

# CHAPTER I

## Introduction

### A. Background

Nowadays, added by the help of the development of technology, transformation, and transportation, the world has become more borderless and connected. It is now a commonality that people can easily travel and communicate with people from one region to another. Like the other development phenomenon, this occurrence will only lead to two things. Positive and negative impacts. The developments can help make things easier. For instance, in the study of international relations, the borderless world has increased the idea of transnational relations (Ghasemi, 2010). People from different nations can interact easily with people from different nations. However, it also comes with negative impacts, such as the increase in so-called transnational crimes.

Rooting from what is commonly known as the internationalization of crimes by criminologists, transnational crimes are the result of globalization, and the increase of cross-border relations refers to the type of crime that is planned, organized, and operated between two or more countries (Bossard, 1990). Although defining transnational crimes is still considered a challenge, some experts have given the keynotes to examine if a crime can be labeled as a transnational crime. For instance, a crime that is done between two or more countries, a crime that is undertaken by a group or group of people based in one state and committed in several other states, or a kind of cross-border crime that violated at least one law of the states of where it is conducted (Reichel & Albanese, 2013).

In addition to those keynotes mentioned above, the United Nations, via the Fourth United Nations Survey of Crimes Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, has also classified the categories of transnational crimes. Based on the survey, it is revealed that there are at least eighteen categories of transnational crimes, namely, money laundering, the activity

of terrorism, theft of cultural and artistic assets, theft of intellectual property, trafficking crimes (narcotics, human, firearms), aircraft hijacking, sea piracy, land hijacking, insurance fraud, computer crime, environmental crime, trade in human body parts, fraudulent bankruptcy, infiltration of legal business, corruption, and other offenses committed by organized criminal groups (UN, 1995).

Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing crimes among all categories of transnational crimes mentioned in the previous paragraph. It is because this crime is such a profitable business. The demands and supply of people for the labor and sex industry are a never-ending circle around the globe. As estimated by The International Labour Organization (ILO) human trafficking ‘business’ can produce US\$150.2 billion in profits yearly. According to the statistics, the Asia-Pacific region is the largest contributor to profit from human trafficking business results, with the largest profit derived from the prostitution industry (May, 2017). Furthermore, in a narrower regionalization, Southeast Asia is a region where many of its member countries are ensnared in human trafficking. For example, Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam, Malaysia, Cambodia, and Indonesia.

According to Chenda Keo in his writing, among those countries in the Southeast Asian region, Thailand has the longest journey of dealing with the issue of human trafficking. The country is believed to be the country of origin, transit, and destination country in the case of humans, especially women and girls, trafficking for the prostitution industry (Keo, 2013). It is not a coincidence that this country has become one of the biggest producers of the prostitution trafficking industry worldwide. Some essential life aspects have supported this occurrence. The first is the socio-cultural environment of the society. Like many countries in the region, in Thailand, the gender role of women has never been constructed equally to men.

Women in this country have never been fully able to get access to higher education, well-paying jobs, capital, and property. Consequently, this problem leads to the second aspect,

which is the socioeconomic status of women in this country. Since they are not able to acquire a decent education or prospective career, women in Thailand become economically irrelevant. Furthermore, when women become financially unnecessary or financially burdened to the family, they tend to enter the prostitution market industry. It is proven that as many as 35% of daughters in economically desperate families in Thailand may be sold into the prostitution market (Sanders, 2012).

Coming from the previous supportive aspects explained above, the problem of human trafficking in the sex market in this country is also supported by the country's history of the prostitution industry. From 1350 until 1776, the Ayuthya period was believed to be when the prostitution industry in local was first recognized. During this period, the feudal system forced Thai women into slave wives. During this period, the prostitution industry was legal and taxed by the white elephant government (Reyes, 2015). Although in the early 1900s, there the abolishment of slavery under the governance of King Rama V. However, many former slaves remained and voluntarily became prostitutes due to several reasons, such as lack of education and the pressure of family conditions.

This condition then got worsened during the Second Indochina War or Vietnam War (1955-1975). During this war, the Thai government allowed U.S. military servicemen to use Thailand as its rest and recreation destination (Kislenko, 2002). The idea then was used by some irresponsible yet immoral persons to use it as an opportunity to bring the industry back on track. Even more, some Thai women use the situation as a chance to meet the needs of life by serving those servicemen resting in Thailand. This led to the growth of the prostitution industry, where then Thailand is famously known as one of the world's sex tourism destinations. Although, in its development, the Thai government has been making efforts to vanish the image of a 'sex tourism country' by promoting and expanding the advertainment of cultural tourism. However, the prostitution industry associated with tourism remains to survive these days.

Continuously the prostitution industry in Thailand has grown since. A big number of Thai women migrated to other countries to work in the industry. They migrated to different continents and different countries around the globe. Although so, Japan and Europe have been the major destinations for Thai women who work in the industry. At the same time, many women from other countries are also trafficked to Thailand to fulfill the domestic market demand. Several countries, such as Burma, Cambodia, and Laos, are the source country for women being exploited as sex workers in Thailand. Ironically, in this issue, the women who are bonded into the industry are often convinced to leave their nations with the promise of convenient and safe employment. Meanwhile, they will eventually be forced and abused to be part of the industry (Sanders, 2012).

Furthermore, according to Siddharth Kara in his writing, there are repressive actions that we can do to help us confront human trafficking issues. First, long-term initiatives must build lasting programs within wounded areas rather than short-term services and temporary shelters for victims. Second, prosecution efforts should shift their attention from the trader to the buyer to damage market income and make the firm unprofitable. Third, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can be a tool for long-term change because their concentration is on getting deeply involved with affected communities (Kara, 2010). However, in reality, abolishing the issue of human trafficking is not a simple thing to be done. Especially in Thailand, there are still dilemmas in tackling the issue.

The majority of people believe that although the government has realized the effects of the industry on the women, such as HIV/AIDS, there has not been an attempt to discourage the industry that plays a major role in the increased number of women's trafficking. It is believed that within society, the industry is considered development capital (Shelly, 2010). Moreover, Thai women have also become one of Thailand's most expensive commodities throughout the years and are frequently referred to as the country's "new gold" (Aoyama, 2009). Despite so, the Thai government is also

believed to have been trying its best to deal with the issue of human trafficking occurring in the country (Feigenblatt, 2021).

Based on the background, the author is interested in examining the dynamics that occur in one of the most famous transnational crimes in Thailand, which is women's trafficking. Moreover, as in line with this study title, the researcher will limit the focus of this study to the case of women trafficked into the prostitution industry. In addition, this study will discuss the efforts taken by the Thai government to deal with the issue of human trafficking and the existing challenges. Thus, the study will also show how efficient and effective the efforts taken by the Thai government are in handling the case of women's trafficking in the prostitution industry.

## **B. Research Question**

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

What are the strategies and actions taken by the Thai government in tackling the issue of women's trafficking for the prostitution industry in Thailand?

## **C. Theoretical Framework**

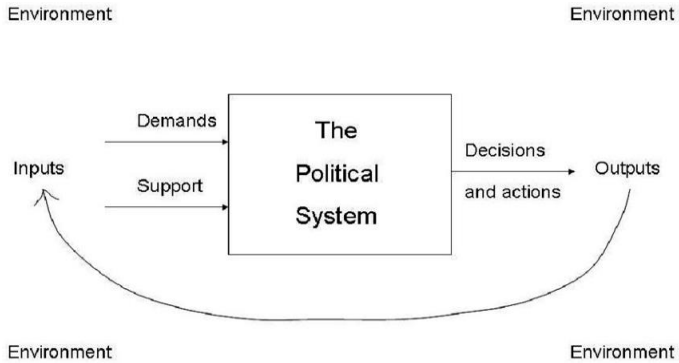
To explain more about the problem and the research question expressed by the author regarding the issue of women's trafficking in the prostitution industry in Thailand, some applicable theories and concepts would be necessary. A theory is a statement that explains a phenomenon scientifically by relating the concepts of the rules of logic. Moreover, a theory is the most general form of telling why a phenomenon occurred and predicting the repetition of the phenomenon. At the same time, a theory is also used as the basis for predictions of a phenomenon (Masoed M. , 1990). In this study, the author tries to propose two theories in this study to explain and answer the formulation of the related problem. The two theories proposed in this chapter will support understanding the formulated problem.

## 1. Political System Theory

In general, a political system as one of the social systems can be interpreted as a system of behavior. This is because the system is filled by the interactions and communications of the sub-units that are related to this system. The interactions and communications that are made in this system are those interactions that are oriented on the values of the society that are binding. These kinds of interaction and communication in this system are also commonly known as political interactions, where the communication that exists in this system is either binding or authoritative. Essentially, this system functions as an authoritative allocation of values for society. Besides that, along with its development, it also functions as the imposition and production of binding decisions (Campus, Pasquino, & Bull, 2011).

Giving further details to previous explanations, the political system as a theory was famously introduced by David Easton in his writing "*An Approach to the Analysis of the Political Systems.*" The theory generally stresses that interrelated interactions and communication can give a causal relationship for authoritative decisions. Furthermore, in the process of output-making, there will be a set of components such as allocations, actors, and power that will play roles in the policy or decision-making as a system (Senjaya, 2017). These components then emerged into some conceptual frameworks such as input, demands, support, conversion, feedback, decision, policy, and output. The concepts are related to one another in a systematic order, and each of the concepts affects the functions of each other. Thus, this theory explains how the political system works (Masoed M. , 1990). This is how the relationship of the concepts is shown in a figure:

**Figure 1.1 Model of Political System**



*Source: Adenskog, Democratic Innovations in Political System Towards a Systematic Approach (2018)*

As mentioned, the figure above illustrates how the political system works. The figure shows how the system consists of two main supporting components that affect one another up to the final stage of the decision-making- process (outputs) and back to inputs through feedback. The first element of this system is input, which is divided into two, namely, support and demands. Both support and demands from the environment are essential for the system to work, as the inputs themselves are the system's start engine to work. In this political system, both of the inputs, support, and demands functioned as the energy to establish what is called a framework of a policy or general policy, which later on will be possibly implemented as a policy both domestically and internationally. Hence, for the political system to continually work to produce outputs, every political system requires constant inputs (Magriasti, 2011).

Continuously, after the inputs are processed in the political system as the decision-making unit, the next important element in this system is the outputs. The outputs are those Easton called the exchange between the system and the environment and the authoritative allocation of values. Similarly, we can also describe the outputs as those decisions that have been discussed, accumulated, and formulated during the decision-making process. The outputs of this system are highly important because they work to identify whether or not the system has worked the way it is supposed to (Easton, 1997). These outputs also work to prove whether or not the system's decision-making process has represented the environmental concern and interest.

Considering the issue of human trafficking in the prostitution industry is an important problem to be taken care of, the Thai government, as a unit of the political system in the country, must be able to handle this matter. Thailand, as a country that faces significant challenges such as a source, transit, and destination for the prostitution industry, clearly received the demand and support both domestically and internationally to handle this sexual exploitation issue. Thus, the Thai government, as a vital actor in the country's political system, must be able to produce outputs on this urgency in the form of actions, strategies, or policies in order to achieve the most rational, effective, and efficient outputs to handle the problem of women's trafficking in the prostitution industry.

## **2. Human Trafficking: A Conceptual Framework**

Human trafficking is clearly a crime against humanity. The concept of human trafficking as an action is what we call a deadly security problem in the contemporary world. Among the six kinds of domestic and international security threats, human trafficking is one



of them. It is believed to be one of the second-largest and fast-growing organized criminal actions. Human trafficking, one of the major concerns of human security, is nowadays also known as modern-day slavery (Pati, 2014). Quoting from the UN Palermo Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, via Gillian Wylie (2016), there is an internationally agreed description of this concept. That description reads as follows:

*‘Trafficking in person’ shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power, or 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 minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation...’.*

The human trafficking concept, in this case, reflects the reality that occurs in Thailand. As of 2018, the Global Slavery Index stated that there are more than 600,000 victims of human trafficking in Thailand. Moreover, based on the data, women are most commonly trafficked within the prostitution industry (McGeough, 2022). Facing this unpleasant reality, Thai government indeed has to be able to prevent and suppress this issue. In addition, Dearnley (2010), in her writing for the UN Chronicle, stated that among those efforts that can be taken to handle this problem is the preventive and protective strategy. These anti-trafficking strategies should be embedded in every action and policy area. It is because human trafficking is a complex kind of crime. It takes preventive acts in the beginning in order to suppress it. And it also takes protection acts as the form of being aware of the effects

after the crime occurred. Human trafficking in Thailand, especially in the prostitution industry, is not merely about the human security of Thai women. It is also about the human security of the foreign women that are being trafficked into the industry. Hence, different strategies are needed to eliminate human trafficking in Thailand.

#### **D. Hypothesis**

From the formulation of the problem and the theoretical framework used. The author hypothesized that the Thai government's strategies to eliminate women's trafficking are through:

1. Implementing preventive strategies through several prevention acts and policies to reduce the possibility of human trafficking from happening, especially in the case of women's trafficking for the prostitution market and industry.
2. Establishing protective strategies through the provision of protection and assistance for victims, aiming to avoid the repetition of trafficking and to eliminate the problem of women trafficking for the prostitution industry itself.

#### **E. Scope of Research**

To avoid unnecessary complexity of the study, as well as to ease the observation of the issue. The author will limit the scope of the issue time; as a result, this study will be about the strategies and actions taken by the Thai government in handling women trafficking in the prostitution industry from 2016-2021. The time scope is limited for the research to be more focused on achieving its research goal.

#### **F. Research Methodology**

A qualitative descriptive method will be used to explain the issue being discussed in this study. This method is a common procedure for conducting research in many disciplines,

including the study of political sciences, especially international relations. The descriptive method will be able to describe the phenomenon of women's trafficking in the prostitution industry as well as its characteristics. Meanwhile, a qualitative method will provide a deeper understanding of individual participants regarding this issue, including their opinions, viewpoints, and attitudes (Nassaji, 2015).

The issue discussed and the method used in this study requires rich data collection. The author will use secondary data with the library research method in order to have a variety of data, such as from books, journal articles, to certain reports from government websites. The relevancy of the data used in this research will be checked before it is used as one of the sources in the arrangement of this research.

### **G. Thesis Structure**

In compiling this research, the author tries to build a framework of a clear outline from three chapters. The following are the descriptions of the outline:

**CHAPTER I** This chapter is the introductory research containing the background of the study, the research question that arises, the theoretical framework, the hypothesis, the scope of research, the research methodology, and the thesis structure.

**CHAPTER II** This chapter contains an elaboration of the background of the problem, such as the latest dynamics of women's trafficking in Thailand for the prostitution industry, along with its causes. The chapter will also discuss the demands and support received by the Thai government to tackle the issue. Moreover, this chapter will also answer the research question mentioned in the first chapter regarding the strategies and actions taken by the Thai government in tackling the issue of women's trafficking in the prostitution market.

**CHAPTER III** This chapter presents the conclusion of the whole chapter