



Parahyangan Catholic University
The Faculty of Political and Social Science
Department of International Relations

Accredited A

SK BAN-PT NO: 3095/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/S/VIII/2019

**Globalization and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: The
Case Study of Child Sex Tourism in Thailand**

Bachelor Thesis

By
Vianny Quinta
6091801045

Bandung
2022



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Vianny Quinta

ABSTRACT

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Globalization has shown its power to predispose our lives as human beings on earth. However, the global intensity can backfire if faced without preparation. As the thing that wants to be outlined in this research is the link between globalization and child sex tourism. The result has shown that the emergence of super territorial relations comes with risk as a result of the complex process of globalization. Many countries relied on tourism as it is supporting the country's economy. Thailand, which holds the title of the leading tourism country in Southeast Asia is no exception. As the tourism industry develops, in this case, CST whose existence becomes very interesting to discuss because it is hidden in the shadow of global travel and tourism. Children become the main focus of this research because they are vulnerable to society and their existence is rarely discussed in the study of international relations. Hence, this research aims to analyze the impact of globalization on child sex tourism in Thailand. To analyze the issue, this research uses Global Ethnography (Burawoy, et al) as the theoretical framework and qualitative case study as the research methods. Global ethnography tried to put the locals into a more global context as globalization has blurred the boundaries between countries. Thailand indeed has enacted the new Prostitution Prevention and Suppression Act (1996) which criminalized prostitution and intended to eliminate the CST. But, as this research wants to highlight, the growth of CST despite the prohibiting law enacted in Thailand is caused by the indirect consequence of globalization. Before the new law was enacted, Thailand used to overtly promote its CST. After the new law was enacted, coupled with other acts that underscore Thai's commitment to eradicate the CST, the promotion stopped. But the low enforcement of the laws accompanied by the global power that has impacted the sex industry, and the society that tolerates and accepts the action have facilitated the thrive of the CST. Thus, this research contends that the significant global force and connection have put Thailand into inconsistency. because CST has become a phenomenon with easy, strong, and undeniable economic profitability that makes it more difficult to stop.

Keywords: Globalization, Thailand, Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, Child Sex Tourism, Child Prostitution, Global Force, Global Connection

ABSTRAK

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Judul : Globalisasi dan Eksploitasi Seksual Komersial Anak: Studi Kasus Pariwisata Seks Anak di Thailand

Globalisasi telah menunjukkan kekuatannya untuk mempengaruhi kehidupan manusia di bumi. Namun, intensitas global bisa menjadi bumerang jika dihadapi tanpa persiapan. Adapun hal yang ingin ditegaskan dalam penelitian ini adalah keterkaitan antara globalisasi dengan pariwisata seks anak. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa munculnya hubungan super teritorial memiliki risiko sebagai akibat dari proses globalisasi yang kompleks. Banyak negara yang mengandalkan pariwisata sebagai penunjang perekonomian negara. Tak terkecuali Thailand yang menyandang predikat negara pariwisata terkemuka di Asia Tenggara. Seiring berkembangnya industri pariwisata, dalam hal ini, keberadaan CST menjadi sangat menarik untuk dibahas karena tersembunyi dalam bayang-bayang perjalanan dan pariwisata global. Anak-anak menjadi fokus utama penelitian ini karena mereka rentan dalam masyarakat dan keberadaannya jarang dibahas dalam kajian hubungan internasional. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dampak globalisasi terhadap pariwisata seks anak di Thailand. Untuk menganalisis masalah tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan Global Ethnography (Burawoy, dkk) sebagai kerangka teori dan studi kasus kualitatif sebagai metode penelitian. Etnografi global mencoba menempatkan penduduk lokal ke dalam konteks yang lebih global karena globalisasi telah mengaburkan batas antar negara. Thailand memang telah memberlakukan Undang-Undang Pencegahan dan Penindasan Prostitusi yang baru (1996) yang mengkriminalisasi prostitusi dan bermaksud menghapus CST. Namun, seperti yang ingin disoroti oleh penelitian ini, pertumbuhan CST, meskipun undang-undang pelarangan diberlakukan di Thailand disebabkan oleh konsekuensi tidak langsung dari globalisasi. Sebelum undang-undang baru diberlakukan, Thailand dulu secara terbuka mempromosikan CST-nya. Setelah undang-undang baru diberlakukan, ditambah dengan tindakan lain yang menggarisbawahi komitmen Thailand untuk memberantas CST, promosi tersebut dihentikan. Namun penegakan hukum yang rendah disertai dengan kekuatan global yang berdampak pada industri seks, dan masyarakat yang menoleransi dan menerima tindakan tersebut telah memfasilitasi berkembangnya CST. Dengan demikian, penelitian ini berpendapat bahwa kekuatan dan koneksi global yang signifikan telah menempatkan Thailand ke dalam inkonsistensi. karena CST telah menjadi fenomena dengan profitabilitas ekonomi yang mudah, kuat, dan tidak dapat disangkal yang membuatnya lebih sulit untuk dihentikan.

Kata kunci: Globalisasi, Thailand, Eksploitasi Seksual Komersial Anak, Pariwisata Seks Anak, Prostitusi Anak, Kekuatan Global, Koneksi Global

PREFACE

To enter the globalized world is inevitable. As an International Relation's student, I acknowledge globalization as part of human's life. It is now the world beyond border that push us to think further. Globalization, indeed, brings many conveniences. But it also comes with risk and not all people can feel those privilege equally. In this case, I want to emphasize my interest in children, as they are also part of the global community that needs to be protected just like any other individuals. Therefore, this study wants to highlight child sex tourism in Thailand which still continues to exist as an impact of globalization itself.

While adult prostitution is still much debated, especially regarding legality and morality, child prostitution is clearly strongly opposed to its existence. I, personally believe that prostitution does not cause more prostitution just like poor does not cause more poverty and underdeveloped countries does not cause more global inequality. Child sex tourism is a challenge for Thailand as one of a leading tourism country in Southeast Asia. Thailand has tried hard to correct its nation image as sex tourists' destination. Thus, this research aims to shift the focus from child sex tourism as domestic affair to a more globalized child sex tourism. Child sex tourism is a global issue that needs global cooperation between countries. It is also hoped that this will encourage the international community to take action to eradicate this issue in the long run.

The time to finish this thesis was challenging but unforgettable. I am utterly grateful to God and all parties who have supported the completion of this thesis. Although I realize there are still many shortcomings in this research, I believe this research can still be a reference for further research. Seeing that there are still many limitations, I am open to any input as well as criticism and suggestions relating to my research.

Last but not least, thank you, and I hope this research is relevant enough, useful, and can provide another perspective in facing the borderless world.

Bandung,

Vianny Quintinta

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSEC	Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
CST	Child Sex Tourism
TOT	The Tourism Organization of Thailand
TAT	The Tourism Authority of Thailand
UNWTO	United Nation World Tourism Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
CSAM/CSEM	Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Material
NESDP	National Economic and Social Development Plan
RDL	Red Light District
OCSE	Online Child Sexual Exploitation
WCST	Webcam Child Sex Tourism

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Trends towards global markets, global competition, and global communications have shown interdependence between countries. Globalization involves the interconnectedness of the world which is reflected in the expanded flow of information, technology, capital, goods, services, and people.¹ The phenomenon of globalization greatly affects various sectors of human life. It has shown its significance and is manifested more dynamically in the development of the nation. Seeing this condition, it is important to involve the perspective of globalization in the study of relations between nations.

Globalization is associated with liberalization of world economy and the emergence of transnational and cultural spaces. This emphasizes that the world order is now concerned with the transnational activity that refers to cross-national relations established by actors following the idea of civil society.² Thus, it constructs a new idea of transnational civil society in which highlighted the emergence of non-state actors in international politics.³ For instance, the tourism could portray this transnational activity. Along with the rapid development of

¹ Larry Dwyer, "Globalization of tourism: Drivers and outcomes", *Tourism Recreation Research*, (2015) DOI: 10.1080/02508281.2015.1075723

² Arnd Bauerkämper and Christoph Gumb, "Towards a Transnational Civil Society: Actors and Concepts in Europe from the Late Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century," *Discussion Paper Nr. SP IV 2010-401*, (2010), <https://www.econstor.eu/obitstream/10419/49611/1/632152826.pdf>.

³ *Ibid*

technology, information and communication, the tourism sector continues to experience deep growth and diversification. The tourism sector is closely related to development, so this sector is considered to be able to support the socio-economic progress of a country, especially developing countries. In fact, UNWTO (United Nation World Tourism Organization) itself says that currently the modern tourism business has surpassed the export of oil, food products, or cars.⁴ With that being said, tourism has become a major player in international trade as well as a major source of income for many countries in many parts of the world.⁵

With diverse tourist destinations, rich in culture and historical background, the Southeast Asian region is an attractive choice for foreign tourists to visit. In 2019, ASEAN countries managed to attract up to 133.1 million tourists.⁶ Despite the decline due to COVID-19, GlobalData predicts that the number of international visitors to the ASEAN region is expected to increase by 4.72% from 129.2 million in 2018 to 155.4 million in 2022.⁷ It is clear that the tourism sector has a big potential in Southeast Asia region.

A country in Southeast Asia that is famous for its tourism sector is Thailand. In 2019, Thailand managed to occupy the first position as the country with the highest tourist arrivals among ASEAN countries with more than 39 million tourists

⁴ UNWTO, *Tourism - An Economic and Social Phenomenon*, <https://www.unwto.org/why-tourism>, accessed on March 20, 2021

⁵ Dwyer, "Globalization of tourism: Drivers and outcomes"

⁶ Indah Gilang Pusparani, "[REVEALED] Tourist Arrival to ASEAN Countries 2019 Reaches 133 million", *seasia*, 11 Februari 2020, <https://seasia.co/2020/02/11/revealed-tourist-arrival-to-asean-countries-2019> accessed on March 22, 2021

⁷ *Ibid*

who came to visit the country.⁸ In the same year, the country which is also known as The Land of Smiles is the only country in Southeast Asia that is included in the top ten Most Visited Countries based on the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer.⁹ In the past few decades, Thailand's tourism sector has continued to experience rapid progress and is predicted to continue to increase every year.

However, the strength of the reputation comes with another social reality. Many countries and local governments seek to optimize economic benefits with little regard for the social and environmental impacts associated with tourism expansion.¹⁰ In general, the community, especially the local community is the one that gets the direct influence from the tourism industry. One of the real impacts felt today is that the tourism industry creates opportunities for commercial sexual activity. In the process, this activity gave birth to a new issue, namely commercial sexual exploitation.

Commercial sexual exploitation is a process when an individual is treated as a sexual object as well as a commercial object in the form of coercion without consent or violence. Similar but not the same as human trafficking, commercial sexual exploitation led to modern forms of slavery. The urgency here is usually,

⁸ Indah Gilang Pusparani, “[REVEALED] Tourist Arrival to ASEAN Countries 2019 Reaches 133 million”

⁹ UNWTO, "UNWTO World Tourism Barometer and Statistical Annex", *UNWTO World Tourism Barometer* 19 (1): 1-42, December 2020, doi:10.18111/wtobarometereng.2021.19.1.1 accessed on March 22, 2021

¹⁰ Lawrence R. Allen, Patrick T. Long, Richard R. Perdue and Scott Kieselbach, “The Impact of Tourism Development on Residents' Perceptions of Community Life”, *Journal of Travel Research* 27(1), 16–21 (1988) doi:10.1177/004728758802700104

commercial sexual exploitation often involves minors. This is known as Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC).

CSEC was first identified as a global problem in the World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children held in Stockholm in 1996.¹¹ The world congress defines CSEC as sexual harassment by adults against children which is characterized by payments in various forms, either directly or through third parties.¹² CSEC includes child prostitution, child pornography, child sex tourism, transactional sex activities that involve a child having sexual relations to fulfil his life needs. Sexual abuse of children that is not reported because of the benefits derived from the abuse is also included in CSEC.

Asia is a region with high CSEC cases where countries are involved both as producers and consumers. Moreover, countries in Southeast Asia, which most of them are still developing countries, are the centre and source of this CSEC. The high entertainment industry market also creates a high demand for commercial sex workers. Victims are forced to work without pay or with very minimal wages with conditions that are exploitative and lead to the type of modern slavery.¹³ Demands like that are being fulfilled by children (and women) from Thailand, The Philippines, even Indonesia.

¹¹ Marie Jan Fatiaki and Ahmad Ali, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children in a Nutshell", International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) – Geneva: ILO, (2014: 40 p), https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-suva/documents/publication/wcms_494314.pdf accessed on March 21, 2021

¹² Fatiaki and Ali, "Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking of Children in a Nutshell"

¹³ *Ibid*

The relationship between CSEC and tourism in Thailand in particular, is a complex issue. As previously mentioned, tourism has been a source of foreign exchange income that Thailand has relied on since the industry was opened and introduced in 1970. However, it seems that CSEC is something that cannot be avoided. For most children in Thailand, their lives have improved over the past few decades. However, for children from disadvantaged communities, they miss the opportunity to experience the progress of the country.¹⁴

Many academics reveal that the development of CSEC cannot be separated from the facts and social norms that exist in society. Poverty is a form of social injustice which is a major factor in the CSEC. There are many children who are forced to work to meet the necessities of life as well as fulfil their obligations to the family. Moreover, the growing social norms in Thailand suggest that children are responsible for ‘feeding’ their parents.¹⁵ In particular, this responsibility falls on the youngest daughter in the family.¹⁶ Based on these norms, unmarried and uneducated children find that working in the sex industry is one of the easiest and fastest ways to earn money and survive.

In rural areas, the opportunities for the profession are small, so they move to metropolitan areas. Urbanization becomes an artificial crisis created in the job

¹⁴ ECPAT International, *Global Monitoring Status of Action Against Commercial Exploitation of Children: Thailand 2nd Edition*, 2011, https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/a4a_v2_eap_thailand_1.pdf

¹⁵ Ananya Guha Roy, “Prostitution in Thailand”, *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research* Volume-7, Issue-1, (2017: 1-5), <https://www.ijemr.net/DOC/ProstitutionInThailand.pdf>

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 3-4

market.¹⁷ In addition, an increasing open tourism industry has increased the number of tourists in the cities. Bangkok, for example, is the centre of prostitution and most of the sex workers in Thailand depend on this city.¹⁸ The increasing need and sexual satisfaction among tourists has also led to prostitution and commercial sexual exploitation. From these facts, it can be seen that there is a balance of supply and demand in the sex industry. Therefore, the prevalence of tourism accompanied by poverty is an underlying social factor and contributes to the vulnerability of children to commercial sexual exploitation in the travel and tourism sector.

Commercial sexual exploitation is a violation of the fundamental rights of individuals, in this case the rights of children. CSEC is also considered a form of abusive practice and the practice of violence against children. In countries such as Norway, Sweden, Iceland, any form of commercial sexual exploitation is considered de facto slavery. This is a protracted problem because it creates new problems. Such as psychiatric problems in children, health problems such as HIV/AIDS, to the emergence of stigma from society that will stick to the child's identity for a long time, not to mention the problem of victim blaming. In fact, whatever the motive, in many cases, it is the “customer” who commits crime, not the victim.

In the study of international relations itself, non-traditional approaches that do not only focus on the state are gaining popularity and attention. Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and

¹⁷ Roy, “Prostitution in Thailand”, 3-4

¹⁸ *Ibid*

ratification by almost every country, child rights defenders have argued that children are the centre of attention in efforts to uphold universal human rights.¹⁹ Many academics argue about the position of children in international relations. However, most argue that children are actors who deserve similar treatment and play various central roles in the international system.²⁰

Commercial sexual exploitation of children and adolescents is a form of crime, whether organized or not, involving various actors, both domestic and international. CSEC is a structural and systematic problem that makes it difficult to eliminate. Moreover, because CSEC is a global social problem that clearly requires collective solutions and global cooperation to solve this problem to its roots. As the travel and tourism industry develops, with cheaper tickets, technological advances, and easier connections, this opens up greater opportunities for child sex offenders. No country or child is immune to CSEC. Therefore, the relationship between globalization, tourism, and commercial sexual exploitation of children is important to be discussed in more depth.

1.2. Problem Identification

Thailand is one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world. In 2019, the number of tourist arrivals in Thailand reached 40 million tourists.²¹ This

¹⁹ Alison M. S. Watson, "Children and International Relations: a new site of knowledge?", *Review of International Studies*, 32, (2006: 237–250) doi:10.1017/S0260210506007005

²⁰ *Ibid*

²¹ Statista, *Number of international tourist arrivals in Thailand from 2015 to 2019*, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/994693/thailand-number-international-tourist-arrivals/> accessed on March 28, 2021

figure accounts for 20% of Thailand's GDP.²² In 2020, the Thai tourism industry experienced a drastic decline in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, until the first quarter of 2020, the tourism industry is still estimated to contribute directly to 5.65% of Thailand's gross domestic product (GDP) or around 539.2 billion baht.²³ From this data, it can be seen the significance of the tourism industry in Thailand.

However, this industry turned out to be growing a negative image. Thailand is known as a country that offers sex tourism. Many foreign tourists especially come to Thailand to enjoy the sex industry that is available there. The size and breadth of this industry makes it difficult to obtain exact figures or statistical data regarding the number of workers and transactions that occur. However, the Thai Ministry of Health estimates that there are 150,000 – 250,000 sex workers in Thailand in 2012 and most of them are minors.²⁴ This number is not the exact number and it is predicted that there are still many unidentified cases.

Based on the history records, prostitution was legal and taxed in Thailand from the 1300s to the mid-1700s.²⁵ This continued until the Japanese occupation

²² Apornrath Phoonphongphiphat, “COVID wave crushes Thailand's already hobbled tourism sector”, *NikkeiAsia*, January 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Business-trends/COVID-wave-crushes-Thailand-s-already-hobbled-tourism-sector2#:~:text=Tourism%20in%202019%20contributed%20about,multiplier%20effect%20across%20the%20economy>. accessed on March 28, 2021

²³ Statista, *Total value of the tourism's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product in Thailand from 2017 to first quarter of 2020*, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1143427/thailand-value-of-tourism-gdp/> accessed on March 28, 2021

²⁴ ECPAT International, *Situation Analysis of The Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Thailand*, November 2015, https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/SITAN_THAILAND_ENG_FINAL.pdf accessed on March 28, 2021

²⁵ Cazzie Reyes, “History of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in Thailand”, *End Slavery Now*, October 2015, <https://www.endslaverynow.org/blog/articles/history-of-prostitution-and-sex-trafficking-in-thailand> accessed on March 30, 2021

during World War II which had popularized sex massage parlours.²⁶ In the 1960s, prostitution became a de jure illegal activity but this industry is in fact growing rapidly and is predicted to have contributed significantly to the national GDP. Then, the sex industry in Thailand is believed to have grown rapidly during the Vietnam War in 1967.²⁷ At that time, there was an exchange between women and money, especially between the United States and Thai soldiers. The US soldiers asked for a form of “recreation and entertainment” and were approved by Thai officials if they were rewarded.²⁸ Even after the war ended, prostitution was still popular.

Only since 1997, technically there are rules and laws that state that prostitution is illegal in Thailand. But the fact is, sexual services are still offered openly. In fact, matters are further complicated when it is estimated that more than 60,000 children under the age of 18 are involved in prostitution.²⁹ In fact, Thailand itself has actually issued a National Policy and Plan of Action for the Prevention and Eradication of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (1996) as a form of prevention of this issue. However, CSEC is still common and takes various forms. In addition, many entertainment venues, especially in tourism areas, contribute to the spread of CSEC. Such places are considered profitable because they attract large numbers of consumers and are used as cover for prostitution and other types of commercial sexual exploitation. For example, the type of 'business' such as massage parlours, hotels, or even restaurants are places that are prone to

²⁶ Reyes, “History of Prostitution and Sex Trafficking in Thailand”

²⁷ Ananya Guha Roy, “Prostitution in Thailand”, 3

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ ECPAT International, *Global Monitoring Status of Action Against Commercial Exploitation of Children: Thailand 2nd Edition*, 9

CSEC.³⁰ Coupled with the presence of technological innovations that provide wider access and facilitate the production of child pornography via the internet. The problem of child pornography adds to the number of cases of online commercial sexual exploitation of children. This problem is increasingly widespread and can have an impact on the image of the Thai state itself.

1.3. Research Focus

This research focuses on **Thailand** as the country with the highest international tourist arrival rate in Southeast Asia. In this research, Thailand or the Kingdom of Thailand is defined as a tourism country. As an independent state, the main actor in international politic realm, Thailand was also chosen because it has a historical track record as a country that offers sex tourism. In addition, the crime of commercial sexual exploitation of children that occurred in Thailand is also a social problem that is still ongoing today. Thus, Thailand is considered appropriate for research.

There are various types of CSEC that occur. However, the focus here is **the child sex tourism (CST)**. CST is related with child prostitution. The prostitution or the sex industry is a common market in country like Thailand especially because its existence is being tolerated and accepted by civil society. Just like the name, CST involves children, both girls and boys, as well as transactions for sexual purposes. Those who use this service vary, both domestic tourists and foreign tourists. Worse yet, usually children who are involved in sex tourism are not aware

³⁰ *Ibid*

of or do not see themselves as victims because of the many rewards given. This research is focused on children because there are not many studies or literature on children in international relations. Whereas in this case the children are in a disadvantageous position and they do not yet have the power like adults to defend and fight for their rights. Parents as well as the general public or even the government are also still negligent of this issue.

Besides that, this research also focuses on the **post-globalization era**. Particularly after Thailand enacted the new Prostitution Law in 1996 that was intended to eradicate the CST. Thai modern tourism actually has been popular since the 1950s, but the growth of the tourism industry started in the 1980s. Thus, the rapid globalization has created massive expansion of the Thai tourism industry. It can be seen especially in the 1980s, when the Thai government spent millions of baht to promote the tourism sector. This enhancement of the tourism sector creates a new problem, which is the CST. With that being said, the Thai government started to gain more interest in this field after the globalization period too, for example, in 2003, Thailand has issued a child protection act as a form of government commitment to protect children. Since then, the government has been involved in many meetings both domestically and internationally to discuss the issue of the CSEC. However, many also stated that the government itself was the party that indirectly promoted this industry. Recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has also affected the existence of commercial sexual exploitation of children involving the presence of technology such as the internet. Therefore, it underscores the reason why post-globalization is the main focus of this research.

1.4. Research Question

Based on the various problems that have been described from the research background to the problem identification, hereby the research question that will be analysed and the answered in this study:

“How is the implication of globalization on child sex tourism in Thailand?”

1.5. Research Objectives

This study aims to display the implication arising from globalization and the sexual exploitation of children in the context of child sex tourism in Thailand. In addition, this study also aims to observe and find new facts behind the phenomena that occur.

1.6. Research Purposes

The researcher hopes that this research can provide factual and more in-depth information and description of the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand. The researcher also hopes that this research can provide references to other academics, governments, and organizations related to the effects of globalization and tourism on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand. In addition, this research can also be useful as material for further research.

1.7. Literature Review

Children are vulnerable actors in the midst of globalization. One of the real dangers and threats faced by children is commercial sexual exploitation. In the case study of Thailand, there are many opinions regarding the existence of this issue. Some focus on historical and social factors that have led to the rise of CSEC in various forms. There are also those who argue that political aspects and government inefficiency are the main factors causing the continued development of CSEC. Another opinion emphasizes the economic factors that drive the increase in CSEC. The following are several articles that focus on the problem of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand.

The first opinion came from **Heather Montgomery** in the writing entitled **Child Sex Tourism in Thailand**. Montgomery argues that there are many factors that lead to child sex tourism. Tourism is only one of many variables that cause child prostitution but does not necessarily encourage commercial sexual exploitation of children.³¹ The case that occurred in Thailand is only a trigger for countries in the world to take this problem seriously.³² However, this is not conclusive evidence that prostitution and tourism cannot be separated conceptually or vice versa, that tourism is a form of rape in another name.³³

According to the article, Montgomery also explained the existence of child sex tourism in Thailand by comparing tourism models in Thailand and in Fiji.

³¹ Heather Montgomery, "Child Sex Tourism in Thailand," in the *Tourism and the Less Developed World Issues and Case Studies*, ed. David Harrison (New York: CABI Publishing, 2001), 191-201

³² *Ibid*, 200

³³ *Ibid*

Montgomery argues that cases of child prostitution in Thailand are rooted in history.³⁴ So, even though Fiji has a more liberal sexual outlook and is also a country with a high level of tourism like Thailand, it can be seen that Fiji has low or perhaps almost non-existent cases of child sex tourism.³⁵ This does not mean Fiji is free from child sex tourism and there is no country is immune to this proble.

Carmen Lau in the **Child Prostitution in Thailand** expressed a similar opinion. According to Lau, child prostitution, including child sex tourism, is caused by the powerlessness of children in relation to adults.³⁶ In other words, this global phenomenon is caused by an imbalance of power between children and adults. Lau also revealed that this phenomenon has not been widely discussed by researchers and needs more in-depth research because it involves human rights violations.

Child prostitution and child sex tourism are forms of slavery as well as commercial sexual exploitation that are common in the Southeast Asian region. The cases that occurred in Thailand were caused by various factors such as socio-cultural and political. In his writings, Lau mentions that one of the factors that influence child prostitution in Thailand is the Buddhist teachings on the law of karma and merit-making. Buddhism is the predominant religion in Thailand, so many people believe that a girl or child can earn merit and show gratitude by raising money to support a family.³⁷ In order to fulfil this responsibility, many children end

³⁴ Montgomery, "Child Sex Tourism in Thailand," 198-199

³⁵ *Ibid*

³⁶ Carmen Lau, "Child prostitution in Thailand", *Journal of Child Health Care*, 12(2), (2008: 144–155) doi:10.1177/1367493508090172

³⁷ Lau, "Child prostitution in Thailand", 145-146

up working as prostitutes. This reflects the condition of poverty which also influences the development of child prostitution in Thailand.

James Petras and **Tienchai Wongchaisuwan** respond to this phenomenon from a slightly different perspective. In their article entitled, **Free Markets, AIDS and Child Prostitution**, they reveal that the sex and manufacturing industries are the most profitable businesses in Thailand.³⁸ In fact, the sex industry is the driving force of the Thai economy. Of course, there is a price to pay for this. Child prostitution, infectious diseases, and labour slavery involving women are seen as fuel that triggers new profits and investments.³⁹

Petras and Wongchaisuwan argue that the secret behind Thailand's economic growth is a specialized niche in the global market, namely prostitution, child sex trafficking, and child labour.⁴⁰ They also added that the exploitation of children and women in the sex industry is not only profitable but can also reduce social tensions that occur in rural areas. For example, parents are willing to sell their children to pay debts. This further prolongs a problem that has existed for a long time. Sex tourism is no exception. Due to the large market demand, as a result of the large tourism industry in Thailand, child prostitution is the main occupation for children aged 10-16 years in Thailand.⁴¹ In addition, the sex-tourism trade also relies heavily on foreign customers as the main consumers. Therefore, this

³⁸ James Petras and Tienchai Wongchaisuwan, "Free Markets, AIDS and Child Prostitution", *Economic and Political Weekly* Vol. 28, No. 11 (1993: 440-442)

³⁹ *Ibid*

⁴⁰ Petras and Wongchaisuwan, "Free Markets, AIDS and Child Prostitution"

⁴¹ *Ibid*

phenomenon becomes very complex because it involves many actors, both domestic and international.

Kritsana Pimonsaengsuriya gives a different opinion. In the writing entitled **Challenges in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation: the example of Thailand**, it argues that there are actually many factors that contribute to the vulnerability of children to sexual exploitation. One of them is that children entering the labor market do not have the power to negotiate and at the same time do not have information about the risks and dangers associated with underage sexual activity.⁴² Even these children work without any protection. However, in the writing, Pimonsaengsuriya underlined that there are three main things that cause the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand to continue: the role of the state in protecting children, the role of civil society and the private sector, and corruption that has an impact on children's lives.⁴³

Basically, Thailand already has various regulations related to the protection of children. Thailand has also signed international conventions on children's rights and its optional protocols including the child trafficking, child prostitution and child pornography. However, the actions taken by the government so far have focused solely on human trafficking and have ruled out other forms of commercial sexual exploitation that are evident in Thailand.⁴⁴ Furthermore, corruption also indirectly

⁴² Kritsana Pimonsaengsuriya, "Challenges in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation: the example of Thailand" in the *Rights in Practice in Combating Sexual Exploitation of Children*, ed. Auriel Niemack dan Lara Green, (Bangkok: ECPAT, 2012), 30-35
https://www.ecpat.org/wp-content/uploads/legacy/ecpat_journal_july2012_0.pdf#page=32

⁴³ Pimonsaengsuriya, "Challenges in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation: the example of Thailand", page 30

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 31

contributes to CSEC. State authorities, or actors in government seats who commit corruption seem to facilitate and promote CSEC. This corruption has caused Thailand to lack in an effective national human rights institution and at the same time made the country unable to eliminate its negative image regarding the state of prostitution.⁴⁵ Given the lack of capacity of the state and government to promote the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of children, there is a call for non-state actors and civil society to be proactive in increasing the protection of children from the threat of commercial sexual exploitation.⁴⁶

Different from the other, **David Leheny** tries to analyze the political economy point of view on this matter. On his writing entitled **A Political Economy of Asian Sex Tourism**, Leheny argues that the development of greater women's right in Japan has shifted the economy constraint increasingly avoiding sex destination in Thailand. However, within the tourism industry in Thailand, Japanese tourists still occupy a large position in arrivals. Additionally, Japanese men do not constitute as the sole source of demand but also the Japanese foreign investment policies, especially for tourism projects making them doubly important for developing countries like Thailand.⁴⁷ Therefore, in this case, tourism industry is not a static but the international sex tourism industry continue to shape and reaffirm

⁴⁵ Pimonsaengsuriya, "Challenges in protecting children from commercial sexual exploitation: the example of Thailand", 32

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 33

⁴⁷ David Leheny, "A political economy of Asian sex tourism", *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 22, No. 2, page 367-384, (1995), doi:10.1016/0160-7383(94)00082-4

gender roles both as suppliers and consumers.⁴⁸ Although it might not affect sex market as a whole, but at the very least, seems to be the significant one.

Based on these various views, all agree that CSEC is a global problem, but there has not been much in-depth research on this. The articles mentioned above only look at the internal factors that lead to the CSEC in Thailand. Though this problem is a complex problem and there are other factors that contribute to the persistence and continuity of the problem. Therefore, in addition to providing a new perspective and adding data on CSEC, this paper fills the **empirical gap** of the research regarding the CSEC in Thailand. In which, this research discusses the phenomenon of child sex tourism which is closely related to globalization or from an external point of view. Globalization has facilitated the mobility of goods, services, and people. To add more, the presence of the internet facilitates communication and speeds up information between countries. Thus, this is what makes CSEC, whether it be prostitution, sex tourism, or child pornography is growing in Thailand.

1.8. Theoretical Framework

Critical Theory (Andrew Linklater)

This research uses critical theory in analysing. Critical theory or the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory is a theory that is present as a critique of positivist theory. The basis of critical theory sees that the study of international relations which is coloured by positivist theories is disturbed by distorted

⁴⁸ Leheny, "A political economy of Asian sex tourism", 381

thoughts.⁴⁹ Here, positivist science is considered to have tried to imitate measurement methods through making models in social science research by ignoring the fact that humans are creatures who have elements of culture, linguistics, norms, and the autonomy of the will to determine their own destiny.⁵⁰ Thus, the presence of critical theory in the science of international relations becomes important because it seeks to free humans from socially-created constraints and distorted thoughts brought by positivist science for the sake of scientific truth alone.

This was expressed by one of the critical theorists, namely Andrew Linklater in his books *Beyond Realism and Marxism* (1990) and *Critical Theory and World Politics: Citizenship, Sovereignty, and Humanity* (2007). In his book, Linklater opposes the concept of the nation-state as well as argues that in order to avoid distorted thinking due to the dominance of the positivist approach, international relations science needs to develop a more emancipatory approach.⁵¹ In addition, Linklater also mentions that during the 17th to 18th centuries, mainstream theorists did not provide a clear line between what they reflected as the central normative problem of the state. In this case, Linklater defines it as a matter of obligations experienced by humans as members of a sovereign political community.⁵² Furthermore, Linklater introduces three problems in the post-Westphalian world

⁴⁹ Bob Sugeng Hadiwinata, *Studi dan Teori Hubungan Internasional Arus Utama, Alternatif, dan Reflektif*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2017), 154

⁵⁰ Hadiwinata, *Studi dan Teori Hubungan Internasional Arus Utama, Alternatif, dan Reflektif*, 156

⁵¹ Andrew Linklater, *Critical International Relations Theory: Citizenship, State and Humanity*, (London: Routledge, 2007)

⁵² *Ibid*, 3

order which are the problem of community, problem of citizenship, and problem of harm. This research will be using the problem of harm to analyse the problem.

The problem of harm, used to be only understood as an act of the state in harming another country (usually through war) for its stake in maintaining its interests in power relations. However, referring to cosmopolitan thinking, Andrew Linklater suggests five categories of harm, namely, intentional harm by independent political communities; injury perpetrated by the government against its citizens; injury by non-state actors; subtle or accidental injury; as well as waiver.⁵³ Referring to this, critical theory sees that humans can reduce harm by seeing themselves as individuals who have dual citizenship: as members of their respective states as well as part of the wider human community.⁵⁴ For adherents of this understanding, the boundaries between national and international are increasingly blurred. Thus, the post-Westphalian world is a cosmopolitan world order in which humans no longer only have loyalty to their country but have universal loyalty as world citizens.

Critical theory provides another alternative, namely awareness as “citizens of the world” who carry universal moral obligations to maintain the security of mankind by upholding freedom from oppression, freedom of pursuing need, and freedom to maintain dignity. Critical theorists also believe that the shift in status from “citizen” to “citizen of the world” can strengthen the global obligation to

⁵³ Hadiwinata, *Studi dan Teori Hubungan Internasional Arus Utama, Alternatif, dan Reflektif*, 171-172

⁵⁴ Linklater, *Critical International Relations Theory: Citizenship, State and Humanity*, 129

maintain human security. In this context, for example, guarantees and protection of human rights will be stronger, including humanitarian crises in countries will be reduced or even ended.

Global Ethnography (Burawoy, et al)

Departing from critical theory, the definition and concept of globalization has been widely debated since the events of 9/11. Some researchers argue that this event is a sign of the end of globalization, while other researchers argue that this event is a symbol of the post-globalization era.⁵⁵ Instead of a random event, globalization refers to a pattern of interconnectedness of the world that is rooted and enduring.⁵⁶ However, globalization is also more than just social relations and activities across regions and borders. In simple terms, globalization shows a widening scale, getting bigger, faster, and deepening the impact of patterns of social interaction and flows between continents.⁵⁷ In other words, globalization refers to the significant transformation and shift of social relations on a wider scale such as between continents or between regions. This does not mean that globalization has replaced social order on a national or domestic scale. Rather, local aspects are combined into a wider set of inter-regional networks. So that space and time constraints, both social and geographical, are no longer a barrier in an interaction.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ David Held dan Anthony McGrew, *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to The Globalization Debate*, (New Jersey: Wiley, 2003), 1

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 4

⁵⁷ Held and McGrew, *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to The Globalization Debate*

⁵⁸ *Ibid*

Seeing the interconnectedness between local and global, this research uses Global Ethnography to analyse the issue further. Global ethnography combined the traditional ethnography and ethno-historical as a strategy to analyse the impact of globalization. As outlined by Michael Burawoy, ethnography could, at least in principle, link up the local to the global.⁵⁹ Because traditional ethnography tends to be place-bound and globalization itself operates across time and places, global ethnography must be supplemented by more in-depth and complex information that links the particular research to the broader historical context and particular research sites, to the broader transnational forces and processes that create the global. Therefore, global ethnography emphasizes and employs the extended case study methods: extending observer to participants, extending observation over time and space, extending from process to external forces, and extending theory.⁶⁰

Thus, the global ethnography approach has 3 features which are global forces, global connection, and global imagination. Global forces refer to external forces that are felt by individual and community typically broad trends associated with globalization such as but not limited to, global capital flows, globalized labour market and industries, mass migration, growing disparities of wealth and incomes, and the emergence of global cities. Global forces constituted by global connection which refers to the linkage between particular places created by the impact of global forces. If global forces analyse the global external forces like social actors and places, global connection studies the connection between sites that increase the

⁵⁹ Michael Burawoy et al, *Global Ethnography Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, (California: California Press, 2000) page 2

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 28

interconnectedness among diverse places and groups especially across national boundaries on the local environment. Last but not least, global imagination which is something natural, eternal, and given.⁶¹ Global imagination refers to how people perceive globalization. Between the three strategies of global ethnography, two characteristics that are the most salient for researchers and will be utilized in this research are global forces and global connection.

Beneficial Image Model

This research uses beneficial image model to give an identity to Thailand as a tourism country. Image has significant role in product situation. In this case, tourism product requires more subjective judgments rather than objective as it cannot be tried before visiting.⁶² Hence, beneficial image tries to explore particular images of a destination that affect tourist's perception about it and affect their decision process to visit. Many studies have tried to examine the role of destination image to the travel decision process. Depart from this, Beneficial image is conceptualized as a characteristic image of a destination that will influence tourist's decision to visit particular vacation destination.⁶³ There are five values of beneficial image which are functional, social, emotional, epistemic, and conditional. Perceptions or impressions of a destination held by tourists based on these values

⁶¹Burawoy et al, *Global Ethnography Forces, Connections, and Imaginations in a Postmodern World*, 31

⁶² Nirundon Tapachai, Robert Waryszak, "An Examination of the Role of Beneficial Image in Tourist Destination Selection", *Journal of Travel Research*, 39(1), 37-44.
doi:10.1177/004728750003900105

⁶³ *Ibid*

in turn lead to their decision to visit a country as tourist destination.⁶⁴ In other words, these five values are believed will give a destination image to a particular place or destination thus affect tourist's decision to visit it.

1.9. Research Methods and Data Collection Technique

1.9.1. Research Methods

This research uses **qualitative methods** to analyse the case. Qualitative approach is one of the research methods based on post-positivism philosophy that focuses on events or phenomena that occur and studies these phenomena to gain an understanding. Qualitative research puts more emphasis on interpretation of meaning than generalization. To be more specific, this research uses the **qualitative case study methods**.

Case study methods are one of the qualitative research methods that focus on one or a few cases in order to understand its broader and more general underlying dynamics.⁶⁵ This implies two interrelated functions: to describe the complexity and in-depth observation of the phenomenon; to generalize the broader universe of the cases. Although most of the time researchers cannot apply both functions, case study

⁶⁴ Tapachai and Waryszak, "An Examination of the Role of Beneficial Image in Tourist Destination Selection"

⁶⁵ Chiara Ruffa, "Case Study Methods: Case Selection and Case Analysis" in the *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, ed. Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese, (London: SAGE Publication LTD, 2020), p. 1133

methods aim to generalize beyond cases and to acknowledge an attempt to identify or describe some pattern of behaviour.

Thus, the qualitative case study method is in accordance with the objective of this research. Case study methods are very well-established sets of methods in political science and international relation.⁶⁶ It focuses on phenomena on specific interest, which is in this research, the child sex tourism can be seen as the case or phenomena that will be analysed. Besides that, research on the CSEC in Thailand focuses on events and analysis of meaning. Moreover, because research on this matter is still lacking, it requires a comprehensive understanding of the processes and phenomena that occur. Therefore, the case study method was chosen because it was considered suitable for the discussion to be studied.

1.9.2. Data Collection Technique

Because it uses qualitative research methods, the type of data in this study is also **qualitative data**. Qualitative data is data in the form of writing or words that are verbal, not numeric or numbers. Qualitative data was chosen because this study seeks to provide an overview of the phenomenon. Qualitative data in this study is important considering that the case raised requires an explanation of meaning which will be difficult to explain with numbers. In other words, because it emphasizes

⁶⁶ Ruffa, "Case Study Methods: Case Selection and Case Analysis"

perspectives, meanings, processes of the phenomena, the results in this study cannot be quantified. The presentation of qualitative data will also make it easier for readers as well as researchers, especially because of the descriptive form of data.

In addition, the form of data taken is **secondary data** or data obtained through literature study and literature study. This is one of the qualitative data collection techniques. This form of data was chosen because the study did not allow for direct observation in the field. Data obtained indirectly from the object of this research can be referred to as **document-based research**. Secondary data requires a lot of literature review. In the era of technology, this form of data is easier to obtain because there are many sources and references that can be accessed online. In this study, the data sources will come from scientific journals, previous research, news, articles, or official documents issued by the government.

Usually, qualitative research uses an inductive method, starting from specific facts to draw a general conclusion and answer the problem formulation. Therefore, in this study, the interpretation of the data is aimed at finding existing patterns through a case study of commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand. The analysis in this study will use a literature study as a whole. Initially the researcher will determine the arguments of the research. Then the researcher will look for data that supports the argument through a literature review related

to the implications of globalization on the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand. The data will be collected, then reduced (looking for data that strengthens the argument, eliminating data that is less supportive), then conclusions are drawn from the presentation of the data.

1.10. Structure of The Study

This research will be divided into four chapters, which are as follows:

Chapter I is an introductory chapter. This first chapter contains the background of the problem, problem identification, problem limitation, problem formulation, research objectives and uses, framework of thought, research methods and data collection techniques, and systematic discussion.

Chapter II will explain the development of prostitution in Thailand pre-globalization period, especially way before the prostitution law in Thailand was enacted. since the industry grew rapidly during the Vietnam War. This chapter will be divided into the history, the socio-cultural, and the economical factor of sex tourism in Thailand. This chapter will discuss about the starting point of the issue before the new prostitution law (1996) was enacted.

Chapter III will analyse the implications of globalization on sex tourism that has occurred in Thailand. In the scope of post-globalization era or after the new prostitution law (1996) was enacted, this chapter will explain the child sex tourism phenomenon through Thailand's tourism industry, Thailand localized sex market, and Thailand's law and policy that facilitates and link the globalized child sex

tourism. This chapter will focus on the global ethnography in two different forms which are global forces and global connection. This chapter especially will explain about the production and consumption of the globalized sex tourism.

Chapter IV will be the conclusion.

