

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Problem background**

For centuries, Thailand has been a country that people around the world know and Thailand has become a popular destination country to travel. Thailand is always a good choice for tourists to visit. Time by time, the number of tourists who visit Thailand is increasing. Many people around the world have come to visit Thailand because, Thailand has many beautiful and amazing places to travel, such as, beaches, waterfalls, and mountains. Tourism is one of important sectors in Thailand. Since, it has the border near other countries like Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, and Cambodia; it is easy for tourists to go around those countries. Because of that, it establishes the issues of human trafficking. Human trafficking is a factor that creates the industry of prostitution, because some of the prostitutes come from the group of human trafficking. The Victims of human trafficking commonly suffer from sexual exploitation. Human traffickers prey on women and children from other countries and send them to the other countries and sell them to the prostitution industry. They force them to be prostitutes and work for them. However, some women become prostitutes by willingness.

Prostitution has existed in Thai culture for centuries, but the current level of prostitution is a new phenomenon that is spawned by the Vietnam War. During the 1960s, the Thai government secured a contract with the United States to provide rest and relaxation services for American troops in Vietnam. The

entertainment sector played a major role in the rapid industrialization of Thailand's economy in the 1970s. Since that period, the Thai government began promoting the expansion of tourism and, since 1982; tourism has been the country's largest earner of foreign exchange<sup>1</sup>.

Prostitution, sex trafficking, and sex slavery are all activities that have existed for most of recorded history and children are subjected to commercial sexual exploitation all over the world, and Thailand is one of the countries where prostitution tourism has existed. Thailand has been unable to prevent the sex industry's explosive growth within its borders. The prostitutes are mostly young women, children, but there are some men and a third gender known as kathoed. While the act of prostitution, or sex trafficking can generally be interpreted as purely wrong and unjust, the idea of voluntary prostitution has been more difficult to understand.

During the last decade, there has been an increase in international sex-tourism, the sex trade is likely any other trades – it is about supply and demand. For the past few decades, a lot of attention has been given to Southeast Asia, where there has been rising numbers of women in prostitution. Thailand is one country that has obtained particular focus as the sex industry has become highly visible.

Bangkok has been famous worldwide as the international center where those who seek cheap, available sex can find the supply. The sex industry is lucrative and it has expanded rapidly in Thailand within the past few decades. For

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<sup>1</sup> Ryan Bishop and Lilian Robinson, Night Market. 1998, p. 98.

the men and women working in the sex trade, prostitution provides a way for people of low education to earn a high salary. For the country as a whole, tourism is the major earner of foreign exchange and is vital to Thailand's economy. In December of 2003, the sex trade was reported to be a \$4.3 billion per- year industry.<sup>2</sup> Approximately 60% of the country's National Income comes from tourism, and sex tourism encompasses a large part of Thailand's tourism industry.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, only within the past decade has the government given much attention to the social costs, such as the spread of HIV and the growth in human trafficking that the sex industry creates.

Even though a majority of clients of prostitutes are Thai men, foreign tourists significantly add to the sex industry in Thailand. Each year, around 10 million tourists arrive in Thailand.<sup>4</sup> In Thai society, boys begin to buy women when they are around 13 years old; 50 percent of 16-year-old boys and 90 percent of university students go to brothels.<sup>5</sup> Human not only mate but also marry.

Prostitution and sex trafficking are based on a balance between the supply of available victims and the demand for victims to provide the sex acts. Victims are recruited from marginalized, poor, and vulnerable populations. These potential victims may be from the same city or country as the exploiters, or they may be trafficked from other countries or continents. They may be women and girls who are poor, uneducated, and naïve, and therefore easy to control, or they may be

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<sup>2</sup>Sex debate: Prostitution is a \$4.3 billion industry in Thailand," Agents/CNN, <http://www.thaivisa.com>

<sup>3</sup> The Bangkok post

<sup>4</sup>U.S. Economic Report for Thailand 2003, online. In 2002, 10,872,976 tourists arrived in Thailand.

<sup>5</sup>Matsui, Yayori, Women in the New Asia. 1996, p. 34.

educated, middle-class girls who have been sexually abused until their bodily integrity and identities are destroyed and they no longer know how to resist abuse and exploitation. Prostitution and trafficking begin with the demand for victims to be used in prostitution. It begins when men go in search of sex that can be purchased. In countries where prostitution is illegal, it begins when pimps place orders with their criminal networks for women and children. In countries where prostitution is legal, it begins when brothels places job ads with government employment agencies. In places where buying sex acts is popular and profitable, pimps cannot recruit enough local women to fill up the brothels, so they have to bring in victims from other places.

The income gained from prostitution comes indirectly mainly from tour companies, bars, hotels, massage parlors, member clubs, golf clubs and mail order brides. It seems as if even though prostitution is illegal, the government's efforts to curb it are weak. It is shown from their unofficial efforts to indirectly promote prostitution through tourism with advertisements of beautiful Thai. Police, military and government officials also are involved in the sex trade which really makes it a dilemma and discrepancy in the society. Thailand is facing with the issues of prostitution in the various numbers and it is still increasing. Whether prostitution can be accepted by some society, but it depends on how people believe in it, and not all people think in the same way. In general, prostitution is prohibited in Thailand, because it will give bad effects to the image of the country. The government has seen the problem caused by prostitution in various ways, such as, broken family, HIV/AIDS etc. Therefore, the government has to

eliminate the prostitution based on the rules or laws of the country to control it. However, it is a few or a lot of effective they have to try hard to solve it.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the background and the identification of the problem, the research question is formulated as follows:

*How does the Thai government respond the prostitution problem?*

## **C. Objective of Research**

The objectives of research are:

1. To fulfill one of the subjects in International Relations studies.
2. To describe and explain the phenomenon of sex industry in Thailand
3. To seek a way out or the solution to overcome the problem.
4. To implement the political concept of international relations directly to explain the case that is relevant to the problem.

## **D. Theoretical Framework**

To analyze the mechanism or device, this thesis will apply the theory of policing. The most of those concepts talk about prostitutes who act as an object and a subject, and how the government responses to the issue.

### **1. Policing**

Policing is the same word with policy that the government creates it to solve or control the entire problem which is emerged in their era. Prostitution is

also one issue that the government has to solve, no matter which ways they should use, such as establishing law, educate people, training police etc. Lynne Featherstone says that the enforcement of the law relating to prostitution is a key element of a local approach to the issue. While legislation applies nationally, precisely *how* it is applied is a matter of local policing policy determined by local priorities and circumstances. These will include local assessments of the risk, harm and vulnerability factors of those involved in prostitution, the community, and the exploiters. Having a specialized, strategic approach to local policing of issues around prostitution was a feature of every area visited and is a key element of the effective policing of prostitution. It is also an important aspect of ensuring the effective delivery of holistic support. As such, it is important that local policing approaches are developed as part of a multi-agency response. Communities will expect the police to enforce the law, but it is important that the way in which this is done takes account of the need for support for those involved in prostitution, and that policing are sensitive to this balance. It is essential that policing is proactive and consistent, and communicates and liaises with specialist projects as far as possible so that disruption between activities can be minimized. It is also important that the police and specialist support services are linked in order to support those involved in prostitution.<sup>6</sup>

The nature of sex work makes those involved in prostitution particularly vulnerable to sexual and violent crime, including from serial perpetrators who may target them. The police's responsibility for public protection means that

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<sup>6</sup> Featherstone, L. 2009. Policing. *A review of effective practice in responding to prostitution*, p30.

stopping attacks on those involved, including catching and convicting those responsible, is a core part of reducing the harm from prostitution. An important factor in responding to crimes against those involved in prostitution is increasing their confidence to report attacks. This may involve working with sex work support projects to communicate the message that these crimes will be taken seriously and investigated. Police training and attitudes in terms of how people involved in prostitution who that report rape and other crimes are treated will be important. Local police can also support „Ugly Mugs“ schemes where they operate, as well as other safety initiatives developed by specialist projects. Neighborhood Policing Teams can enable local community members to report their concerns, and can also provide additional intelligence on specific local issues.<sup>7</sup>

Apply to the case of prostitution in Thailand, the government is also finding good solution to solve this problem. Some of them really focus on this issue because it will give the bad effect to the country's image. However, it is a big problem, so the government cannot do alone, it should be other to help it also. Such as, non government organization, MOU with others, society also is the best influence to solve in this problem. The government is also combining to policy to the direct place, and this way is more effective than, because, it can immediately solve on direct issue.

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<sup>7</sup> Featherstone, L. 2009. Policing: public protection and harm-reduction. *A review of effective practice in responding to prostitution*, p30

## 2. Tourism policy

Tourism policies significantly invite the tourists from around the world. Government is the main actor to control the system of tourism. Without government people cannot do anything because government is more powerful.

James Elliot says that “They provide essential services and basic infrastructure. It is only national government which can negotiate and make agreement with other government on issues such as immigration procedures or flying over and landing on national territory. Governments have power, but how they use will depend upon many factors including political culture, the political and economic power holders and their perception of the tourism industry. There are different types of government, including national, state and local, and they can be either active or passive in tourism management and in the use of their powers. Governments can assist tourism by the provision of service; they can also control the industry and its activities in order to ensure that activities and safety standards are maintained in the public interest. These are all legitimate functions of governments which they are expected to perform for the public good<sup>8</sup>.”

Thai government plays a significant role as the main actor of promoting tourism in Thailand. Thailand has special organ namely Thailand Authority Tourism to help the Thai government to promote the tourism. In addition, Thailand Authority of Tourism has branches located in about 27 countries such as Singapore, Jakarta, Hong Kong, New York, and London, Paris<sup>9</sup>, in order to promote and make Thailand well known to the world. Consequently, tourism it makes the number of tourists more increase and the number of prostitutions is also increasing. Tourism in this era is not about a project to maintain the economy but it is about organization. James Elliot argues that “tourism is more than industry

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<sup>8</sup> James Elliot (1997) *Tourism and politics and public sector management*, London: Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> [Thai.tourismthailand.org/about-tat/tat-oversea-office](http://Thai.tourismthailand.org/about-tat/tat-oversea-office)



and an economic activity; it is a universal dynamic social phenomenon touching most countries of the world and affecting their people”.<sup>10</sup>

Related to the issue, Thailand is the best destination to travel. That is why Thailand has many of tourists who come to travel, and the government is always promoting tourism inside of supporting the tourism, and make tourist come to Thailand in several of number, it is always influence to the country. Because, some of tourists come to Thailand not only for travel but also for sexual activity, and it will make Thailand has bad image. Therefore, the government establishes the tourism policy to get their good reputation, and changes the people’s mind that Thailand indeed has very good places to travel. The government does not promote women, but they promote and give suggestions for tourists to go to good places like what they want exactly. Moreover, the government does not stay quiet and watch this problem happen, but they are also creating the policy, particular to solve this problem.

#### **E. Hypotheses**

Thai government responds the prostitution problem through:

#### **In the era of Chuan leekpai:**

1. Eliminating prostitution: by establishing rules to fight, against and eliminate prostitutes in the way of prevention on how the government offense the

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<sup>10</sup> ibid

prostitutes, educate people to have more knowledge, training police, and giving the punishment to all whether prostitutes, agents, clients, and so on.

2. Building international cooperation by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to protect the human right, and signed with UN protocol to punish people who involve within the prostitution problem.

#### **In the era of Thaksin shinnawatra:**

1. Eliminating prostitution: by against sex trafficking was the National Plan and Policy of Prevention and Resolution of Domestic Cross-Border Trafficking in Children and Women.

2. Signing MOU between the Government of Thailand and the Government of Cambodia on Bilateral Cooperation for Eliminating Trafficking in Children and Women and Assisting Victims of Trafficking, and Thailand also cooperate with the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic on Cooperation to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.

3. Setting up a grant of 500 million baht to have fund help initiatives for trafficking victims

#### **F. Scope of the Research**

Research scope, the writer limits the time, in which the research is conducted. The scope of the discussion starts from 2000 to 2006 of the prostitution tourism in Thailand. This time limitation is used in order to ease the

observation of the problem as well as to avoid the complexity of the further analysis.

### **G. Data collecting methods**

In this writing, the writer uses several ways to collect the data in order to discuss the problem, they are as follows:

- Media research. The data are collected from media such the internet, newspaper in order to find references and sources to accomplish the explanation of the problem.
- Library research. This method is used to study the relevant sources in order to discuss the problem and to get obtain secondary data.
- Data analysis. The data gained from the internet and library (books), are checked for the relevancy in order to be used as the sources in the final paper arrangement.
- Testing the hypotheses. Derived from the meaning of the title, the discussion of the problem, and data analysis.

### **H. System of writing**

CHAPTER I explains the Problem Background, Research Question, Research objectives, Theoretical Framework, Hypotheses, Method of Research, and System of Writing.

CHAPTER II discusses the dynamics of tourism in Thailand, including its geographical condition.

CHAPTER III discusses the dynamics of prostitution and sex workers in Thailand.

CHAPTER IV answers the research question and how the government responds the prostitution problem.

CHAPTER V gives the conclusion of all chapters and also gives suggestions.