8	9	0	0	0	0	0
7	Kampot	1	1	11	12	7	5	5	0	0
8	Kandal	4	5	11	14	26	20	15	5	0
9	Koh Kong	2	3	7	11	21	16	7	9	0
10	Kratie	1	1	10	12	5	4	1	3	0
11	Mondul Kiri	0	0	5	7	0	0	0	0	0
12	Phnom Penh <sup>1</sup>	25	28	226	253	312	238	41	169	28
13	Preah Vihear	0	0	31	37	0	0	0	0	0
14	Prey Veng	1	1	16	18	5	4	4	0	0
15	Pursat	0	0	8	10	0	0	0	0	0
16	Ratanak Kiri	0	0	7	10	0	0	0	0	0
17	Siem Reap	6	7	22	26	60	46	17	29	0
18	Sihanoukville <sup>1</sup>	6	7	22	26	47	36	8	28	0
19	Stung Treng	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0
20	Svay Rieng	4	5	10	13	34	26	19	7	0
21	Takeo	6	7	34	40	58	44	44	0	0
22	Odor Meanchey	0	0	9	12	0	0	0	0	0
23	Kep	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
24	Pailin	0	0	15	18	0	0	0	0	0
Outside Phnom Penh		43	53	332	414	377	288	125	163	0
Cambodia		68	81	558	667	689	526	166	332	28

1. Tabled numbers for Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville represent data that include the 5 trafficked restaurant venues.

In sum, Table 3 data list 558 sex venues throughout Cambodia that were located and studied by Teams A-E, and 667 sex venues observed-without-entering by Team F. Based on data gathered by these teams, 28 sex venues were estimated to be involved in trafficking in Phnom

Penh (Table 3, column B) and another 53 throughout the provinces for a total of 81 sex venues with trafficking in Cambodia. The estimate of the number of currently trafficked women and children in Phnom Penh by this method is 238 (Table 3, column F), with an additional 288 throughout the provinces, or 526 sexually trafficked women and children throughout Cambodia from Team A-E observational data.

### 3) Correction for Initially Indentured Workers

The data in column F of Table 3 incorporate the corrections for temporarily absent currently trafficked workers, and for missed venues provided by the Team F data. Temporarily absent current workers usually include both workers who are currently with a customer and workers who did not report for work on a given day. These data do not reflect the numbers of current sex workers who were initially trafficked but now work voluntarily.

Some workers were initially abused or exploited in a way that may have led them into voluntary prostitution at a later time. Steinfatt, et al. (2002, p. 9) identified 31.2% of 1,416 sex workers in Cambodia as indentured by management estimate, with most of these persons entering sex work through indenture. The current indenture percentage throughout Cambodia in 2003 was determined as 19.6%, with 1044 of 5,317 indentured including those under 18, and an additional 30 persons under 18 who were not indentured, or 20.2% of 5,317 trafficked (2003, p. 15). Using the 2002 estimate of 31.2% as a high end estimate of those who entered sex work through indenture but now work voluntarily, column E of Table 3 provides this estimate based on the data of column F of that table. These column E numbers represent the number of persons who *Cannot Leave* as estimated by 1) and 2) above, plus this 31.2% correction factor for initially indentured workers.

The majority of suspected trafficking cases occurred among Khmer (63%), which is 332 trafficked persons based on Teams A-F data (Table 3, column H). When the initially-indentured correction is employed, the estimated number of Khmer women trafficked becomes  $([332/526] * 689 =) 435$ . Vietnamese persons were the second largest trafficked ethnicity (31.6%) with 166 trafficked Vietnamese, based on Teams A-F data (Table 3, column G). This becomes 217 trafficked Vietnamese after applying the initially-indentured estimate. Chinese women in Phnom Penh accounted for 5% of those trafficked in Cambodia (Table 3, column J), with 28 trafficked based on Teams A-F data. When the initially-indentured correction is employed, 37 Chinese women are estimated as trafficked in Cambodia. These three trafficked totals by ethnicity including the initially-indentured correction  $(435 + 217 + 37)$  add to the 689 total in Table 3, column E.

### Corrections for Currently Indentured Workers and Possibly Missed Cases: Table 4

Steps 1), 2), and 3) above were used to create columns E and F of Table 3. The final two steps, 4) and 5), concern persons trafficked through a current rather than an initial debt contract, and possibly missed cases.

Step 4) adds an estimate of the persons trafficked through a current debt contract.

Step 5) corrects for possibly missed cases.

Steps 4) and 5) are used to compile rows 4) and 5) respectively of Table 4. The effects of each of the five steps are summarized in Table 4

#### 4) Currently Indentured Workers

Workers who enter sex work with an indentured contract are treated as *de facto* trafficked in our data. As discussed above, by 2008 the enforcement pressure on brothel management regarding trafficking, and pressure on brothel workers by management, led to reticence among management and sometimes among workers in supplying information on women working under a debt contract. Thus this information could not be obtained as reliably in 2008 as it had been in 2002 and 2003. The correction for initially indentured workers applied above employed the 2002 figure of 31.2% as a high end estimate of the proportion of current workers who entered sex work through indenture. Column E of Table 3 provides this estimate, based on the data of column F of that table.

Some workers who did not begin sex work through indenture have since become indentured. These newly indentured persons have not been included in the corrections to this point. Determining an appropriate correction for newly indentured persons involves knowing the proportion of workers who are now indentured but were not identified by the *Cannot Leave* criterion. This number is approximately equal to the number of workers over 18 in venues where trafficking occurs who have not been counted as trafficked using the *Cannot Leave* criterion, multiplied by the proportion of these workers who are currently but not initially trafficked.

One way to estimate the size of this potentially unrecognized group in the 2008 data is through application of a correction factor to the number of sex workers over age 18 and currently treated as not trafficked, in sex venues that have known trafficking. Data from the 2002 and 2003 studies provide information on the proportion of workers with a current debt contract who were and were not allowed to leave with a customer. Of the 876 indentured sex workers over 18 reported in Steinfatt (2003, Table 3), data collected for 491 of these workers contains information on their ability to leave their place of work together with their initial and their current indentured status. Of these 491 with data, 344 or 70.0% were allowed to leave the workplace. Of the 344 allowed to leave, 95 or 27.6% were currently but not initially indentured persons. Thus among those data, 27.6% of those allowed to leave were trafficked through a current debt contract. This is our best available estimate of the proportion of currently indentured persons allowed to leave the workplace.

The number of workers in venues where trafficking occurs that are over 18 and counted as non-trafficked using the *Cannot Leave* criterion, may be found through Tables 1 and 2. Using observed data, in Phnom Penh 253 sex venues were located, 25 of them with trafficking. These 25 venues contained 200 trafficked women and children, of whom  $(22 + 37 =) 59$  were under 18 (Table 2, row 12), leaving  $(200 - 59 =) 141$  women over 18 who were trafficked within these venues by the *Cannot Leave* criterion. These 25 venues with trafficking have 307 sex workers, an average of 12.3 per venue, and average 3.2 who are over 18 and currently indentured. Applying the relevant currently-indentured proportions from the 2003 data to that of 2008, this means that about 80 additional workers across these 25 venues should be currently indentured  $(3.2 * 25 = 80)$ . Added to the 312 estimated trafficked sex workers in Phnom Penh from Column E of Table 3, this gives an estimated 392 workers who are trafficked in Phnom Penh using the combined criteria of *Under 18*, *Cannot Leave*, *Initially Indentured*, or *Currently Indentured*.

Similarly, in provinces outside of Phnom Penh 414 sex venues were located, 43 with trafficking. These 43 venues contained 233 trafficked women and children, of whom  $(34 + 34 =) 68$  were under 18 (Table 2, row for Outside Phnom Penh), leaving 165 women over 18 who were trafficked within these venues by the *Cannot Leave* criterion. These 43 venues with trafficking have 357 sex workers, an average of 8.3 per venue, 3.8 of whom are over 18 and



currently indentured. Again applying relevant currently-indentured proportions from the 2003 data to that of 2008, about 163 additional workers across these 43 venues should be currently indentured ( $3.8 * 43 = 163$ ). Added to the 377 estimated trafficked sex workers outside of Phnom Penh (Column E, Table 3), this gives an estimated 540 workers who are trafficked in Phnom Penh using the combined criteria of under 18, cannot leave, initially indentured, or currently indentured.

Combining these results for Phnom Penh and the remaining provinces provides an estimated total of 932 workers who are trafficked throughout Cambodia using the combined criteria of under 18, cannot leave, initially indentured, or currently indentured. While similar estimates could be computed for each province, the sample sizes within most provinces are small enough and the variation between provinces high enough that Province by Province calculations of this form should be interpreted with caution.

### 5) Possibly Missed Cases

As discussed above, the totals in column E of Table 3 are obtained from the Total Number Trafficked column of Table 2 by correcting for absent workers and for initially indentured workers. In our 2002 and 2003 studies we corrected for the possible existence of unobserved sex workers beyond those who were with a customer or otherwise temporarily absent from a studied venue at a given time. We did this by using data obtained from the city block sampling study of 2002 (Steinfatt, et al., 2002b, pp. 6 – 7; Steinfatt, 2003, p. 12). The city block sampling study suggests an additional proportion of 13.56% might be added to the observed count of workers to correct for the possible existence of such unobserved workers even after the first four corrections are applied. The estimates produced for Phnom Penh, the provinces, and Cambodia as a whole by this missed cases correction are presented in row 5) of Table 4.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Comparison of</b> <b>Estimated Number of Sexually Trafficked Women and Children</b> <b>Across Four Corrections</b> <b>2008</b>				
<i>Estimate Type</i>	<i>Trafficking Estimates</i>			<i>Correction</i>
	<i>Phnom Penh</i>	<i>Provinces</i>	<i>Total</i>	
1). Table 2 Type = Teams A-E, uncorrected	200	233	433	None
2). Table 3 / Col F Type = 1) + Team F correction	238	288	526	<i>Team F data</i>
3). Table 3 / Col E Type = 2) + initial indenture	312	377	689	<i>31.2%</i>
4). Currently Indentured = 3) + current indenture	392	540	932	<i>25 - 43%</i>
5). Missed Cases = 4) + city block sampling	445	613	1058	<i>13.56%</i>

It could be argued that the Team F data have already accounted for the Possibly Missed Cases correction. While the initially indentured correction bears directly on trafficking, the city block sampling correction refers to sex workers who were not recorded as trafficked. Thus the use of the city block sampling correction may overestimate the number of trafficked women and children since the proportion of unobserved sex workers is not necessarily representative of the proportion of unobserved trafficked workers. Any positively valued correction applied to observed data may lead to overestimates, yet failure to apply such corrections may lead to underestimates. Table 4 presents the trafficking estimates with successive corrections applied so that readers may examine the numbers with and without these corrections. Applying the city block sampling correction to the results by province as presented in Table 3 would produce only

slight changes in the provincial numbers due to their smaller size and to the variation in the appropriate correction percentages across provinces. Such corrections are also less appropriate when applied province by province than when applied to the aggregated data for areas with large populations, such as Phnom Penh, and to the remaining provinces taken as a whole. Table 4 presents these corrections for the larger aggregates, and readers may then calculate and apply them to individual provinces if they have reason to believe the corrections are individually applicable to such a case.

Table 4, rows 1) to 5), present the progression of corrections to the observed data. These figures are each the best estimates of the numbers trafficked in Phnom Penh after progressively applying the specified assumptions.

## **Discussion**

### **The Need for Numbers**

The US government and the United Nations have provided substantial anti-trafficking funds for the study of Cambodia, much of it intended to counter sex trafficking. An accurate count of trafficking victims is of fundamental importance to the victims and to inform all methods of attempted assistance, both to understand the scope and nature of the problem and to allow determination of the effect of various counter trafficking approaches. The effectiveness of any intervention in reducing human trafficking cannot be measured, let alone understood, without a clear empirical basis that compares the extent of trafficking before and for some period of time after the intervention, and is analyzed with cognizance of the internal and external factors potentially affecting the validity of the numbers obtained. In the United States, the CIA on request from within the State Department, and later the trafficking office of the State Department, provided estimates of the numbers of trafficked persons worldwide in annual US TIP Reports. Such large scale estimates do not lend themselves to directing actions toward specifying trafficking situations or in determining the effects of interventions. While statistically rigorous, the data on which they are based such as newspaper reports includes factors whose relationship to many types of trafficking numbers is not well understood.

Understanding the number of persons trafficked in areas targeted for intervention is a requirement in reducing that number by a substantial amount. If numbers of trafficked persons are not known, no accurate measure of the efficacy or of possible negative effects of specific individual anti-trafficking interventions can be known. Obtaining accurate counts of trafficking victims in specific locales and at specific points in time allows evaluation of effectiveness of any anti-trafficking measure applied there. Such numbers create the potential to judge whether trafficking is increasing or decreasing, where, and by about how much, through comparison with later counts. Such data allows tentative inferences based on empirical methods concerning the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of trafficking approaches applied or not applied in the interim. If one does not know the trafficking numbers then there is no good basis for judging effectiveness of interventions. It is not sufficient to know that a particular intervention resulted in a number of captured traffickers and a listed number of trafficked women and children removed to the care of an NGO. Whether such interventions actually affect trafficking numbers, or simply produce opportunities for increased trafficking by other traffickers, can only be verified by the continued study of trafficking numbers over time in areas directly related to the intervention.

Since the early 1990s, published reports have provided various estimates of the extent of human trafficking in Cambodia. Some reports concerning trafficking numbers suggest large

numbers of trafficking victims in the country. Most such reports lacked supporting documentation regarding the gathering of evidence on numbers of trafficked persons. Summaries of these are available in Steinfatt, et al. (2002), Steinfatt (2003), and in Derks, et al., (2006). In cases where methods of obtaining such evidence are presented, the methods reported often have been insufficient to provide accurate data if applied.

Reports from victims sheltered by NGOs are one possible source and need to be monitored. The trafficking section of the US Embassy follows all such leads carefully. Such reports occasionally lead to the prosecution of traffickers. Trafficking victims are seldom in a position to know about numbers of others in their circumstances beyond those directly observed in their own immediate experience, and they are commonly kept in a confined location while trafficked. They are often unaware that they are or have been trafficked until well into the transit



No brothels are in this market by the side of a National Road, but one operates 100 meters behind market stalls on right

stage and they may not to be placed with other victims until that time. This limits their knowledge of trafficking numbers.

Perrin, Majumdar, Gafuik, and Andrews (2001) based their estimates of trafficking numbers on evidence provided in oral reports of NGO directors. NGO personnel normally have no direct connection with traffickers or trafficking numbers. They are usually limited to reports from trafficked women and children who were in their care, reports that normally do not provide numerical information of the type needed for determination of current trafficking numbers or actual increases or decreases in trafficking numbers. Beyond an intake interview, NGOs assisting trafficking victims seldom press for information on a victim's former circumstances as this can be counter to the healing process. Unless a valid and detailed study has been conducted and brought to their awareness, NGOs commonly have no more information on trafficking numbers than is available to other interested persons.

Steinfatt, et al. (2002) discuss additional problems with the Perrin methodology, as well as problems with suggested numbers of trafficking victims that appear in Perrin et al. absent a methodology that produced them. Reports of the Perrin type are often characterized by an initial statement that it is impossible to know the numbers of persons trafficked, followed by a statement

claiming to give the size of the presumably unknowable numbers. Derks et al. (2006) also discuss the external inconsistencies created in the implications of the Perrin estimates.

Several reasonable methods exist of measuring the extent of human trafficking (Kutnick, Belser, and Danailova-Trainor, 2007). The methodology of our studies, including the present study, uses one of these to assess the numbers of women and children trafficked for sexual purposes. It results from a theoretical position discussed under *Replicability of Methods* below. In our method, researchers from at least one and usually two research teams studied most entertainment places, restaurants, bars, karaoke parlors, brothels, and all such service industry locations in Phnom Penh and in each of the provinces of Cambodia, with the few exceptions noted above in discussion of the Team F data. No team gathering data knew the number of sex workers or trafficked persons reported from that venue by any other team prior to reporting their numbers. This method provides multiple independent counts of sex workers and sex work venues, and estimates of numbers of trafficked persons obtained from observers, managers and sex workers who are in a better position to know the answers to questions asked. Asking direct questions to persons selected because they are in a position to know the answers is a hallmark of our method.

### Comparison of Results from 2002, 2003, and 2008 Studies

As population and population density increase in areas of Cambodia, human trafficking might be expected to increase proportionally. An apparent increase in the number of sex workers was observed, but not a concomitant increase in trafficking. In 2002 and 2003 we estimated statistically that there were 2,000 to 2,500 trafficking victims at any given time across Cambodia, using an *underage* or *indebted* or *Cannot Leave* definition. The 2008 results found a smaller number of trafficked women and children than reported in the 2003 study, just as the 2003 study reported a smaller number than in 2002 (Table 5). These results appear to be counter to the increases that might be expected from population changes alone. Several factors may account for

<b>Table 5</b> <b>Comparison of High-End Estimates for</b> <b>Numbers of Sex Workers and Trafficked Women and Children in Cambodia</b> <b>2002, 2003, and 2008</b>						
Year	Sex Workers			Sex Trafficking		
	Phnom Penh	Provinces	Total	Phnom Penh	Provinces	Total
2002	5,250	15,579	20,829	1638 <sup>2</sup>	850 <sup>3</sup>	2,488 <sup>1</sup>
2003	5,250 <sup>5</sup>	13,006	18,256	1480 <sup>4</sup>	520 <sup>4</sup>	2000
2008	15,070	12,855	27,925	445 <sup>6</sup>	613 <sup>6</sup>	1058 <sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Regards current ever-indentured sex workers as trafficked.

<sup>2</sup> 31.2% of 5,250

<sup>3</sup> (2,488 – 1638)

<sup>4</sup> Estimated from observed numbers and proportions trafficked in Steinfatt et al. (2003)

<sup>5</sup> From 2002 study

<sup>6</sup> Table 4 (2008)

this. Methodologically, the present study has reduced a previous source of error through more extensive observation than was possible in 2002 and 2003. A greater dependence on estimation from a smaller observed sample in earlier studies may have inflated the number of trafficking victims. The trend in lower estimated trafficking numbers cannot be explained as a function of fewer sex workers since the estimates of numbers trafficked have decreased while estimates for numbers of sex workers have not. A definitional change and a real change also occurred in the sex trafficking numbers.

## Analysis of Variation in Numbers Across Studies

**Methodological Change.** In the 2002 study, trafficking estimates for smaller villages and remote locations were based on parameters obtained from a geographic mapping study of HIV vulnerability along Cambodia highways 1 and 5 conducted by UNDP in August and September of 1999 (UNDP, 2000). Also in that 2002 study, data for Phnom Penh were obtained by projecting from 22 major sex work areas to the remainder of the city, and these venue areas were used to represent Phnom Penh again in our 2003 report. The 2003 study also obtained data from the largest urban area in each of the provinces and most major towns, using one research team to visit 31 large towns and 163 villages throughout Cambodia and projecting from them. Provincial results for 2003 were estimated from these data.

The present study was able to send data gatherers across the country and into more remote areas of the provinces to a greater extent than in 2003 due to the grant provided by UNIAP. Such smaller villages and remote locations are areas where sex work and sex trafficking should be less likely due to smaller populations, as in theoretical assumptions 3, 4, and 5 above. The present study investigated many less populated areas directly and observed smaller trafficking and sex work numbers, while trafficking numbers for 2002 and 2003 were statistically estimated based on data from more populated areas. These more populated areas have higher rates of sex work than in less densely populated areas, increasing the likelihood of an overestimate in the 2002 and 2003 reports. Differences between numbers for different years in the categories appearing in Table 5 may be due in part to these methodological differences.

**Definitional Change.** While the operational definition of underage workers remained the same, the operational definition of adult trafficking was modified for this report from the existence of a debt contract to whether the worker could leave the premises, with previously observed data used to estimate indentured workers who could leave the premises. In preparation for data collection, a pilot study in June 2008 of six brothels in Phnom Penh indicated increased reticence of brothel management to supply information directly on the existence of debt contracts. This may have been due to increased government anti-trafficking enforcement efforts between 2003 and June 2008. In the pilot study, providing information on such contracts appeared to have a much higher threshold of disclosure for management than did disclosure of the common and related information of whether a woman could leave with a customer which there was little problem in obtaining. During 2008 data collection, reduced freedom to leave the brothel was used as a surrogate for the debt contract information. Lack of freedom to leave *is* trafficking. In any business, the expectation exists that employees are to come to work and remain on the job until their shift is completed. The penalty for leaving during work hours may be a reduction in pay or even the loss of the job, though workers willing to face such a penalty can still leave or fail to show up for work. But sex workers listed as *Cannot Leave* in the 2008 data cannot leave at any time, not simply during a certain shift.

**Reliability.** Reliability of these measurements appears to be high. Estimates in the six pilot study brothels of the number of sex workers that were obtained from management and those obtained from workers concerning how many sex workers would not be able to leave with a customer, were quite similar. The greatest disparity in these estimates was in one brothel where workers estimated that five sex workers could not leave, while management in the same venue said four. The larger of the estimates given in any sex venue, from management or from workers, was used as the reported *Cannot Leave* number trafficked. Similarly, the larger of these two estimates for ‘under 18’ was used as the reported *Under 18* number trafficked.





Women await customers outside small brothel in East Central Cambodia

**Validity.** Sex workers in any sex venue are normally free to leave the work location with customers, and in fact are expected to do so in venues without an on-premises location for sex. Sex venues are in business to make money, and are motivated to reduce costs and increase profits. Control of the movements and location of their employees occur when a venue's managers believe they may incur unusual costs from this freedom. These costs may result from sex workers who according to management's accounting system, owe money to the venue and whom they suspect may fail to return, might complain to their family or to authorities if free, while they cannot call or complain while ensconced in a trafficked brothel, or might run away and not return to pay off a real or imagined debt.

Inability to leave without management accompaniment is strongly associated with trafficking, and normally is seen only in brothels with trafficking, and with workers who are trafficked. During the pilot study, brothel workers who were queried by team members concerning why a worker might not be able to leave a venue with a customer were generally unable to provide a response other than one implying trafficking. The face validity of *Cannot Leave* as the criterion for trafficking operationalizes trafficking in a manner closer to the meaning conjured by the term "trafficking" than does the existence of a debt contract. A debt contract speaks to the sale of a person, which is trafficking, but which can also be interpreted as an advance payment of future earnings that must be repaid. *Cannot Leave*, on the other hand, implies illegally incarcerating people against their will, and it is difficult to find an alternative interpretation to *Cannot Leave* other than trafficking.

**Real Change.** In addition to methodological and definitional change as possible explanations for smaller trafficking numbers in the 2008 data, actual change has likely occurred in those variables over time. The best high end numerical estimate of trafficked sex workers in Cambodia has decreased from 2,488 in 2002, through 2000 in 2003, to a low of 1058 in the



current study. A more detailed comparison of observed results across the three studies is available in Table 6, with a comparison of high-end corrected results available in Table 7. The decrease in overall sex trafficking numbers appears to have occurred primarily within certain categories, defined by age and by ethnicity.

*Children.* The number of children (persons under 18) engaged in sex work in Cambodia appears to have been reduced in 2008 from the levels obtained some five years earlier. In 2003, 1074 trafficked sex workers were observed (Table 6) including 198 children, which is 18.4% of the total number trafficked, with at least 20 of these children under the age of 13. The number of children, both those observed as sex workers and those mentioned by management or by sex workers in the 2008 data, was 127 (from Table 2, the sum of the < 18 columns), with eleven of the children verifiably under 15, and six under 13. These 127 children are 29.3% of the total of 433 observed trafficked persons in 2008 (Table 6, < 18). When the Step 1) through Step 5) corrections are applied, the high-end estimate for the number of children likely involved in sex work in Cambodia in 2008 is 310 children (Table 7), compared with 369 in 2003.

**Table 6**  
**Comparison of Observed Numbers of Trafficked Women and Children**  
**by Ethnicity and Trafficking Type in Cambodia**  
**2002, 2003, and 2008**

Year	Ethnicity				How Trafficked			Area of Trafficking		
	Khmer	Vietnamese	Other	Cambodia Total	< 18	D C <sup>1</sup> C L	Cambodia Total	Phnom Penh	Provinces	Cambodia Total
2002	30	610	2	642	-	642	642	642	-	642 <sup>2</sup>
2003	203	863	8	1,074	198	876	1074	795	279	1074
2008	268 <sup>3</sup>	142 <sup>3</sup>	23 <sup>3</sup>	433 <sup>3</sup>	127 <sup>4</sup>	377 <sup>4</sup>	433	200	233 <sup>5</sup>	433

<sup>1</sup> Debt Contract 2002 and 2003; Cannot Leave 2008

<sup>2</sup> Observed numbers were only obtained in Phnom Penh in 2002

<sup>3</sup> Table 2, Cambodia row

<sup>4</sup> These numbers are not independent

<sup>5</sup> Table 2, Outside Phnom Penh row

If this decrease in estimated number of children involved in sex work reflects a real change in child sex trafficking between 2003 and 2008, it is difficult to trace such a decrease directly back to the success of intervention programs. Changes in economic conditions and other naturally occurring intervening variables have to be considered as an alternative explanation. It is unfortunate that comparisons needed to show the effectiveness, lack of effectiveness, or possible unanticipated harm or unanticipated additional benefits of programs and interventions intended to reduce trafficking that would be available through evaluation research does not appear to exist.

Despite the apparent decrease in the number of child sex workers, these children constitute a larger proportion of the total number trafficked in 2008, 29.3%, versus 18.5% in 2003. This occurs in part due to the substantial decrease in the estimated number of workers listed as trafficked other than child workers between 2003 and 2008.

**Table 7**  
**Comparison of High-End Estimated Number of Trafficked Women and Children**  
**by Ethnicity and Trafficking Type in Cambodia**  
**2002, 2003, and 2008**

Year	Ethnicity				How Trafficked			Area of Trafficking		
	Khmer	Vietnamese	Other	Cambodia Total	< 18	D C <sup>1</sup> /C L	Cambodia Total	Phnom Penh	Provinces	Cambodia Total
2002	117	2363	7	2,488 <sup>1</sup>	-	2,488	2,488	1638 <sup>2</sup>	850 <sup>3</sup>	2,488
2003	378	1607	15	2000	369	1631	2000	-	-	2000
2008	668	334	56	1058	310 <sup>4</sup>	921 <sup>4</sup>	1058	445	613	1058

<sup>1</sup> Debt Contract 2002 and 2003; Cannot Leave 2008.

The <18 and DC/LC columns are *not* independent, so may not sum to the Cambodia Total.

<sup>2</sup> 31.2% of 5,250

<sup>3</sup> (2,488 – 1638)

<sup>4</sup> These numbers are not independent

*Ethnicity.* Most sex workers in Cambodia are of Khmer origin but a substantial number are ethnic Vietnamese. Ethnicity, as used in this report, refers to culture of origin and not necessarily to citizenship. In 2003 the observed number of trafficked Vietnamese sex workers was 863 which declined to 142 in 2008 (Table 6). The best high end estimate of the number of trafficked Vietnamese in 2003 was 1607 but this number declined to 334 in 2008 (Table 7). Alternately, in 2003 we observed 203 Khmer sex workers trafficked (Table 6), which increased to 268 in 2008, as did the estimated number, from 378 in 2003 to 668 in 2008 (Table 7). The sheer size and opposite direction of the changes in these numbers makes it unlikely that the difference in number of Vietnamese sex workers between 2003 and 2008 involve chance fluctuations in the data. Decreases in Vietnamese sex workers appear to be largely responsible for an overall decline in the number of sexually trafficked persons in Cambodia between 2003 and 2008. The overall decline is due to a lesser extent to decreases in child trafficking and is not reflected in a similar decline in the number of trafficked Khmer sex workers. The high-end estimate for the number of trafficked Khmer sex workers increased from 378 to 668 between these two studies (Table 7).

One reason for this increase in the Khmer trafficking numbers is that the initially larger numbers of trafficked Vietnamese might have been affected by anti-trafficking initiatives to a greater extent than were Khmer sex workers. If this had happened, then the lowered availability of Vietnamese workers in venues with trafficking may have led to a ‘vacuum’ in the supply chain which then increased the pressure to traffic Khmer workers. This is only speculation, but there is additional evidence that might support it. During the summer of 2007 through the time of data collection in 2008, research teams often encountered police raids at brothels they were observing. This type of enforcement was observed only at brothels with Vietnamese workers. Raids may also have occurred in Khmer brothels at that time but they were not observed, while the Vietnamese brothel raids were. Most Vietnamese workers are found in brothels, and brothels usually have either all Khmer or all Vietnamese workers. Traffickers of Vietnamese workers may have found it better for them to go elsewhere, or may have been apprehended due to prosecutions, or may have understood the police crackdown at that time as partially motivated by anti-Vietnamese sentiment. If so they may have moved to the trafficking of Khmer workers. Alternately, workers in Vietnamese brothels may have been affected to a greater extent than workers in Khmer staffed brothels by the various prevention programs such as awareness-raising. The unfortunate lack of before/after evaluation data surrounding both the enforcement and the prevention programs make it difficult to determine the credibility of claims concerning the effect of either type of intervention on the changes in numbers trafficked, either for or against.

### Cross Validation: Additional Empirical Data on Sex Work in Cambodia from the IJM, National Assembly, and NCHADS Data

Results from the 2002, 2003, and 2008 studies are generally consistent with the findings of other empirical studies, though the method, focus, and level of detail vary across the other studies. Derks, et al., (2006) review many of these reports. The relative congruity regarding numbers of workers among empirical studies provides a level of validation across their methods and results. Numerical estimates offered by groups and individuals without benefit of a study to support them are seldom consistent with empirical results, especially when the estimator has something to gain financially or emotionally from the size of the estimate.



Street in Southwest Cambodia town with brothel on left near approaching red moto.

### IJM Numbers

Data related to the validity of the interview methods used to obtain trafficking numbers in the 2002, 2003, and 2008 studies is available in the form of results from the IJM raids on Svay Pak in early 2003. IJM is the International Justice Mission, an American investigative group funded in part by the U.S. Department of Labor and the State Department. Thrupkaew (2009a, 2009b) discusses the philosophy of IJM and their role in the Svay Pak raids and elsewhere. Svay Pak, also called K-11, is village with a large complex brothel area north of Phnom Penh just west of the Tonle Sap. Open from the early 1990s to 2004 it contained many young sex workers, and continues to operate on a much smaller and more secretive scale. Thomas (2005) provides a detailed discussion of the effects of closing of Svay Pak. The standard method described above under *Obtaining Data from Venues*, was used to obtain data from Svay Pak on several days of regular data collection in 2002 and again in 2003. Our March 2003 count of child workers in Svay Pak (N = 46) was obtained prior to the JM raids and is very close to the number of children IJM found working in Svay Pak during the raids (N = 45, oral report of IJM following the raid), which also occurred in March 2003. IJM's direct count of the Svay Pak numbers serves to

provide small scale validation of our method of questioning managers and workers to obtain them in a complex brothel area with multiple venues and managers since the number obtained by our method was essentially equal to the number found on close inspection by an independent group.

## Ten Nationwide Studies of Sex Work Numbers

**The Number of Empirical Studies.** Derks, et. al., (2006) present a review of much of the research on trafficking in persons in Cambodia, prepared for the Center for Advanced Study of Cambodia and the Asia Society. They note the disparity in estimates of the number of sex workers in Cambodia between empirical studies, and estimates whose basis is provided by an “expert” without conducting an actual study.

Only two studies — conducted by the Commission on Human Rights and Reception of Complaints (CHRR) of the National Assembly (1997) and by Steinfatt et al. (2002; 2003) — involved a nationwide count of sex workers and sex work venues in Cambodia. ... It is evident, however, that the two nationwide counts found far lower numbers of sex workers than estimates based not on research but on secondary sources and “expert” interviews. Derks, et. al., (2006, p. 21).

In addition to the National Assembly study (1997) and the Steinfatt et al. (2002) and Steinfatt (2003) studies that are listed by Derks et al. as involving nationwide data collection on sex workers and sex work venues in Cambodia, six additional empirical studies involving a nationwide count of sex workers and venues in Cambodia were conducted between 1997 and 2003 by NCHADS, the Cambodian National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD. NCHADS employed a methodology quite different for the other studies in counting the number of sex workers in Cambodia. Each of the study types is reviewed below.

**(1): National Assembly Numbers.** In 1997, the Commission on Human Rights for the Cambodian National Assembly (National Assembly, 1997), the governing body of Cambodia, commissioned a detailed study of sex work throughout the country.

The National Assembly report is the Cambodian government’s best attempt to determine the extent of trafficking in women and children in Cambodia to date. It is based on an extensive and detailed study, conducted through interviews with local authorities, brothel owners, and sex workers throughout Cambodia, combined with direct observations by research assistants. [Our study is] not directly comparable since the National Assembly report estimates 14,725 *brothel workers* in Cambodia (National Assembly, 1997, p. 3), ignoring sex workers outside of brothels, while the present study observed both direct and indirect forms of sex work finding 18,256 *sex workers* in 2002-3. The National Assembly study estimates 81% of the brothel workers to be Khmer and 18% Vietnamese. The present study found 65.5% Khmer persons and 32.8% Vietnamese persons among all sex workers, though [our] countryside figures of 77.4% Khmer and 21.1% Vietnamese are closer to the numbers obtained by the National Assembly. It is unclear from the National Assembly report whether ethnicity was determined by citizenship or by ethnic origin. Counting ethnic Vietnamese born or naturalized in Cambodia as Khmer, would produce a higher Khmer proportion in the National Assembly results (Steinfatt, 2003, p.18).

The national assembly study obtained data in 21 of the 24 provinces. Each of these nationwide studies – the National Assembly study (1997), the studies of Steinfatt, Baker and Beasey (2002) and Steinfatt (2003) – involved somewhat different methods of data collection and different degrees and methods of estimation of numbers of sex workers in Cambodia, as well as occurring several years apart.

**(2), (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7): NCHADS Numbers.** NCHADS conducts detailed counts and estimations of persons at risk for HIV/AIDS, using subpopulations of hospital in-patients, TB patients, pregnant women, male police, female brothel based, and female indirect sex workers throughout Cambodia. The NCHADS studies follow the methodological guidelines of the World Health Organization (WHO, 2000); see also NCHADS (2000, 2004); FHI (2003); and Saphonn, et al., (2004). These studies were conducted by trained medical personnel charged by international health agencies and the Cambodian Government with monitoring all persons in at-risk groups for HIV infection (National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD, 2004).

Table 8 provides the results obtained in the six independent NCHADS studies available to us at the date of this writing, compared with the results of our 2002, 2003, and 2008 studies. The column means are presented for reference. Other NCHADS results should be forthcoming. Two different NCHADS studies were conducted in 2003 with separate data collection but similar methodology. Each of the NCHADS studies obtained information from a count of sex workers who appeared at health clinics, and also formed estimates based on those counts. Their studies are not intended to be trafficking counts, but are part of the sentinel surveillance system regarding infectious disease related to HIV of the World Health Organization. NCHADS obtained their data in 21 of the 24 provinces with three rural provinces not included. A possible additional source of variation between our numbers and those of NCHADS may be that trafficked individuals may be less likely than non-trafficked sex workers to encounter the medical services through which NCHADS obtains its respondent contacts. Thus, these trafficked workers might be somewhat less likely to be encountered by NCHADS, though workers attending the medical clinics might mention their existence.

**(8), (9), and (10).** These are our 2002, 2003, and 2008 studies identified as **(8) SBB**, Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002); **(9) S**, the Steinfatt study of 2003; and **(10) SB**, the present Steinfatt and Baker study of 2008 data. Data for each of these studies were obtained directly from observation of and conversation with sex venue management and workers at their place of work.

Examination of the four means across studies presented below each column in Table 8 indicates good agreement between the average of the NCHADS studies (4,881) and the average of our three studies (5,084) on the number of direct sex workers. The result reported in the National Assembly study for direct sex workers (14,725) appears to be closer to the estimates for all sex workers (the means under the *Total* column) rather than the (2) through (9) estimates for direct workers. Means in the *Indirect* column indicate a disparity regarding numbers of indirect sex workers between the NCHADS numbers (6,655) and our studies (17,253), with our numbers for indirect workers about 2.6 times the indirect estimate for NCHADS. We might suspect that a difference in classification is related to this discrepancy, since sex workers self identified in the NCHADS studies while we obtained estimates of worker numbers directly at their places of work. It may be the case that direct workers generally accept their status as sex workers and identify themselves as such in the NCHADS studies, while indirect workers may be less ready to identify themselves in that way. This effect could produce fewer indirect workers identifying themselves as sex workers to NCHADS interviewers, while our interview process does not require such self identification. If accurate, this effect could also help to explain the disparity between the average reported total number of sex workers in our studies (22,337) and the lower total-workers averages across other studies (Table 8, *Total* column). Differences in numerical estimates in Table 8 columns across years may represent real changes over time as well as sampling variance.



In sum, beyond our three studies of 2002, 2003, and 2008 are eight additional empirical counts of sex workers conducted or supervised by three separate agencies. Each of these eight studies – from the National Assembly, IJM, and from the National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD – serve as partial validation of our method and results, since each was conducted by independent groups of researchers using different methods. Numbers from the IJM raids are a byproduct of the raids themselves with 45 children found in the IJM count. The National Assembly numbers come from local counts conducted by local officials from each of the sex venues within their specific area, under order by the national government. For the IJM

<b>Table 8</b> <b>Estimated Number of Sex Workers in Cambodia</b> <b>from Ten National Studies</b> <b>1997 – 2008</b>					
<b>Study Number</b>	<b>Research Group</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Sex Workers</b>		
			<b>Direct</b>	<b>Indirect</b>	<b>Total</b>
(1)	<b>National Assembly</b>	<b>1997</b>	14,725	-	14,725
(2)	<b>NCHADS</b>	<b>1997</b>	6,002	5,309	11,311
(3)	<b>NCHADS</b>	<b>1998</b>	6,235	6,119	12,354
(4)	<b>NCHADS</b>	<b>2000</b>	3,872	7,004	10,876
(5)	<b>NCHADS</b>	<b>2002</b>	4,403	4,154	8,557
(8)	<b>SBB<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2002</b>	5,324	15,505	20,829
(6)	<b>NCHADS</b>	<b>2003a</b>	3,764	7,049	10,813
(7)	<b>NCHADS</b>	<b>2003b<sup>3</sup></b>	5,009	10,292	15,301
(9)	<b>Steinfatt</b>	<b>2003</b>	5,011	13,245	18,256
(10)	<b>SB<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>2008</b>	4,916	23,009	27,925
<b>Mean of (1) to (10) =</b>			5,926	10,187	15,095
<b>Mean of (2) to (10) =</b>			4,948	10,187	15,136
<b>Mean of (2) to (7) =</b>			4,881	6,655	11,535
<b>Mean of (8) to (10) =</b>			5,084	17,253	22,337

<sup>1</sup> SBB Steinfatt, Baker, and Beesey (2002) data

<sup>2</sup> SB Steinfatt and Baker (2008) data

<sup>3</sup> The 2003b data are listed by NCHADS as their most reliable data collected to that date.

numbers the data come from direct counts in brothels and other sex venues. The National Assembly method employed interviews with local authorities, brothel owners, and sex workers throughout Cambodia, a method similar to that employed in our studies. It seems possible that the National Assembly data may include indirect workers as well as direct. NCHADS used the statistical health interview methods of the World Health Organization in obtaining detailed reports from sex workers who received medical assistance including sexual health.

### Implications of the Ten Nationwide Studies

In the ten empirical studies with a national sample, the estimates for number of direct sex workers range from a low of 3,764 (NCHADS, 2003a) to a high of 14,725 (National Assembly, 1997) with a mean of 5,926 (Table 8). Estimates for the number of indirect workers in these ten studies range from a low of 4,154 (NCHADS, 2002) to a high of 23,009 (Steinfatt and Baker 2008 data) with a mean of 10,187. And estimates for the total number of sex workers across the ten studies range from 8,557 (NCHADS, 2002) to 23,009 (Steinfatt and Baker 2008 data) with a mean of 15,095.



The number of sex workers who are trafficked appears to be largely a function of the number of direct workers rather than of numbers of indirect or total workers. The mean estimate of 5,084 for number of direct workers across our 2002, 2003, and 2008 data sets is in close agreement with the NCHADS mean across six data sets of 4,881. This 4,881 is within 4% of 5,084 which is the mean number of direct workers across our three studies. The difference between the two figures may be partially accounted for by the three outlying provinces not included in the NCHADS data. We believe that any concern over location and interviewing methods in our studies that is occasionally expressed might be reduced among those aware of the NCHADS studies and the similarity in results across the NCHADS studies with our results. Derks et al. (2006, pp. 21-25, 29-32) suggest that additional national studies are needed in order to verify the number of sex venues and sex workers throughout Cambodia. While additional studies are always welcome, the relative range of the size of the populations of sex venues and sex workers appear to be well established by the results of national studies listed in Table 8. Additional studies should be specifically coordinated with funded interventions using time series before and after data collection in attempting to determine the effects of such interventions.

**Meta Analysis.** While non-empirical guesses abound concerning trafficking numbers and could be included in Table 8, our decision is to leave them out. This issue is discussed further below under *Problems with Guessing and with Expert Testimony without a Study*. Glass (Smith & Glass, 1977; Glass, McGaw, & Smith, 1981; Glass, 2000) holds that all research should be included in a meta analytic review, and the use of a predictor variable based on the methodological quality of the studies will expose the effect of study quality on effect size through the examination of moderator variables. Slavin (1983) disagrees. He argues that *best evidence meta-analysis* should be conducted, including only methodologically sound studies. Also, it can be argued that the term “research” should not be applied to  $N = 0$  studies, and that guessing by an individual does not turn these into even  $N = 1$  studies. Cooper and Hedges (1994) discuss related issues. Regarding guessed results, we believe Slavin’s view appears to be the wiser choice among these studies. The data for a Slavin style meta-analysis, but on  $N$  rather than the traditional effect size predictors of means or  $r$ ’s, are present in Table 8. Since these data are  $N$ s, the typical meta analysis decisions regarding selection of effect size and weighting by sample size are not present. The different possible definitions of direct and indirect workers may be regarded as a problem of classification rather than of scale differences. If potential classification differences are of concern, as may occur with the National Assembly study, the *Total* column may be used in place of the *Direct* and *Indirect* results. If potential actual year to year variations are not a consideration, the mean  $N$ ’s in the final four rows may be taken as the relevant effect size estimates.

### **Problems with Guessing and with Expert Testimony without a Study**

Sources of variation in empirically based estimates of numbers of sex workers and trafficked persons are discussed above. The principal cause of variation in numerical estimates of sex work and sex trafficking numbers in Cambodia is not related to the source of the empirical estimates (National Assembly, NCHADS, Steinfatt, et al. studies). Large variations in these estimates occur primarily when empirically based estimates are contrasted with guessed estimates. Experts who state an estimate without relying on a study are guessing. The commonly repeated guessed estimates of trafficked women and children – perhaps 80, 000 to 100,000 persons said to be trafficked without benefit of a study to support these estimates – are well beyond the range of empirically based estimates.

Reports mentioning studies that are cited in support of guessed estimates in this higher range turn out to be illusory on analysis. Yet this inaccurate information has little difficulty in

entering the public debate on trafficking in persons, and is often accorded equal status to that given to empirical reports. Derks et al., (2006, pp. 21-26; 29-32) cite many of these guessed estimates in their interesting analysis of trafficking numbers, questioning the credibility of several. The essentially equal status sometimes accorded to guessed estimates may be due in part to the stakeholder status of many of the groups that support these estimates, groups that often provide support to rescued women and children. As important as they are, such groups often believe that their financial support is tied to funding agencies' perceptions of the size of the problem, and that this size is measured in terms of high trafficking numbers. The need for financing influences some groups to put their faith in higher numbers regardless of the evidence. This misplaced faith can lead to confusion over the effectiveness of interventions and prevention programs.



These daytime shops in Southeast Cambodia become sex venues in the evening.

The problem of human trafficking cannot be effectively addressed unless we understand its actual size and which remedies can effectively reduce it. Accurate knowledge of the size and extent of trafficking are needed in order to plan and implement a practical and effective anti-trafficking strategy. Both overestimates and underestimates of the number of victims will result in the failure to allocate resources efficiently, and they may result in the ultimate failure of many anti-trafficking interventions. Overestimates of trafficking numbers may produce prevention and intervention programs that are overly extensive and in the wrong locations, wasting funds provided for anti-trafficking efforts. If guessed numerical estimates are given credence, and the guesses are kept high for funding reasons following an intervention, then an intervention that was effective may be branded as ineffective. Some strong anti-trafficking programs may subsequently be discarded due directly to inaccurate guessed numerical estimates. The effectiveness of interventions cannot be understood accurately without grounded empirical evidence of their effect, whether positive, negative, or neutral. It is important to understand how such guessed estimates appear in the public record in order to consider the validity of such numbers if and when they appear. The connections between some of the commonly cited guessed estimates and their referenced support is available in Steinfatt (2003, pp. 1-5), and are reviewed briefly below.

## Claims of Support for Guessed Estimates

Since the mid to late 1990s it has been common to read that there are in the range of 80,000 to 100,000 trafficked women and another 5,000 to 15,000 children sexually trafficked in Cambodia. All of these persons are said to be *sex slaves* in some publications. Some of these guessed estimates, those of 10,000 - 15,000 “child prostitutes” and “80,000 to 100,000 prostitutes and sex slaves” have entered the public debate on trafficking in persons through the following route.

The *NGO Statement to the 2001 Consultative Group Meeting on Cambodia* says:

Child prostitution and child trafficking have become grave problems in Cambodia. In Phnom Penh, there are an estimated 10,000 - 15,000 child prostitutes. (NGO Statement, 2001).

Perrin, Majumdar, Gafuik, and Andrews (2001), referring to sex workers as *sex slaves* for their Future Group report, *The Future of Southeast Asia: Challenges of Child Sex Slavery and Trafficking in Cambodia*, say:

On the higher end, it is estimated that there are between 80,000 to 100,000 prostitutes and sex slaves in Cambodia. By far the lowest statistic for the number of prostitutes and sex slaves in Cambodia is between 40,000 to 50,000. With a population of just 10-12 million, Cambodia's sex slave and prostitution problem is enormous. Indeed, more than 1 in 150 people in Cambodia are sex slaves or prostitutes (Perrin, et al., 2001, p. 13).

Perrin et al. go on to claim that “at least 1 in 40 of children born in Cambodia will be sold into sex slavery” (p. 13) and that that 17,000 “sex slaves” were in Phnom Penh in 2001, with 80,000 throughout Cambodia (p. 14). In the same year, the Child Rights Foundation of Cambodia cited the same number of trafficked women and children, “17,000 in Phnom Penh, 30% under 18 years old, 80,000 to 100,000 nationwide” (CRF, 2001, p. 14). CRF cited CHDR 2000, the Cambodia Human Development Report of the Ministry of Planning (MoP) as the source of these numbers.

In analyzing the evidence that supports such statements it is important to note that none of the groups issuing these numerical estimates actually studied the problem themselves. Each group simply reprinted what other reports had said or what other people had told them. The reprinting of numerical estimates is a common and legitimate practice, providing that the numbers printed or reported are based on an actual study, and that the estimates are correctly cited and correctly labeled concerning what they represent in the actual study. The problem with the NGO Statement and the Child Rights Foundation of Cambodia statement, is that the sources cited by these reports do not in fact say what the groups report them as saying. The Perrin group's statements often were not attributed to a particular source.

The CHDR 2000 does mention the numbers “80,000 – 100,000” but mentions them as the total number of sex workers in Cambodia, not as numbers of sex slaves or trafficked individuals. The Child Rights Foundation of Cambodia report states that the Ministry of Planning says that this is the number of trafficked women and children in Cambodia, though this is inaccurate. Many NGOs created this same transformation in their reports to the media, from the adult sex workers mentioned in the MoP report, to sex slaves and trafficked women and children. Many media outlets dutifully reported that NGOs said there were 80,000 – 100,000 sex slaves. From this point

on the phrase “80,000 – 100,000 sex slaves” takes on a life of its own and is discussed as a fact in both the media and in reports of other groups.

CHDR 2000 is an official government report funded in part by UNDP. The Ministry of Planning did not conduct a study of sex workers, but cites the Human Rights Vigilance of Cambodia (HRVC, 1995) and Sophea (1998) as the two sources of the 80,000 – 100,000 sex worker estimate in the report. But the 80,000-10,000 number does not appear in HRVC (1995). The only numbers of sex workers given in HRVC (1995) are from an empirical study of twelve provinces conducted by HRVC staff in which they found 3,919 adult sex workers and 1,800 workers of 17 or under in 516 sex venues (HRVC, 1995, p. 2). No other numerical estimates are provided in (HRVC, 1995), including no mention of 80,000 – 100,000 sex workers. But CHDR 2000 cites a second source for the 80,000 – 100,000 sex workers number, Sophea (1998), which is an ILO/IPEC presentation given in Bangkok in January of 1998. There is no report associated with Sophea (1998), only the typed notes from his presentation. The ‘80,000 – 100,000 sex workers in Cambodia’ statement appears only once, in a table on page 8 of the notes as: “Total Prostitutes in Cambodia: (Unicef, 1996) 80,000 – 100,000” (Sophea, 1998, p. 8). The two sources of the 80,000 – 100,000 number appearing in CHDR 2000 are now traced to one source, (Unicef, 1996). ILO/IPEC officials gave assurances that the 80,000 – 100,000 figure is not an ILO/IPEC finding. Unfortunately, there are no UNICEF publications listed in the references on p. 17 of Sophea (1998), from 1996 or any other time.

We conducted a search of the library of UNICEF in Phnom Penh for all publications from the 1994 to 1998 period that mention a number of sex workers or a number of trafficked women in Cambodia or Phnom Penh. UNICEF officials assisted in this library search. Two reports were located that mention such numbers: UNICEF (1995) and UNICEF (1996), the situation reports on Cambodia for those years. There is no mention in UNICEF (1995) of any study of sex workers that found 80,000 to 100,000 sex workers, or in fact any study that found any number of workers. Similarly, UNICEF (1996) contains no mention of the 80,000 – 100,000 sex worker numbers but does say “17,000 sex workers were active in Phnom Penh in 1994” (UNICEF, 1996, p. 144). This statement is in a sidebar in the margin of p. 144, without any discussion or explanation in the text itself, and out of context with the surrounding textual discussion. It appears nowhere else in the publication, does not appear in the references, and has no form of reference or attribution concerning how these numbers arrived in UNICEF (1996). No UNICEF documents available in the Cambodia office in Phnom Penh support the 80,000 to 100,000 figure. The number seems to have appeared on its own, with no one willing to accept credit, or blame, for it.

The etiology of the “17,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh” number from the UNICEF sidebar, also cited by Perrin et al., and by the Child Rights Foundation of Cambodia as discussed above, is similarly interesting. This number appears in CHDR 2000 as well, attributed to HRVC (1995) which was also cited as one of the two sources for the 80,000 – 100,000 sex worker numbers. While no mention of 17,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh occurs in HRVC (1995), HRVC (1996) mentions 17,000 sex workers in Cambodia, but not in Phnom Penh. HRVC (1996) does not mention a study to support the claim of 17,000 sex workers in Cambodia. But it does list CWDA as the source of the 17,000 number, saying “The Cambodia Women’s Development Association estimates that the current number of women and children being prostituted in Cambodia is 17,000” (HRVC, 1996, p. 26). Unfortunately, there is no CWDA study of the number of sex workers in Cambodia that appears in any of its published reports from 1994 to 1997. Further, the Cambodia Women’s Development Association did not issue the 17,000 estimate or any other such estimate, nor does it stand by any such estimate according to a July 2003 interview with the director of CWDA. She stated that the “17,000 sex workers in

Cambodia” statement has not appeared in any CWDA report to her knowledge, yet someone picking up the telephone in someone else’s absence could say anything to anyone.

The guessed estimates of 5,000 to 15,000 children sexually trafficked in Cambodia follow an equally questionable route into both the public debate and into actual funding decisions regarding trafficking programs and interventions (Steinfatt, 2003, pp. 1-5). The closest mention of such numbers appears on p. 4 of UNICEF (1995) stating that NGOs had estimated the presence of 10,000 to 15,000 sex workers in Phnom Penh (not 5,000 to 15,000 sexually trafficked children in Cambodia), but without a study. The full 1995 reports of the NGOs, representing the basis for the 5,000 to 15,000 sexually trafficked children statement in UNICEF (1995), are contained in an Appendix to UNICEF (1995). None of these reports mentions the existence of any study or any data that might support the claim, or even any estimate of any type that is near such numbers.

**United States.** Similar discrepancies in trafficking numbers have been noted in the United States. US TIP reports estimated the extent of human trafficking in the US as varying in size between several million victims in 2000 to as few as 14,500 victims per year by the 2005 TIP report. But these estimates, with no clear method provided concerning how the estimates were obtained, were in stark contrast to Department of Justice figures on the number of victims located.

Most importantly, the government must address the incongruity between the estimated number of victims trafficked into the United States – between 14,500 and 17,500 [annually] – and the number of victims found – only 611 in the last four years [2001-2004].... The stark difference between the two figures means that U.S. government efforts are still not enough. In addition, the estimate should be evaluated to assure that it is accurate and reflects the number of actual victims. (USDOJ, 2005).

The figure of 611 actual trafficking victims found in the United States over a four year period, coinciding with the years of several studies of Cambodia in Table 8, is not directly comparable to our point-in-time estimate of 689 in Cambodia. To the extent that such a comparison can be made, it would suggest that 689 trafficked persons in Cambodia indicates a trafficking problem about 4.5 times as large in Cambodia as in the US (  $689 / [611/4]$ ). A US estimate closer in time to that of our 2008 data may be found in the US Federal Register for 2008. By December of 2008 a total of 787 T-visas were issued by the US to trafficked persons in that country, with an additional 682 T-visas issued to family members of these trafficked individuals (USFR, 2008, pp. 75, 552).

### **Summary: Empirical Support for Guessed estimates**

Most current published estimates of the numbers of sex workers, underage workers, and trafficked women and children in Cambodia cannot be relied upon unless a legitimate study has been conducted and produced these numbers by a reasonable empirical process. Publications by many organizations who believe their funding is affected by the number of trafficked persons may publicize incorrect numbers knowingly or unknowingly that have no basis in fact. These errors often appear to be quite unintentional, and may originate in something as simple as a typo. But the error is published and others then cite it uncritically as fact. Other published reports then cite such numbers uncritically and without checking their validity, and then those reports in turn become the source for further such printed estimates. The meaning of any estimate is worth no more than the methods used to produce it. Without knowing the methods there is no way of determining the worth of the estimate.



### Observations Regarding Population Density Assumptions

Assumptions 3 to 5 above under *Theory and Rationale* state that sex work is unlikely to occur in rural areas, including smaller and mid-sized villages. This was borne out by the results from Teams A-E and by Team F in the countryside. Essentially the only villages found with sex work were on main roads in the area, despite an intensive search. In the countryside there appears to be a minimum “natural” distance between such venues such that a sex work venue tends not to occur within a certain travel time distance from another village that has a sex work outlet, thus concentrating rather than diluting the pool of potential customers. This may have the effect of increasing the potential customer population within a given area to a critical level. Cambodia census data are not provided in a manner that allows a calculation of the critical level of the general population size that appears to be required for sex work to occur, and teams did not provide estimates of the population of villages where sex work did and did not occur.



Brothel room in Phnom Penh. Many such rooms have space only for a bed and a way to enter and exit the room. Brothel workers often sleep in the room where they work.

A different effect is often observed in cities, where the available male population with disposable income is sufficient to support more than a single sex venue. While individual such venues might be found at almost any location rather than occurring as a fairly uniform scattering of such businesses around the city, many are concentrated into what appear to have become “natural areas” for sex work. While more rural sex venues tend to “keep their distance,” urban



sex businesses appear to find it efficient to congregate near each other within a city, perhaps in order to draw more potential customers to an area and thus provide more actual customers for their own venue.

Another effect at work may be a portion of Assumption 3, suggesting that potential customers wish to preserve anonymity. This can be achieved in the anonymity of a city of sufficient size even in a sex work area. In the countryside, the apparent distance required between villages with a sex venue may also be a function of the distance required for anonymity.

### **Studying Destination-Trafficked Populations**

This project studied the extent of destination sex trafficking of women and children in Cambodia. Persons caught up in the web of source and transit trafficking will soon arrive at a destination point where their existence is more easily detected. The economics of human trafficking suggest that trafficked persons will be kept in the source and transit stage for as little time as is practical for the traffickers since the trafficker is incurring both actual and potential costs while in possession of these persons and no money is coming in. Trafficking victims create a profit only when they reach the destination stage. The motivation of traffickers is to have them reach that stage as quickly as possible and to keep them in it as long as possible. Thus, studying the number of trafficking victims in the destination stage provides a simpler method of detection and locates victims in the stage where they are likely to remain the longest so they are easier to detect.

Our methods provide a good assessment of the extent of female sex trafficking in Cambodia. We have not attempted to study other forms of trafficking such as that of males for seafaring labor or otherwise, or women for factory or domestic labor. Decreasing numbers over time found in our studies for female sex trafficking may reflect the success of attempts over the past few years to reduce these trafficking numbers. If these attempts were not successful to some degree, continued funding of them might be considered questionable. But without evaluation studies conducted as an integral part of each intervention, both the extent of any positive or negative effect of a given intervention and the relative effectiveness of various methods remains unknown. The cost of such evaluation studies should more than pay for itself through concentrating future funding on the more effective methods.

### **Additional Unstudied Sex Work Populations**

While corrections for unstudied populations are integrated into the research summarized above, the possibility always exists of a small error range around any estimate. A possibility sometimes mentioned in this context is “hidden brothels.” Another possibility might be a ship offshore, with its attendant profitability and transportation problems. It is often difficult to obtain a description of what the concept of a hidden brothel means since sex venues by their very nature are businesses that require knowledge of their location and what they are selling in order to make a sizeable profit, and often simply to stay in business. Given that there are many known alternative providers that compete for customers in any urban area, the competitive advantage of a hidden brothel is difficult to grasp. A hidden brothel in a rural area would likely attract sufficient unwanted attention in any case to make it relatively impractical and far less profitable. Making the highest profit is always the goal, and if actually hidden in some way, the management would have to assume that being located by the wrong people, likely by those authorities who would attempt to impose severe penalties, could be expensive.

The competition concept may be part of the answer. A brothel offering something that is “more illegal” in the eyes of authorities or the public underlies this concept, perhaps something arousing even greater moral disapproval than the selling of sex or even sex trafficking. Brothels with young children – under 15 – and brothels featuring torture come to mind and would have little competition. Both types are clearly within the scope of this research and the research methods used to locate venues should either uncover, or at least raise a strong hint of the existence of such places. The latter type, involving torture, do not appear to exist in Cambodia. The former were uncovered in the form of Svay Pak brothels as discussed under *IJM Numbers* above, and in a very few scattered brothels in Phnom Penh and very occasionally around more urban and tourist areas in Cambodia. Moto driver informants were the sources on these and are usually well informed sources as well as being easily accessible. No moto driver knows everything, but some appear to specialize in this type of information. Many moto drivers know which driver to ask about what kinds of information if they themselves are not certain.

Venues with underage girls were common in the mid 1990s in Toul Kork and Svay Pak. They were moved out of Toul Kork as that area gentrified during the past decade. The research of Thomas (2005) provides an excellent and valuable discussion of the situation in Svay Pak: what occurred, the aftermath, and information important for best practice regarding such brothels. Following the closing of Svay Pak as a sex venue involving raids over a period of months in 2003, some of the traffickers and two groups of children working for them but not apprehended in the raids, moved to Phnom Penh and to Siem Reap. For about 18 months the Phnom Penh venue was located a few blocks from the Central Police Station at the rear of a barbershop, and then moved to Siem Reap. The second Svay Pak group moved directly to Siem Reap. In 2008, continuing information from moto drivers who had worked closely with our research group in earlier studies mentioned the prior existence of the barbershop venue. Other sources did not appear to be familiar with it, again demonstrating the importance of moto driver information. In sum, we believe that our moto-driver method is among the best and most effective ways of locating sex trafficking in Cambodia.

Other researchers were also able to find these children by their methods. In late 2005, French researcher Fredric Thomas was featured on the 5pm news on WFOR-TV, Ch. 4 Miami, when a local Miami reporter sought him out in Siem Reap with a camera crew. The mamasan from the largest child brothel in Svay Pak appeared on local Miami television that evening, though she was not identified in that way, denying to Thomas and to the cameras that her brothel in Siem Reap featured anyone under 18, retreating inside, and padlocking the iron gate. Shortly thereafter that venue moved to a different location. Our own research group did not study Cambodia between 2004 and 2007.

### **Additional Observations**

#### **Effects of the Anti Sex Work Edicts**

Several additional observations resulting from this study may be of value. In 2008, brothels and other sex venues with or without trafficking had relatively little to fear from allowing persons demographically similar to their customer base to ask questions about the number and availability of workers, and on occasion to discuss these things with sex workers who were available at that time in the venue. This should change with the Prime Minister’s edicts of early 2010 in attempting to close all sex venues in Cambodia. While most sex venue managers and available workers have been quite willing to provide the typical customer information requested by our interviewers, that method may be far less effective in gathering numbers of sex workers and trafficked individuals in Cambodia at least in the immediate future. Massive suppression of sex work ordered by the Prime Minister in March of 2010 should continue to lead

to considerable reticence of sex work management to disclose certain information, which is also likely to restrict the form of access employed to obtain data from available non-freelance sex workers. When sex work operates relatively freely, as has long been the case in Cambodia, simple direct communication with the manager and workers provides accurate information from those most likely to actually possess knowledge of the information required. If the anti-sex work edicts are enforced, then during that time and in the geographic areas when and where it is enforced, any method of locating trafficked individuals will be affected.



Workers await customers at night in small brothel in Southern Cambodia with only two workers

A corollary effect may be that reductions in the existing numbers of sex venues and workers should occur. Unless demand is also reduced, the supply reduction would be predicted to increase the value of remaining venues and workers. In addition, some marginal suppliers who have not entered the sex work market prior to this time, perhaps due to high levels of competition, could see an opportunity and decide to enter. Other marginal suppliers may be discouraged from entering by the stricter enforcement. Since the value of individual workers who remain should be higher, there should be pressure to increase both prices and the share provided to workers. If this occurs, some managers may be motivated to seek higher levels of trafficked women who can be paid less, can be cheated more easily, and may not need to be paid at all.

### **Sex Venue Format Change**

A change in the format of sex outlets was observed between 2003 and 2008. An obvious move toward upscale venues offering indirect sex in the style of Thai foreign oriented bars (Steinfatt, 2002) was observed in Phnom Penh and in Siem Reap during this time, though not in the rest of the

country. The clientele of these venues were upscale Khmer and foreign customers. New sex outlets appeared to open in the form of such indirect venues far more often than direct.

### **Point-in-Time Estimates and Estimates Over-Time**

The geographic area covered and the time-nature of any estimate affect its size. Point-in-time sex work and trafficking estimates are the number of persons currently engaged in sex work or are trafficked at a specific point in time. Essentially all actual sex work data and trafficking data are point-in-time data. When individual sex workers are identified, tracked over time, and enumerated at multiple times over an extended interval, perhaps a month, a year, or a lifetime, estimates of numbers that relate to periods of time can be computed from them. Such identification and tracking is difficult, can be invasive, and is seldom done. Statements of the size of trafficking numbers accumulated over periods of time such as a month or year or several years may simply be guesses, even when based on empirical point-in-time data. Good point-in-time numbers multiplied by a guess are still a guess. The corrections applied in steps 1) to 5) above are each based on empirical results. Research providing more recent over-time-estimates based on a

larger population is in order for these correction factors. These over-time-estimate calculations are discussed in Steinfatt (2002, pp. 17 – 22, 134 – 144) and are reviewed briefly below.

The empirical method of obtaining a per-year estimate or other non point-in-time estimate involves obtaining empirical data on the numbers of workers or trafficked persons who enter or leave sex work and/or currently trafficked status, or empirical evidence of normal rates at which these processes occur. These empirically derived rates of change can then be used together with point in time data to calculate over-time-estimates such as the total number trafficked during a year.

While it is possible to obtain much larger trafficking numbers by adding the same point-in-time numbers together over and over, as though one set of workers quit each month, or week, or day, and an entirely new set appeared, such manipulations bear little relationship to reality. If estimates over-time such as the number trafficked during a year are needed, several rates of change are required for accurate calculations. These include the entry rates of new workers or newly trafficked persons, the turnover rates of existing workers and trafficked persons, and whether existing workers actually leave sex work or are simply moved to a new location. Also needed are the re-entry rate of former workers who quit and are re-employed, and the number of workers entering sex work or being trafficked who have not previously been so.

If workers who are ever-trafficked are counted as always trafficked they should not also be counted as newly trafficked if they leave trafficked status and return to it. And if such procedures are used to produce a yearly trafficking number, such numbers are not independent from year to year unless everyone trafficked during, say, 2010 quits on 31 December and an entirely new group of sex workers and trafficked persons is introduced on 1 January 2011. Adding yearly estimates together creates the same data overlap problems as adding daily point in time estimates to create a yearly estimate. The type of data required to create estimates over-time from point-in-time data are illustrated by the data and calculations required for the five concepts discussed below and derived from Steinfatt (2002, pp. 17 – 22, 134 – 144).

**Turnover.** The turnover rates normally used in industrial and management studies of worker turnover are inappropriate for the type of estimation desired in sex work and trafficking. Turnover in the context of normal business is defined as the quit rate, not as the number of workers who leave due to quitting and all other causes of leaving sex work. Quit rates not only fail to consider other causes of leaving, but are usually insensitive to workers who leave and then return a day, week or other time period later. A turnover rate based on all causes of leaving that is also sensitive to workers who leave and return is needed in order not to double or triple count workers who commonly leave work for a period and then return. While a detailed record of when specific individuals enter and leave the workforce is needed for exact calculations, a reasonable approximation is presented in equation [1].

$$T \approx L / [\{O + (O + H - L)\}/2] = 2L / [2(O) + H - L] \quad [1]$$

T is the all-causes-of-leaving turnover rate over a specified time period, L is the number of workers who leave for any reason during that time period, H is the number of workers who are hired or put to work during that time period, and O is the original number of workers at the start of the time period. O + H - L is the number of workers at the end of the time period.

The denominator in square brackets following the ‘approximately equals’ sign in [1] represents an estimated mean number of workers over the course of the specified time period. Workers in H who both enter and leave the workforce during the time period are counted as hires.



Workers who leave are counted as leaves only if they do not return for some specified period, often 60 days, but depending upon the specified time period for the rate being calculated. Turnover defined in this way is not a quit rate. Rather, it is a proportion representing the average number of workers who leave the specified workforce over the specified time period. For this purpose, an approximation is used by defining the size of the specified workforce as the average number of workers over the specified time period using only beginning and ending point in time estimates to compute this average. This considerably simplifies the data required for the calculation, and the denominator  $[\{O + (O + H - L)\}/2]$  remains the same for equations [2], [4], and [5]. It is presented in simplified form in those equations, as it is following the equals sign in equation [1]. The effect of the simplified calculation based on this denominator becomes measurably large only when large variations in the size of the workforce occur during the specified time period. This is also true for the measures presented below in equations [2], [4], and [5], as indicated by the use of the ‘approximately equals’ sign in those equations. Several additional measures provide useful information related to estimates of numbers over a period of time.

**Employment Activity Rate.** The EAR form of turnover considers both workers who leave the workforce and those who enter it. It is useful as a measure of the stability or disturbance in the number of sex workers and trafficked persons over time in the workforce in question. It is similar to turnover but also considers the number of workers who are hired or activated during the time period as a numerator function, not just in computing the average workforce size.

$$EAR \approx 2(H + L) / [2(O) + H - L] \quad [2]$$

EAR, the Employment Activity Rate, is a proportion representing the average number of workers who are involved in either or both entering or leaving the workforce during the specified time period, a measure of the extent of change or stability in the specified workforce over time. The denominator remains the same as in equation [1] representing the mean number of workers over the course of the specified time period.

Three additional rates are relevant to the study of human trafficking: The workforce half-life, the reenter percentage, and the novice worker percentage. As with turnover and EAR, they require detailed knowledge of the actual entering and leaving patterns of any venue, set of venues, or area of trafficking or sex work under study.

**Workforce Half-Life.** Calculating the Workforce Half-Life requires an individually identified list of persons who are working at time  $T_0$ . This list must be updated regularly by noting individuals who no longer appear for work for a specified time that is shorter than the specified interval over which the half life is calculated.  $T_1$  is the date on which no more than 50% of the workers identified as working at  $T_0$  are still working at that venue or in the set of venues or area that is under study.

$$WHL = T_1 - T_0 \quad [3]$$

WHL represents the time in days or other time units between  $T_0$  and the date ( $T_1$ ) that 50% or less of the workers identified as working at  $T_0$  are still working at whatever unit is under study. An example of the use of such concepts might be an area or venue with a high EAR and a long workforce half life. Such a venue or area would have a stable core of workers who remain on the job over time, while many other workers join and stay for a short time and then are

constantly replaced by other workers. Comparisons between the values of the various measures presented here allow empirical judgments concerning many different workforce situations.

**Reenter Percentage.** The Reenter Percentage is the number of experienced (previously working) workers or trafficked individuals (R) who did not appear on the worker list at the beginning of the specified period and within some specified grace period after that beginning date (perhaps a week or two to account for workers who go to a distant home, stay no more than a week or so, and then return to work) who reenter the workforce over the specified time period, multiplied by 100 and divided by the average number of workers in that venue or area during the specified time period.

$$\text{REP} \approx 200 R / [2(O) + H - L] \quad [4]$$

REP is the percentage of the average number of workers who rejoined the workforce in question after an absence equal at least to the size of the grace period. Workers who reenter after an absence briefer than the grace period are not counted as having left.

**Novice Worker Percentage.** A *new worker* is someone who has not worked as a sex worker before in the venue or area under study. A *novice worker* has never worked as a sex worker before. NWP is the number of workers joining the venue or area under study during the specified period under study who have never worked in the sex industry before (NW), divided by the average number of workers in the venue or area during the specified period, expressed as a percentage.

$$\text{NWP} \approx 200 \text{ NW} / [2(O) + H - L] \quad [5]$$

These five concepts from [1] to [5] allow calculation of yearly trafficking numbers or estimates over any specified time period through empirical observations.



This floating market on the Tonle Sap River in Kampong Chhnang offered no sex work, but it is occasionally found in more dense collections of shops.

### Yearly Ever-Worked and Ever-Trafficked Estimates

A yearly ever worked estimate provides the number of sex workers, or the number of trafficked persons, in the area in question over the period of a year. The method is simple in

concept but difficult to compute due to the need for detailed data collection. It is stated here in terms of numbers of sex workers, but can be changed to a trafficking estimate by using trafficking data rather than sex work data, as is also the case with equations [1] to [5]. The number of sex workers who ever worked (NEvW) in a given time period is approximately equal to (a) the number working at the beginning of the period, plus (b) the number of novice workers entering during that time period, plus (c) the number of re-entering workers who were not working at the start of the time period but began work at some time during the period. No subtraction terms are included since the estimate is for the number who have ever worked, regardless of whether any quit, or form a pattern of quitting and returning over the specified time period. Similarly the number of ever trafficked persons (NEvT) in a given time period is approximated by (a) the number working who ever were trafficked at the beginning of the period, plus (b) the number of never before trafficked workers entering during that time period, plus (c) the number of re-entering previously trafficked workers who were not working at the start of the time period but began work at some time during the period. Empirical estimates of the NWP [5] can be used in place of (b), just as empirical estimates of the REP [4] can be used in place of (c).

$$\text{NEvW [or, NEvT]} \approx (a) + (b) + (c) \quad [6]$$

Different time periods can be specified, from two days through any number of months or years. Though reasonably accurate, the principal problem with this method of estimation is obtaining the data to compute it. The number of sex workers who worked during data collection for the 2008 data is 27,925 (total number for Cambodia in Table 1). The numbers for (b) and (c) can be obtained but require considerably more detailed work than a single point-in-time study. But estimates for (b) and (c) can be obtained though NWP [5] and REP [4], providing a simpler and only slightly less accurate estimate in many cases. NWP [5] and REP [4] can each be studied over a time period shorter than the desired period, perhaps over three months rather than a year if a year is the desired period, and the percentage obtained can be assumed to be consistent and projected over the year's time. Assumptions of the equivalence of such projections from a proportion observed over three months to that applying to a year ideally should be checked through one or more studies.

**Sex Workers.** As an illustration only, since empirical values for NWP and REP are not available for Cambodia, if NWP is assumed to = 20% and REP is assumed to = 13% for sex work, then applying equation [6] would give

$$\text{NEvW} \approx (a) + [(a) * \text{NWP}] + [(a) * \text{REP}] = [27,925 * 1.33] = 37,140 \quad [7]$$

NWP and REP are not independent as defined, since a novice worker could quit and then reenter the workforce. So the addition of 20% to 13% for a 33% total will produce a slight overestimate to the extent that novice workers enter the workforce, then quit, and then reenter, all within the specified time period. This additional 33% is added to the base figure of 27,925 producing a yearly estimate of 37,140 persons who worked as a sex worker at any time during a year. This estimate would be reasonable if the average population of Cambodian sex workers were replaced about every three years. But in addition to the slight overestimate resulting from a novice worker who quits and reenters the workforce, [6] does not incorporate a correction for the effect of previous workers who leave and re-enter sex work more than once over the three year period, which would also reduce the actual number of workers. Additionally, the calculations assume that the 33% estimated to leave each year are independent across those years. That is, the re-entering workers are all assumed not to have been working when the initial point-in-time estimate was observed, and those workers present for the point in time estimate are assumed not to have re-entered the workforce if they left it. Since this assumption of independence is unlikely

to be accurate, for each of the non-independence reasons cited, the calculations represent a slight over estimate of the total number of sex workers. This is also true for the total number trafficked



Viewing room of brothel in Southwest Cambodia at night

in the example given below, to the extent that this independence assumption has been violated. Given that caveat, these figures should provide a reasonable approximation of the yearly number of ever working sex workers until daily or weekly enumerations become available, if ever. A longer lifetime months-worked average for sex workers would imply lower rates for NWP and REP.

If Cambodian sex workers are similar in work-life behavior to indirect Thai sex workers in Bangkok and Pattaya in foreign oriented bars – an unrealistic assumption since indirect workers in foreign oriented bars are only a small proportion of the total number of Cambodian sex workers – then a higher REP and NWP would be needed. Steinfatt (2002, p. 130, Table 8.1) found a mean total lifetime number of months worked among currently active Thai sex workers in Patpong and Pattaya (N = 685) to be 18.1 months. Assuming a relatively constant number of sex workers from year to year as seems reasonable from the Table 8 data, ~66% is required as the sum of NWP and REP to create an average working lifetime per sex worker of about 18 months.

**Trafficked Persons.** The average working lifetime for a person trafficked into sex work would assumably be longer than that for non-trafficked workers since such persons cannot quit of their own accord, and the managers involved would keep them as long as they could in order to increase profits in addition. If the average population of Cambodian sex workers undergoes replacement about every three years, as assumed for the illustration above, then a four or five year replacement period for trafficked workers would be reasonable. The number ever trafficked at the start of the time period (a) is 689 in the 2008 data (the Cambodia total for column E in Table 3). Assuming a four year replacement period and recalling that empirical values for NWP and REP for trafficking are not currently available for Cambodia, if NWP were to equal 15% and REP were to equal 10% for trafficking, producing an approximate four year replacement period assuming no violations of the assumptions of independence for NWP and REP as discussed above, then equation [6] becomes

$$\text{NEvT} \approx (a) + [(a) * \text{NWP}] + [(a) * \text{REP}] = 689 * 1.25 = 861 \quad [8]$$

This may be interpreted as an estimated total of 861 persons sexually trafficked in Cambodia over the course of a year, an overestimate to the extent that the independence assumptions discussed above are violated, and as only an illustration for trafficking, since actual weekly enumerated estimates or counts for NWP and REP for trafficking are not available for Cambodia. It also assumes a relatively constant number of trafficked persons from year to year as seems reasonable, but without detailed year to year studies to confirm it. The validity of such assumptions should be determined through empirical studies. We urge that the concepts represented by equations [1] to [5] or similar be employed in all extensions of point in time data across time periods, as in yearly trafficked estimates. The methods of these calculations are detailed in Steinfatt (2002, pp. 142-143) under *Yearly Ever-Worked Estimates*.

### Replicability of Methods

Table 8 illustrates the predictive validity of the methods used in the present study to locate and to measure the extent of sexual trafficking in Cambodia. The sources providing this information were located by employing the methodological theory that drives our research. It serves to direct specific methods at specific target problems. The use of moto drivers and other residents concerning sex venue location is derived from that methodological theory, and employed because, and only because, it is the best method for that purpose from that methodological stance. Obtaining sex work and trafficking estimate by questioning management and workers using informants who are demographically similar to the venue's customer base is also the best method according to the methodological theory. Our meaning for "best" is elaborated below in the form of the five questions asked as a result of the methodological theory. The methods used in studying sex trafficking in Cambodia in the 2002, 2003, and 2008 studies were produced by answering these questions. It is the methodological theory, not the specific application of it in the instance of sex trafficking, which we believe will generalize. The questions operationalize the theory and expose our thinking on extending the current method to additional areas of human trafficking.

Methods of obtaining private information from criminal enterprises, foreign governments, and opposing military forces have a distinguished history. That history teaches that on-the-ground intelligence is the ideal method, an infiltration of a human agent who understands the language, can pass for a person typically involved in the enterprise, and who can and does obtain and transfer the information to the sponsoring agency in a readable form without detection. An alternative method is obtaining records or correspondence from within the financial and communication system of the target. This seems unlikely in human trafficking since there is little evidence that such records are kept or would provide answers to the desired questions if they were to be obtained or intercepted. They should be kept in mind if the circumstances arise. Capturing persons with the desired information and obtaining it from them has a long and sordid history. It is impractical and likely unethical under several standards in human trafficking. Another alternative is the spy-in-the-sky system currently employed by the US CIA, largely through the resources of NSA, when on-the-ground intelligence is unavailable. The role of the Jordanian Intelligence Chief in *Body of Lies* (2008) illustrates the on-the-ground position, as opposed to the Russell Crowe spy-in-the-sky CIA role, with predictable results. The specific best methods in on-the-ground intelligence situations bear a similarity to each other, but many elements differ depending on the details of the situation.



Answers to the five questions below provide information on the ideal on-the-ground intelligence method in areas other than sex trafficking. The response to Question #1 provides the path and information required to direct the answers to the remaining questions.

**Question #1: What type of trafficking is to be studied?**

In extending the intelligence method employed in the study of sex trafficking in Cambodia, assume the goal is to measure the numbers of venues and trafficked persons of a specific type, such as labor trafficking.

**Question #2: Which sources are in a position to know?**

Determining which sources are in a position to know the answers to the questions in the specific research instance requires a reasonable familiarity with the area of trafficking identified in Question #1. The *Theory and Rationale* presumes that trafficking is based on the motivation of traffickers to obtain money. The owners and upper level managers of any business are in the best position to know this financial information and the strategies. If the information required is technical, as it may be if the trafficking involves computer and internet related aspects, certain technical personnel may be in the best position to know. Identification of the people who know the desired information is fundamental. In sex trafficking it is the owners and managers of the venue in question. Unless the source is in a position to know the answers, at least in part, it is not simply a waste of time, money, and effort to seek out persons who are not in a position to know. The information obtained from such sources is likely to be misleading, but will be treated as accurate. The research effort may be adversely affected by this, and that will not be known and understood since the data are accepted as meaningful.

Three possibilities for a good source in labor trafficking are labor suppliers, labor employers, and trafficked laborers themselves. Prior research may also exist that can be used to determine the most appropriate source of information. That choice is partly dependent on the answer to the question asked in #1. Who or what number are we trying to locate or obtain? Assume that the goal is the numbers of labor trafficking venues and the numbers trafficked at each. Any of these three, suppliers, employers, and trafficked laborers themselves are possible sources, but with varying degrees of knowledge and ease of access.

**Question #3: Is it easier and more likely to obtain good data from the Labor supplier, the Labor Employer, or Laborers?**

Laborers present the same problem as in sex work. Their domain of observation is limited to those they see and to stories told by others. The data they provide are often rich, create understanding, and help to explain the behaviors of the parties – supplier, employer, and laborer – in different contexts. Strong empathy for the position of trafficked individuals does not necessarily equate to considering their estimates of the number of those trafficked as best evidence. They are not the best source regarding the numbers of labor trafficking venues and the numbers trafficked at each, unless the questions concern persons in their immediate and current surroundings. But they can produce excellent secondary information and partial confirmation to the extent they can be located and interviewed. That is the second problem with laborers as sources, as they can be difficult to contact due in part to employer watchfulness. A direct visual count might be considered in some cases if that is easier and safer for both workers and researchers than attempting communicative contact with the workers. But such a count does not produce a trafficking estimate without additional information.

The supplier and the employer are the remaining sources with direct knowledge of the information desired, knowledge that is usually more accurate than that of laborers. Who will be easier to locate and who will be most susceptible to questions that provide the needed information? Labor employers are easier to locate than labor suppliers, as is the case in the sex industry. But labor employers will be quite circumspect, and questions to them that would provide the needed information are not as easy to construct as in the sex industry. A business scenario that would lead to questions revealing trafficking numbers is difficult to create. Perhaps questions from a person wanting to enter the industry as an employer, but what would motivate existing employers to respond to that individual's questions?

This line of thought suggests that labor suppliers may be the easiest knowledgeable source. But if labor employers will be circumspect, that should be doubly true for labor suppliers involved in trafficking. Yet this may not be true. Just as brothel owners with trafficked women and children would be expected to avoid providing information about trafficking, legitimate business questions can be formed that will produce that information. Labor suppliers may also provide relevant trafficking information in the same way and for the same reasons as brothel owners: they are motivated by profit. Labor employers are also profit motivated, but there seems to be no obvious economic advantage to them to provide trafficking information. The key is discovering and then asking common business questions that use this economic motivation. The problem remains of how to find these labor suppliers, how to phrase the questions, in what form of conversation, and from what type of interviewer.



Port in Southwest Cambodia with early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century reputation for smuggling and contraband

In sex trafficking, Question #3 asked how new customers found brothels. In Cambodia the answer was heavily weighted toward moto drivers, producing the moto driver location method. In labor trafficking, how do labor employers find labor suppliers? Perhaps they call friends in the business or even competitors to locate suppliers. Perhaps there are newspaper advertising sections for seafaring labor or whatever type is of interest, or industry newsletters that carry ads, or stories

of a new labor supplier start up in some form of media. Interviewing writers of such stories might provide a starting point. And there are likely to be labor supply sites on the internet. Any means to find how the type of labor of interest is located or recruited can be useful. Applying our method to labor trafficking involves answering this location method question and then using the same method that customers of sex, or of labor, use to find what they are looking for. That is the method. It involves moto drivers, etc., only when they provide the best location method as defined.

**Question #4: What is the optimal method to obtain valid data from the entity selected?**

What is the easiest, simplest, and most direct method of getting good data from those identified and located in Question #3, those who are in a position to know the answers relevant to the information required? Good data means reliable responses providing valid numbers. Our method in sex venues was to have demographically similar informants enter these venues, asking the typical customer questions of management, and workers when possible, that would provide access to the required information from labor suppliers.

The key to this part of the method lies in ‘how’ to ask the questions. They should be phrased and spoken in a way that employs typical normal conversation in the business setting. They should use the level of the language typically used in that business setting. They should produce responses that provide information requested by legitimate customers, and these responses must at the same time disclose the desired information on trafficking. In our method in sex venues, typically in brothels when trafficking might be involved, some customers want to take the woman to a hotel. Asking if any women cannot leave, narrows the customer’s selection process and is a legitimate customer question, commonly heard and responded to in that setting. It also provides the desired information. Or, asking if any “small ladies” are available indicates the customer’s desire to see or to hear about the possibility of younger workers. Quite often though not always, these children will be unlikely to appear in the viewing room without such a question, and information about them may be more likely to be given than would their sudden appearance. If the response to the “small ladies question was “yes” rather than a number, some informants asked the ‘how many’ question in the context of a future “party” at a hotel with multiple men in attendance. The demographic similarity component is intended to communicate the question to the respondent as the respondent is accustomed to hearing it. This method works in the brothel setting. The questions are “legitimate” in that business context and produce the desired information.

In seafaring or other labor, the *typical normal conversation in the business setting* element might be a question or statement concerning costs. For example, ‘But when you figure in the labor cost you’re hardly making anything that’s worthwhile. How can you even consider making money by ... .’ The question is legitimate and invites information on cost saving labor measures. Researchers need to learn what is acceptable to ask and what produces the desired information. This likely requires observation and discussion in these commercial transactions. An alternative, if access to commercial transactions becomes difficult, would be talking with people in the industry in question who run a legitimate labor employment operation. These conversations should likely not concern “trafficking,” but perhaps how it is that some operators seem able to make a higher profit while underbidding other suppliers on occasion.

**Question #5: Can the same methods used by the entity selected [e.g., employers seeking employees] be used to locate the trafficked individuals?**

This question will differ in its exact form based on answers to previous questions. Answers to those questions alone may lead to points of recruitment, methods of transport, and/or destinations.

If not, the leads developed through determination of how the labor employers locate labor suppliers need to be followed to the labor suppliers, or from suppliers to employers, in order to locate trafficked individuals.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Several conclusions may be drawn from the present research. While lower trafficking numbers are encouraging, the very existence of human trafficking at any level for any purpose is unacceptable. No one should be exposed to such exploitation. And in no case should the existence of hundreds of trafficking victims, as estimated to exist in this study, be assumed to be an ‘acceptable’ number. Trafficking estimates obtained through research should not be conflated with guessed estimates. The number of sex workers in Cambodia has been estimated to a reasonable degree by the decade of research reviewed in Table 8. The number of those workers who have been trafficked is not as definitively researched, but the observed numbers in Table 6 and the estimated numbers in Table 7 provide very reasonable estimates. While instructive, numerical results for Cambodia should not be uncritically assumed to apply to other unstudied populations of other countries without research to support such an assumption.

## **Evaluation Research**

We would urge continued funding of programs to assist persons victimized by trafficking in any form with the caveat that an evaluation research component be attached to each and every such grant. Evaluation research demonstrating the effectiveness of such programs and interventions appears to be rare. Accurate causal attributions concerning the positive or negative effects of such programs and interventions cannot be made without evaluation research included as a necessary part of each funded attempt to intervene. Each program funded should have an evaluation component attached. The evaluators should have no connection with the organization receiving funding and that organization should not be able to influence the person or group selected to conduct the evaluation. Evaluators should be provided with the data from the funded organization that they request and is required to compute the rates needed in order to evaluate the funded program or intervention. While these data would be subject to privacy protections for the persons assisted by the funded group, a method acceptable to the evaluators of attaching a unique and consistent code to each person assisted should be created within ten days of the start of the program or intervention, with data normally collected on the intervention for each coded person, and data on each coded person requested by the evaluators, provided to the evaluators at that time and at least every subsequent 30 days.

Clear penalties should exist in the contract for failure to provide the required data in a timely manner. The data required for evaluations should be easy to obtain by providers in a reliable manner such that data collection should not interfere with the mission of the providers. This data might include at a minimum each assisted individual’s presence or absence, the date of intake and all intake data for each person except personal identifying data, the reason for the assistance provided, the reason for any absence and dates of such, the progress made on any scales or judgments in normal use including the personal judgments of those in the assisting program who normally render them, and the final disposition of the case. Each of these should be given to evaluators attached to the unique consistent code assigned to the individual. Evaluators must provide at least the level of security to all data provided to them that has been guaranteed by the provider and collector of the data. Evaluators should be able to request and receive in a timely manner data beyond these minimum levels if they are relevant to the evaluation of the project. All data requests by evaluators should be assumed to be relevant unless the evaluated group can clearly demonstrate their irrelevance to the satisfaction of the evaluators. Evaluators should provide clear justification to the funding agency for all additional data requested.

### Investigating the Implications of Cell Phone Possession

Workers in many venues, including brothels, had cell phones and used them openly in viewing rooms. A study on the relationship of cell phone possession and trafficking would be useful. Do trafficked workers possess cell phones? If so, what does that say about ability to leave or to contact outside persons? Cell phone possession might be consistent with debt contract trafficking, but less so with trafficking by force. Are the rates of possession and use similar for trafficked and non-trafficked workers? What, if anything, does cell phone possession indicate relative to trafficking?

### Future Research: Trafficking for Domestic Servitude and Labor Trafficking

Trafficking for domestic servitude is a good candidate for future research on trafficking in women and children, as Derks, et al., (2006) mention. The spread of the potential problem, with a few people in large numbers of households across urban and rural Cambodia, presents a challenge to confront. Labor trafficking, aside from sex trafficking, is another strong possibility within several industries, including seafaring labor. Many of these labor areas employ male laborers, while domestic workers are often female.



Shop owner provides food to monks across from a market and nearby brothel. The arousal of desire by a sex worker may create bad karma, but neither sex nor charging for sex are branded as necessarily evil in traditional Buddhism unless the woman is married.



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