

in terms of her lineage and her personal qualities. Harriden also notes that the military regime attempted to use Aung San Suu Kyi's marriage to Michael Aris to discredit her, drawing on nationalist discourses that censured Burmese women who married foreigners.

The final two chapters of the book analyze women's position in Burma post-1988, with chapter eight addressing women's "advancement" (the quotation marks belong to Harriden) under the military regime since then, and chapter nine discussing the various women's organizations formed by Burmese women in exile. While the women's organizations associated with the military regime were able, by their association with the dictatorship, to obtain a sizeable membership, these organizations have accomplished little in the way of substantial betterment of women's lives in Burma, serving rather to defend the regime against international criticism. The expatriate women's organizations dedicated to reform, many of which integrate non-traditional conceptions of gender equality in their platform, seem to be a more promising vehicle for change. Harriden concludes with an assessment of the possibilities for collaboration and connection between these expatriate organizations and groups within Burma.

This work is a significant contribution to the existing scholarship on Burma, and is innovative in its focus on the nuances of gendered power relations. As noted above, this work is strongest when discussing women's access to power in Burma from the Konbaung era onwards, but overall Harriden's research is notably thorough. This study will be of interest to scholars of Southeast Asian history and gender relations, and anyone who seeks a better understanding of contemporary Burmese society.

Ashley Wright

Department of History, Washington State University

The Perfect Business? Anti-trafficking and the Sex Trade along the Mekong

SVERRE MOLLAND

Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012, viii+276 p.

Transnational Crime and Human Rights: Responses to Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion

SUSAN KNEEBONE and JULIE DEBELJAK

Oxon: Routledge, 2012, xiii+276 p.

Recently, as a response to the global crisis of human trafficking, more attention has been paid to human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS). However, the literature of human trafficking mainly focuses on prostitution and irregular migration, and always considers the "max-

imization of profit" as the central logic behind human trafficking. But this is only part of the story.

Explaining the social-cultural discourses of human trafficking in the GMS, Sverre Molland, Susan Kneebone, and Julie Debeljak present alternative perspectives on human trafficking in the GMS. In their opinions, there is a tension between the discourse of policy enforcement and human rights in the region.

Transnational Crime and Human Rights: Responses to Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion evaluates the legal policy frameworks for responding to human trafficking in the GMS. At international, national, and subnational levels, the authors point out two essential contexts in human trafficking, namely, prostitution and labor migration. Meanwhile, they apply Foucault and Habermas' ideas about discourse to evaluate how competing discourses have shaped policies and how policy responses have respectively changed the discourses.

For instance, Kneebone and Debeljak adopt Foucault's concepts of "bio-politics" and "governmentality"¹⁾ to illustrate the trafficking discourses at both a global and regional level not only explaining "the increased interests in 'securitization' by those who are in power," but also analyzing "why some discourses that may unsettle the status quo are excluded" (Kneebone and Debeljak, p. 24).

In *The Perfect Business? Anti-Trafficking and the Sex Trade along the Mekong*, Sverre Molland comments on the three discourses of traffickers, victims, and anti-traffickers in human trafficking along the Thai-Lao border, with a specific focus on the border towns of Vientiane and Nong Kai. At the same time, Molland interprets human trafficking along the Thai-Lao border from three theoretical approaches. First, he utilizes the "discourse"²⁾ to explain that institutional practices do not only shape the external world, but also respond to it. Second, he adopts practice theory to explain "how individuals and groups employ a range of strategies and maneuvers to archive certain ends," and "internalize these very same ends" (Molland, p. 14). And third, he introduces Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis of "bad faith"³⁾ to explain "deliberate ignorance" in human trafficking.

Molland carefully analyzes the price and income hierarchies within the sex industries in Vientiane and Nong Kai, which are different from the idealized depiction of human trafficking. He

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- 1) In the opinion of Kneebone and Debeljak, bio-politics and governmentality produce "knowledge and discourses that become norms for the behaviour and control of populations." For example, "the discourse of human (in) security is inextricably linked within a broader framework of the bio-politics of the population" (Kneebone and Debeljak, p. 24). In brief, Kneebone and Debeljak use Foucault's ideas to "illuminate the narratives which have led to trafficking discourses at the global level and then at the regional level" (p. 26).
 - 2) In the view of Molland, "the human trafficking discourse is not a coherent body of theorized scholarship but a meta-language which consists of a range of loosely connected assumptions which allows for contradictions and discursive slips to co-exist" (Molland 2010, 837).
 - 3) As Molland argues, "bad faith" means "deliberate ignorance" (Molland, p. 19). For example, "anti-traffickers actively attempt to camouflage to themselves what is by necessity a subjective and ambiguous decision they need to make, by giving it an aura of objectivity and due process" (p. 225).

concludes that human trafficking is not parasitic on migration flows from poorer to richer areas. In many cases advanced by Molland, “price for commercial sex in Laos is higher than that in Nong Kai” (Molland, p. 127). Furthermore, Lao sex workers cross border to work in Nong Kai, who break the logic of “maximization of utility.” Molland highlights the fact that the analytical models assumed by anti-traffickers do not explain the movement of Lao sex workers mentioned above.

In both books, the authors pose serious challenges both analytically and methodologically to the literature on human trafficking in the following three areas.

First of all, the two books criticize the effectiveness of the definition context of human trafficking in the GMS.

In *The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (“the Trafficking Protocol”),⁴ one of the most essential international texts to any study on human trafficking, the definition context of human trafficking contains “a range of contradictions and ambiguities” (Molland, p. 8). For example, the overall objective of *the Trafficking Protocol* is to “protect states (through controlling migration), not individuals (protecting migrant laborers’ working rights) (p. 43). Moreover, *the Trafficking Protocol* implies that “there is a clear distinction between smuggled and trafficked persons” (Kneebone and Debeljak p. 127). From Molland’s point of view, “any recruitment, whether deceptive or not, into prostitution is deemed to be trafficking” (Molland, p. 70). The definition of human trafficking should not be simply accounted for trafficking by referring to ideal models of profitability.

Meanwhile, Molland contends that the literature on human trafficking, which regards human trafficking as a most profitable illegal crime, ignores the fact of low-profit margins along the Thai-Lao border. Molland utilizes the approach of “socialization process” within the venues (such as bar) to explain the reason why sex workers “would consider exploitative prior to recruitment but not after socialization” (Molland, p. 99). In contrast, Kneebone and Debeljak show that the discourse of human trafficking is dominated by traditional security discourse, which regards human trafficking as a transnational organized crime. As a result, “anti-trafficking programmes have focused on alleviating the lack of human security at source” (Kneebone and Debeljak, pp. 64–65).

Secondly, the authors draw lessons from the anti-trafficking sector in the GMS. For a long time, little consideration has been given to the social relationships between a trafficker and a trafficked victim. According to the fieldwork conducted by Molland, recruitment in human trafficking is primarily driven by informal networks of extend acquaintances. Molland suggests that “the greater the emphasis on the horrific situation to which trafficked victims are subjected, the less possible it becomes to imagine any forms of social relationships between a trafficker and a trafficked victim” (Molland, p. 202).

4) See United Nations (2000).

Kneebone and Debeljak show that the anti-trafficking policies in the GMS are shifting from “a female-gendered focus to include trafficking of men and boys,” meaning that the discourse is “shifting from prostitution to labour exploitation” (Kneebone and Debeljak, p. 160). However, at the national level, the discourse of anti-trafficking is not reflected in bilateral arrangements in the GMS. For instance, most arrangements responding to human trafficking are not linked with anti-trafficking policies.

In the opinion of Molland, human trafficking employs “both deceptive and non-deceptive recruitment practices” (Molland, p. 141). Concerning the social relationships between a trafficker and an anti-trafficker, Molland explains that traffickers and anti-traffickers have something in common: for example, they are “both actors of bad faith” (p. 234). Because “deliberate ignorance is instrumental for the reproduction of recruitment within the sex industry, anti-traffickers are dispositioned to act in bad faith, as willed avoidance of complexity is intrinsic to the perpetuation of program activities” (p. 235). For the sex workers, “client” and “health worker” have something common in the Thai-Lao context, since “they are both potential sources of material support” (p. 23).

Thirdly, the two books explore the implications for security governance in the near future. Based on the case studies at the Thai-Lao border, Molland describes the heterogeneity in human trafficking as three concentric circles, which provide a clear framework for security governance at three levels: dyadic power relationships between victims and perpetrators as the core circle, organized crime as the middle circle, and the cross-border markets as the outer circle. Furthermore, Molland considers that deceptive and voluntary recruitment are co-present along the Thai-Lao border areas. Recruiting acquaintances and friends into sex work does not necessarily entail negative moral sanctioning. Because the common practice among sex workers’ recruitment of others is based on patronage, it is a way of fulfilling reciprocal obligations through patron-client relationships.

Based on the assessments on the social context of sex workers along the Thai-Lao border, Molland concludes by remarking on cultural and social similarities in Thailand and Lao. First, “patron-client relationships remain central” to both countries (Molland, p. 85). For instance, the sex industries in the Vientiane and Nong Kai is “through informal networks of patronage” (p. 140). Second, pre-marital sex places many young women in highly marginalized positions. Third, there is no effective moral sanctioning of prostitution, though stigma regarding sex workers certainly exists. Without necessary governing mentalities⁵ on the ground, the trafficking discourse would “allow itself to circulate within its own sphere” (p. 234).

Kneebone and Debeljak compare “Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons Projects” (ATRIP

5) Kneebone and Debeljak interpret “governmentality” of Foucault into “governing mentality,” which emphasizes mentality of the main actors in the governing mechanism.

Project)⁶⁾ with “Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking” (COMMIT),⁷⁾ and explain why the two mechanisms develop different anti-trafficking measures through “communicative action,”⁸⁾ a core concept developed by Habermas. For instance, NGOs are essential actors of “communicative action,” especially in the discourse of the trafficking of children. NGOs should work toward the reintegration and repatriation of victims into village communities. Though the “discursive formation” of human trafficking discourse mainly focuses on traditional security discourse, there are still a few exceptions. For example, COMMIT recognizes the importance of a “victim-centered” approach, and involves responses at multi-lateral levels. In contrast, the ATRIP Project mainly focused on law enforcement in human trafficking.

The two books do find answers to the challenges of human trafficking, and deal with human trafficking in a more “victim-centered discourse.” However, the two books should have discussed the phenomenon of child soldiers, one of the most highly prevalent forms of human trafficking in the GMS and a marginalized discourse in the field of anti-trafficking policies. On one hand, without consensus among stakeholders, it is impossible to put into place effective mechanisms against child soldiering in the GMS. On the other hand, the stakeholders in anti-trafficking sectors possess different understanding of what child soldiers are.

Though Kneebone and Debeljak discuss the discourse of trafficked children in *Transnational Crime and Human Rights* the length of discussion is comparatively limited, and does not include discussions of child soldiers. As the authors conclude, there is “little independent empirical work on the structured factors leading to trafficking in children” (Kneebone and Debeljak, p. 251). In the GMS, there is not only a lack of “consensus on the definition of trafficking in children,” but also a lack of “understanding about exploitation of children in the region” (p. 251), which causes “the lack of incorporation of principles of child protection into the major policy instruments” (p. 255).

Most child soldiers not only face stigma and resentment, but also suffer mental scars. Therefore, the cells composed of child soldiers will likely transform into terrorist cells or criminal cells, which can act in a more extreme and radical fashion than other ones. There was a historic precedent in the GMS. Along the Myanmar-Thailand border, there is a faction of the Karen National Union called “God’s Army,” which was mainly composed of child soldiers. “God’s Army” operated independently and was led by Johnny and Luther Htoo, who were both child soldiers. This faction launched many terrorist attacks on citizens and policemen in Thailand, pushing Thailand’s border security into a desperate situation.⁹⁾ As a critical security threat, child soldiering in the GMS should

6) See Australian Agency for International Development (2009).

7) The Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative against Human Trafficking (2011).

8) “Communicative action” means “action oriented to arguing and mutual understanding” (Kneebone and Debeljak, p. 25).

9) For example, in January 2000, 10 members of God’s Army hijacked a bus near the Burmese-Thai border and forced the driver to take them to Ratchaburi, they seized a hospital in Ratchaburi, Thailand. They held 700 to 800 patients and staff members hostage for 22 hours.

be given more attention in the literature of human trafficking in the GMS.

Overall, *The Perfect Business* and *Transnational Crime and Human Rights* represent a breakthrough in the literature of human trafficking in the GMS. They are essential works which not only benefits specialists in the Greater Mekong Subregion, human trafficking and human rights studies, but can be very useful to future students as well.

Kai Chen 陈锴

College of Public Administration, Zhejiang University

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Questioning Modernity in Indonesia and Malaysia

WENDY MEE and JOEL S. KAHN, eds.

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In Asia, there is a lot of emphasis on the progress. In this light, the term “modernity” is one that is very much bantered about by national leaders and the society in general, but perhaps little understood. The book *Questioning Modernity in Indonesia and Malaysia* engages readers less in a theoretical discussion of the concept of modernity as in its application to two significant countries in the region. The contributors problematize a simplistic East versus West discussion in the study of modernity, contending that the form found in Indonesia and Malaysia “cannot be viewed as merely derivative of a European/Western modernity” (p. 1). The work of Joel S. Kahn, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at La Trobe University, which argues for what historian John S. Smail called an “autonomous” understanding of modernity in Southeast Asia, is drawn upon in the book. Kahn’s work calls for an ethnographic understanding of modernity that is rooted in cultural and