

# EE466 Political Economy of Development Individual Essay

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## BLUR BUSINESS OF SEXUAL IN THAILAND

Prostitution and sex service can be claimed that is one of the oldest industry in Thailand and in the world. We cannot deny that this type of business is not actually existed in Thai society, as foreigners surely know the reputation of the Thai sex industry. The business can be shown up in several types, for example, sauna, brothel, nightclub, or through an online path like a sideline. The amount of sex workers in this country is controversial from then until now. But from information from the team of researchers of Chulalongkorn University, sex workers in Thailand has an approximate number of 3 million: 2 million are female, the other 20 thousand are male, and 8 hundred thousand are the youth under legal age 18. More than 3% of the Thai economy came from the sex industry and prostitution. Most of the workers are found in Samui and other traveling places and nightlife societies such as Pattaya and Phuket.

In the global terms, the sex businesses were predictably originated after the birth of the exchange system. Sumerians and Babylonians used women for having sex with another man for the reasons of religion, including relationships with foreigners to present embracing and the power of their leaders. Found in the country's history, Thailand has a long history of sexual business for more than six hundred years from the documents of Chinese and Europeans. In fact, the origin of the Thai sex industry was around the 16th-17th century not by brought from Western countries. It spread among foreigners in Thailand during the international trading era. There had written documents in the reign of King Naraya called the business of 'getting done for men'. Consequently, in the Rattanakosin era, the law said about the code of marriage and prostitutes. Normally the sex service locations had green lights in front of the store, affecting the name of 'a green light institute. Before 1956, sex services were not illegal but there was the law in 1960 against the industry and imply the guilty. And after World War II that affecting many ingredients of Thailand. Today it is still a grey business.

Prostitutes in Thailand in this period are seen indifferently in social cities such as Bangkok. Society is continually getting bigger and opening for capitalism to cover people's life. The business has a more confusing structure to the online platforms and is hidden with the other career: singer, waitress, etc. Academicians and social workers predicted the causes of prostitutes as the workers have problems of poverty and temptation and forcing.

From a historical perspective, prostitutes are serving the pleasure of sex to anyone other than own husband and wife, both man and woman are including. These type of workers is not evil or moralless, but the meaning of prostitutes slowly changed to the topic of morality of people in the 19th century. Gayle Rubin, an American cultural anthropologist, attacked the Victorian morality system that blames prostitutes are deprived, affecting the workers with evil minds. Victorian culture tries to classify sex by valuing sex only between a married couple, but sex not from marriage is dirty, deprived, and moralless. Prostitutes are normally the point

attacking of this system.

Also feminist is one of the sexual morality systems. Radical feminist focuses on women persecution and debates sex businesses as a woman's subordination. Female prostitutes will become 'a capital' for a man's sexual pleasure. The value of women will be disappeared and degraded. Radical feminists and conservative people have a goal to destroy the sex industry from their society because it is the symbol of male power. This thought affected power in sexual morality to penetrate society. Feminists will become agents driving sex without marriage be evil and abomination. The view sees overall prostitutes and ignores the historical origin of this industry.

Along with the previous statement, sex-positive feminist takes a movement for a confirmation that women can find sex pleasure without binding with marriage. Prostitutes are a choice women can set their destiny and pettiness of sex in their own way. Women should have rights in their own bodies. Moreover, sex businesses have not only an economic dimension but also other positive dimensions. The female workers are no need to feel shame and have only negative thoughts. Because women can serve many types of pleasures in terms of services, sex is just one relation. Hence, sex services are not evil. Many sex-positive feminists drive the support of the legal sex industry.

Through many pieces of research, prostitutes are economic because sex is not physical but psychological. Sex makes happiness and responses to human desire that everyone has rights to. Prostitutes are not a trade but give pleasure to others. However, society judges sex in terms of capital and prostitutes as 'service sellers' affecting contrasting in morality and disgusting. This view supports more shame and breaks anyone in this industry's face. Society usually vituperates them with problems of poverty, drug, undereducation, unemployment, inability, and forcing.

Next, society blames prostitutes' sex is deprived without love. Sex with strangers is a fault and diminishes humanity. The effect brings to the thought that sex workers have no value, honor, and prestige, which are important in Thailand in the order of Thai face. Radical feminists imply the empowerment of men with a negative view of prostitutes. Social thoughts of sex view it is in the stage that must be covered and agree with married sex and love. If sex services are a fault, that is because sex workers use the thought of radical feminism with themselves. Hence, power and knowledge led by society is a fault.

In terms of economy, we cannot deny that in Thailand, the sex industry is a powerful booster of the Thai economy. Many periods that Thai sex services existed along with other businesses. The main partner seems to be a travel industry until today. Even the sex businesses are still illegally, employment and income distribution are boomed to every side of the industry, especially the entrepreneurs. The industry is large and has related people to more than a hundred thousand. Benefits develop opportunities in other businesses like traveling, beauty and salon, restaurants, and nightclubs. Moreover, it also supports the business of many legal industries: traveling and nightclub. The positive effects are economic enlargement and a source of foreign currency. On the other hand, since sex businesses are illegal activities with huge

benefits that legal ones cannot be compared with. These profits will be circulated to run other illegal businesses for expanding income basement or if they are used with legal industries, resource scramble will happen. If the capital basement is larger and powerful rather than legal activities, the economy will be unstable.

Prostitutes are concerned as the illegal activities which no tax payments for the government, while any legal ones have to pay more tax. The unstable economy is a disadvantage of the overall economy. Both investors from inside and outside the country have less trust in the Thai economy, impacting future investment and economic development. The government will pay much in terms of damages and against this illegal activity: medical treatment for HIV patients from sexual activities.

Problems from this illegal business cannot be claimed it was originated by only the players in the activities. The lack of governance, inequality, and unwritten norms, and income distribution are important factors. Including with the view of liberalism, in terms of reality, many societies reject the old norms of morality about sex conditions. Sex businesses are legal in several countries which concern human rights which is touchable. Those countries allow people to do prostitutes legally. Their view on this career is trustworthy and society should accept it. Social welfare is also offered to sex workers equally. In addition, more than the legal law of the sex industry, the rules were launched to control the businesses to stay with peace and care.

In France, almost a hundred years that prostitutes and sex services are legal in this liberal country. But the enforcement will occur when there has a brothel or a pimp. New Zealand has the law controlling prostitutes and legalized this business since 2003. Sex workers have to be age 18 or older and Australians or New Zealanders. They have to hold the legal certificate and will receive equal social benefits: welfare, health, and security. And the significant example is the Netherlands, the most famous redlight country in the world. Prostitutes are 'glass cabinet beauty queens' and whorehouses and all madams are legal since 2000. The workers must have their own certificates, career registration, and taxable. The customers are a group of people above age 16.

Thailand, where the sex industry is still in a grey zone, has sex businesses as the most powerful economic driver. Contradicting, sex services are forbidden legally and socially. No social welfare supports the workers, moreover, polices and the government are factors lowering their quality of life. Chuvit Kamonvisit, the former politician and the entrepreneur of sauna business, implied that the sex industry brings income for this country for more than 2 hundred thousand million baht or more than 8.4% of Thailand Budget 2012. However, Thailand has no controlling policies for places, legalization, or social welfare. Sex workers are classified as the second citizen class but many individuals choose this career path because of high income in a short period of time. From this forcing, more than the situation of unwanted customer behavior and bewareing of polices, the workers have to be forced to be social defendants even if they are affected by the gap of the Thai law. This point represents the inequality among different group of people in society.

In nowadays, several countries are fighting for legal prostitutes, especially liberal

countries with the liberalism of freedom. Along with sex-positive feminism movements, by the way of being a liberal country, although many countries have the thoughts of freedom, the major obstacle of this career is always a morality, inequality, and face, especially in Thailand. Many countries had discussions of immorality in prostitutes: Thailand has a view of evil and peaceless while the others allow it as a freedom of occupation. But in the context of this country is ready or not to look at this career and think it is not evil because of the following social orders. While the second answer the other countries already have a try on this that prostitutes and sex businesses are not the term of morality but rights and freedom. On the other hand, it was an one part of freedom, not all for a hundred percent.

Along the time before, the statement for prostitutes is they want to escape from poverty, have no choice, and no any investment. But today the information from many research, sex workers do not come from that social problems but the choice they choose. People in rich society are also found in this industry. However, if we discuss in the topic of prostitutes, before this period, we may think about only a group of women. Now statistics show the genders of male, female, and also LGBT.

The next question is how to act with a group in every gender equally when this industry is already legal. If we focus on the health orders, sexual contagious diseases are concerned by people to judge sex workers because of stranger relationships. Registration in occupation will support the process of controlling by forcing for the health check. It is also still a question that in terms of crime for prostitutes, what is the best solution for these problems between making it still illegal and accepting legally to open for the government controls.

From the note of the Law Reform Committee about human trafficking situation, especially female sex businesses, most of them is from the type of importing women and girls to the industry. There has a development in terms of importing due to the development of technologies and social situations led to confusing illegal business connections and international criminal organizations in the future. The problems are not exist only among Thai people, foreigners are interested to come to Thailand for this job which earns higher income and the value of currency. A consequent problem is smuggling.

In the conclusion, we have to concern several factors for this topic and Thailand, especially can Thai people change their mind if prostitutes and the sex industry is legal. To be claimed as 'a liberal and democracy country', we cannot deny the fact that although it contrasts with morality and Buddhism, the benefits from the industry can be a powerful mechanism and the seconomy forward like the case country as the Netherlands. If we have the view on this career as one of the jobs we can choose and the government has policies to support, safe, and control prostitutes, benefits may happen more rather than disadvantages.