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What is the added value of coordination?

An institutional analysis of the United Nations' response to national and regional
coordination of human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion

by

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Abstract

Since the 1990s, complex global problems such as HIV/AIDS, humanitarian crises, environmental degradation, and human trafficking have presented challenges at scales that transcend the nation-state as a focus for development initiatives. These challenges, in concert with the emergence of new public management rationalities and good governance discourses, have altered the mandates and capacities of different development agencies from NGOs to governments and United Nations (UN) agencies. The UN has the potential to become a leader for coordinated responses, which are seen as a prerequisite for resolving these issues. However, the marketisation and fragmentation of the development field has engendered an environment fraught with complexity, instability, and heightened competitiveness over scarce resources. The problematic nature of coordinating the activities of stakeholders in such an environment is not well understood. Effective coordination must marry ideals of cooperation to the different and often competing interests of stakeholders and to field-based development practices structured along marketised and disaggregated lines. In this thesis I explore what is meant by coordination, how it is being institutionalised, and what can be done to make initiatives more effective.

This thesis examines the institutional arrangements devised to coordinate the practices of agencies working to combat human trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion. It analyses the institutional forms themselves and the practices that have emerged from them. Using an ethnographic institutional approach, I focus on the workings of a UN Inter-Agency Project (UNIAP) designed to facilitate a coordinated response to human trafficking. My research draws on over 70 interviews with practitioners and government representatives from six countries, as well as close examination of project documents. To analyse this material and the institutional contexts in which they are embedded, I draw upon strands of new institutionalism and the conceptual tools of Pierre Bourdieu.

I argue that the structure of the development field itself is not conducive to coordination. However, realising the potential that does exist will require that consultative platforms be built more on incentives (accumulation and exchange of resources) than on trust, equal participation, and neutral power relations. The findings suggest moving beyond the processes of market exchange toward a more realistic appraisal of hierarchies, markets, and networks as modes of governance and coordination.

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Table of contents

Chapter 1

Introduction 1

Chapter 2

Reconceptualising the development field: Insights from Pierre Bourdieu..... 45

Chapter 3

Theoretical reflections of new institutionalism in development 84

Chapter 4

Development, governance, and institutional reforms..... 116

Chapter 5

The human trafficking field in the Greater Mekong Subregion..... 168

Chapter 6

Negotiating a field of misunderstanding and uncertainties 205

Chapter 7

Phase II and the COMMIT Process: Reckoning with the realities of the field..... 255

Chapter 8

Contributions, implications, and conclusions: Building platforms for coordination 294

References 323

List of Figures

Figure 1: UNIAP project structure (Phase II)	9
Figure 2: Shan Women's Action Network Cartoon.....	15
Figure 3: UN Inter-agency Project: Three Phases (2000 – 2009)	26
Figure 4: Bourdieu’s notion of doxa	78
Figure 5: Doxa of the wider development field	133
Figure 6: UN project cycle	140
Figure 7: Funding flows of the UNIAP Phase I (including COMMIT).....	141
Figure 8: Map of the Greater Mekong Subregion	178
Figure 9: Map of Greater Mekong Subregion trafficking routes	182
Figure 10: Thailand trafficking routes.....	185
Figure 11: Forms of coordination.....	227
Figure 12: UNIAP hierarchical structure (Phase I)	228
Figure 13: UNIAP Principles of Cooperation (14 Commandments)	231
Figure 14: UNIAP horizontal structure (Phase II)	241

List of Tables

Table 1: UNIAP member agencies.....	8
Table 2: Regional human trafficking projects in the Greater Mekong Subregion.....	12
Table 3: Cambodian stakeholder working group on trafficking (members).....	46
Table 4: Bourdieu's conceptual tools	57
Table 5: Bourdieu's forms of capital.....	65
Table 6: New public management-type reforms within the UN system	159
Table 7: UNIAP donor support	200

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFESIP	Acting for Women in Distressing Situations
AIDéTouS	Association International pour le Développement le Tourisme et la Santé
ARCPPT	Asia Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking
ARTIP	Asia Regional Trafficking in Persons
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CATW	Coalition against Trafficking in Women
CCA	Common country assessment
COMMIT	Coordinated Mekong Ministerial Initiative Against Trafficking
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DAI	Development Alternatives Inc
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DEX	Direct Execution
DFID	(British) Department of International Development
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking
EPTA	Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance
FACE	Fight Against Child Exploitation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GAATW	Global Alliance against Trafficking in Women
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGO	International nongovernmental organisation
IPEC	International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour
IR	International Relations
JPO	Junior professional officer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
NIE	New institutional economics
NPM	New public management

NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
OPS	Office of Project Services
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
QUANGO	Quasi-nongovernmental organisation
PBA	Program-based approach
PFA	Principle facilitating agency
PIU	Project implementation unit
PRA	Participatory rural appraisal
RBM	Results based management
RC	Resident Coordinator
SAP	Structural adjustment program
SCUK	Save the Children United Kingdom
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SOM	Senior officials meeting
SWAp	Sector-wide approach
TIP	Trafficking in persons
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDG	United Nations Development Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic & Social Commission for Asia Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization.
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN.GIFT	UN Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIAP	United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Subregion
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNODC	United Nations Office against Drugs and Crime
UNOHCA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNOPS	United Nations
UNRC	United Nations Resident Coordinator
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WDR	World Development Report
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund