THE QUANDARY OF THAI WOMEN PROSTITUTES:
Contemporary Situations of Poor and Working Class Thai Women
Sex Workers in Thailand and New Zealand

by

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ABSTRACT

As a Thai feminist scholar, I engaged in a study of the economic and social circumstances of a particular group of women, poor and working class Thai sex workers, over the late 1990s to 2001. In this thesis, Thailand and New Zealand are the primary geographical points for the commercialisation of poor and working class Thai women prostitutes. The rationale is to present an explanation for why these women engaged both in the Thailand and New Zealand sex trade.

In addition, my thesis investigates the causes and consequences of Thai women being traded nationally and globally, as though they were a form of merchandise. The chief assumption underlying this study is that the effects of female poverty, such as the deficiency and inadequacy of education and of work opportunities, influence the numbers of poor and working-class Thai girls and women entering the sex industry. These women are additionally constrained socially by their gender, their poverty and their class position combined. Inequality between males and females in Thai culture is the overriding factor contributing to unjust profiteering by the sex businesses that employ these women sex workers.

The causes and consequences of sex work among poor and working class Thai women are investigated by interviewing thirty former and current prostitutes in Thailand and in New Zealand. The hypothesis that their plight is mainly a result of sex discrimination in Thai society is examined by using Thai feminist methodologies.

The interviews show that these sex workers initially entered prostitution in order to escape from poverty, and continued to do sex work because of particular controlling factors in their lives such as the obligation to support their families/children. The interviews also implied the misleading belief of Thai women sex workers that sex work would bring them economic security. However, as the findings show, sex work does not always engender such financial security, but frequently begets painful experiences.

In spite of this, most prostitutes assent to this situation and prolong their sex occupation. Later, these Thai prostitutes struggle and hope for self-sufficient

improvement of their lives in first world regions and countries other than Thailand. The difficulty of avoiding sexual exploitation in Thailand pressurised them into migrating to other countries, including New Zealand.

In general, the findings of my research establish that Thai women prostitutes have little control over their economic state in overseas countries. However they had less power over their lives in Thailand and elsewhere than in they had in New Zealand. In addition, gambling and alcohol seem to be used as the primary methods of comforting their personal stress. The negligence of their money discipline is also the cause of Thai sex workers intermittently re-entered prostitution. In particular, the stigma of sex work is an outstanding aspect in their later lives after giving up sex work.

I conclude that sex work is a destructive work alternative for most Thai sex workers, though it obviously offers the possibility of making some money. Furthermore, I assert that their individual rights must be upheld as equivalent to those of other women, so that these sex workers are empowered in their 'life situation'.

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Part I: Structure

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Thesis statement

This study investigates the lives of poor and working class Thai female sex workers in Thailand and New Zealand in the late 1990s. Their experience, as recounted by them, is analysed and synthesised. Feminist theories are put forward to clarify gender relationships in Thai society as experienced by these women. In addition, feminist methodologies are undertaken to confirm the hypothesis of this study that the double standard in Thai society has engendered female poverty.

In this thesis, I argue that the major factors contributing to poverty among these women are unemployment and the lack of educational and economic opportunities. The feminisation of poverty in Thai society has had the severe effect of forcing poor and working class girls and women into the sex industry in Thailand and other countries, including New Zealand. These poor and working class Thai girls and women have accordingly entered into prostitution with hope for an improved quality of life.

However, this thesis discusses whether it is simply poor quality of life which leads to the pressure of families on these poor Thai girls and women to enter the sex trade. I analyse the 'choice' of prostitution, looking at whether it is an easy option, or the *only* alternative for these young women to survive economically. I consider if there are other preferences for these poor and working class Thai women, to do work other than sex work. I try to establish whether or not female poverty and misery is the sole cause, and also the sole consequence, of the trafficking of Thai girls and women worldwide.

To find out the answer, this research confines itself exclusively to Thai women who come from the poor and the working class. These Thai women constitute the group in the sex industry from which Thai and foreign men profit most. Additionally, my thesis provides evidence on how the greediness and cruelty of Thai and foreign men

have played a part in the high numbers of poor and working class Thai girls and women becoming prostitutes.

My thesis findings also seek to illuminate the way in which male desecration has had an unending effect on the lives of these women during prostitution. This study investigates whether Thai prostitutes really gain much from the billion dollars sex business. The results of the interviews illuminate the disempowerment of the label of 'prostitute', and the painful experiences of these women, arising from their involvement in the sex business.

In this study, I establish that prostitution has engendered a downward financial cycle for these poor and working class Thai sex workers. Furthermore, in order to avoid pay loss, these women have no option other than to continue to work as sex workers. This is shown to be the major reason for these Thai women continuing to work in the sex trade.

At the end, I will suggest realistic resolution for the problems facing these Thai sex workers, by illuminating the urgent needs in their lives. I illustrate the factual economic positions of Thai women prostitutes as individuals. I also advocate for them, with the intention of increasing their ability to exercise their human rights equally with others.

Research Objectives

The objective of this thesis is threefold. First of all, the goal is to present the outcomes of this thesis investigation as clearly and directly as possible. Therefore, this thesis is based on the real circumstances of the women interviewed, with them speaking as subjects, not as objects. Feminist theorist Shulamit Reinharz has described how feminist studies can help in creating social change, to the advantage of the subjects concerned.¹ I consider that these interviewed sex workers should speak for themselves. Consequently, I let the readers 'hear' each woman's words so that the readers can determine the reliability of the information for themselves.

¹ Reinharz, Shulamit (1992) 'Feminist multiple methods research', in *S. Reinharz Feminist Methods in Social Research* (pp.197-213), Oxford University Press, New York, p.209

I adopt feminist perspectives in this study, with the precise purpose of facilitating the empowerment of this group of women. In this thesis, I also argue that Thai prostitutes should not be categorised as social outcasts, but actually are the same as any other group of women in androcratic Thai society. I use women's studies in various frameworks to examine the lives of these Thai sex workers, and to do away with the misconception of seeing prostitution simply as a social problem in Thailand, for which Thai prostitutes can be held responsible. I disclose aspects of the sex industry which are normally veiled from society. These factors validate the concept that the difficulties of lives in prostitution are much more than the sex workers is normally taken account of by other people.

My second aim is to reveal the economic dilemma within sex businesses, which poor and working class Thai women sex workers cannot avoid. I discuss the idea that since these Thai women are poor and working class, they are bound to be branded as poor and lower class prostitutes. I also assess the control factors which incline poor and working class Thai girls and women to maintain their sex profession. Maintaining this profession has in fact become a widespread occupational option among poor and working class Thai women prostitutes, even though it has such an unpleasant consequence.

Inexorably, such investigation and discussion lead to the effects of interconnections between female poverty, gender inequality, and Thai and foreign male hypocrisy on Thai women sex workers. They also expose the way in which growing materialism in Thai society has enlarged the number of Thai women being trafficked as sex workers to first world countries. Pasuk Phongpaichit, an economist in Thailand, has stated that modern attitudes of materialism have become established in Thai society and have reinforced the reality that by being a prostitute, a woman can earn more than by working as a low position government officers.² Examples of this materialism in the family circumstances of these sex workers, such as how mothers and/or sisters have sold their daughters and/or sisters into prostitution without remorse for money reward, are discussed.

² Phongpaichit, Pasuk (1982) *From Peasant Girls to Bangkok Masseuses*, ILO report, Geneva, p.67

My final intention is to represent the needs of these individual sex workers as diverse and provisional, and to substantiate that there is no exact or perfect solution for their problems. But clearly, all Thai girls and women working as prostitutes should effectively be granted their individual human rights in any circumstances. I hope that definite benefits to Thai prostitutes will result, and that feminist practices and co-operation of gender institutions in Thai and other societies will lead to a feasible approach to human rights, and resolution of the problems perceived and raised by the Thai women sex workers in this study.

Why this thesis is unique³

The difference between other social research methods and the feminist methodologies used in this research is that feminist methodology promotes the adoption of 'the emancipation of individual women'.⁴ With a Thai feminist viewpoint, I not only analyse the reality of being a Thai prostitute in specific terms, but also combine different aspects of these Thai sex workers' lives. These women have some circumstances in common, such as no or derisory education and poor economic situations. Yet although my thesis highlights the sexual exploitation of Thai girls and women from working class backgrounds, each subject being studied maintains their individuality as a Thai woman who has decided, for varying reasons, to undertake and persist in sex work.

Primarily, this thesis is an exploration of the realities of the inferior financial circumstances of these poor and working class sex workers, rather than an analysis of the political economy of sex businesses. From this point of view, this study does not consider prostitution in the light of political or economic ideology. I principally examine what the desires of the Thai prostitutes themselves are. This is to show each participant as an individual, not as part of a homogenous group. Their answers inform my suggested solutions, which tend to be based on the realities of how these poor and working class prostitutes are to survive, given the interdependence required to live in any society.

³ Please see more details on Part two, *Assumptions and limitations*.

⁴ Code, Lorraine (1995) 'How do we know?: Questions of Method in Feminist Practice', in S.Burt and L.Code, *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, Broadview Press, USA, p.23

The stories of these Thai sex workers and my discussion of them comprise original research, and have not contributed to other studies in New Zealand. I have explicitly undertaken research into the background of Thai sex workers in New Zealand because such research has not previously been undertaken.

The two important dynamics of this thesis: the causes driving poor and working class Thai women to enter sex work, and their consequent direction of life toward sex industries in other first world countries, in this case New Zealand's sex industry. I have also extended my findings to interpret Thai women's relationships with their New Zealand husbands as Thai mail-order brides. I hope to demonstrate how patterns of economic predicament have exacerbated problems in the lives of these Thai women in New Zealand.

Furthermore, I expanded my research to interview other Thai sex workers who were trafficked as sex workers to countries other than New Zealand. Significant problems for these trafficked sex workers, including their immigration status and the health context, working conditions, and abuse they encounter, are compared for New Zealand and for other first world countries.

Personal background to the research

I have lived in Bangkok, the active city since I was born. The population of Thailand passed 61,878,846 million people and 5,774,683 live in Bangkok whom Thai women residents are 2,971,944 at the end of 2001.⁵ My own life circumstances were fairly isolated from those of Thai sex workers; I was rather ignorant about their live and work tribulations. My life environment was also different, as I spent most of my teenage years studying, and lived with my parents and brothers and sister. By contrast, a number of Thai women sex workers started doing sex work and living independently when they were fifteen years old or younger.⁶

When I was twenty-one years old, I was unemployed, after having graduated as Bachelor of Communications Arts Studies from Chulalongkorn University at the

⁵ Department of Local Administration, www.dola.go.th.html, Bangkok, Thailand, 18/11/2001

⁶ Srisang, Kobkiet, et al. (1990) Caught in Modern Slavery, Tourism and Child Prostitution in Asia, *Report and Proceedings of the ChaingMaj consultation, The Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism*, Bangkok, Thailand, p.56

beginning of 1995. One way to develop a future career in Thai society is higher education.⁷ At the end of 1995, I decided to come to New Zealand in order to broaden my outlook, and to further study in English.

I was offered the opportunity to do an Honours degree in Women's Studies at Victoria University of Wellington at the beginning of 1997. During my Honours program, I gained confidence in using gender analysis to broaden my perspective. During May-June 1997, I completed a practice in an unpaid capacity for the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective. (NZPC) I had an opportunity to work at the NZPC and was supervised by Catherine Healy, the national coordinator, who provided me with warm support and helpful advice. At that time I translated a manuscript, which was a guideline about safe-sex practices, and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) prevention methods, from English into Thai. This information kit has been supplied to Thai prostitutes in New Zealand.

I also undertook another paper to do a research project, and interviewed a Thai sex worker for a case study. Therefore, in 1998, I did not hesitate to decide to embark on a Doctoral thesis topic involving the lives of Thai sex workers in New Zealand.

Another motive was an advantage in studying this problem, because I can communicate in the Thai language. My background in Thai culture has also enabled me to speak with these women. This places me a unique position in New Zealand, of being able to elicit many aspects of the lives of Thai sex workers. Living in New Zealand as a Thai student and without my family for six years, I can also identify with Thai prostitutes who are also living in New Zealand without the support of their families. It has been somewhat of a struggle for me to live in a country where culture and language are different from my own.

Since coming to study here, I have known several different Thai women who are not sex workers. These Thai women came to New Zealand in hopes of a healthier living condition than in Thailand. Most of these women are from poor or working class backgrounds. Their communication in English is poor, and in terms of vocabulary, is rather weak. This puts them at a great disadvantage in obtaining skilled jobs. Most of

⁷ Bea Toews and Robert McGregor (1998) *Culture Shock, Success Secrets to Maximise Business in Thailand*, Times Books International, Singapore, Malaysia 1st edition, 1998, pp.17-18

them worked in Thai restaurants as full-time waitresses. Sometimes these women worked illegally because their visa is a visitor and/or is expired. They then married New Zealanders in order to acquire permanent New Zealand residency. They did not have enough credentials and criteria to apply for New Zealand residency themselves.

Comparing the differing states of these Thai women noted above, and the group of poor and working class Thai sex workers, Thai sex workers tend to be more susceptible and invisible in both Thai and New Zealand society. To quote Jan Jordan, who has studied sex work in New Zealand,

'Thai prostitutes lack of economic independence and often insecure immigration status renders them highly vulnerable to exploitation and the abuse of power'.⁸

For Thai women prostitutes with very little education or training, one option for getting a New Zealand visa is to come to New Zealand as a mail-order bride. The second option is to come as a tourist; these women then often simply overstay. For most of the Thai women who want to immigrate to New Zealand, their immigration status is one of utmost difficulty. Judging from newspaper reports, I was struck by the image of Thai women in New Zealand as one in which Thai women go to overseas countries only for prostitution purposes. For example, in 1990 New Zealand immigration and police departments called for the re-introduction of visas for every Thai woman, so as to prevent Thai prostitutes entering New Zealand as tourists.⁹

It should be obvious that not all Thai women in New Zealand are illegal sex workers. From the interviews, it is also understandable that some young Thai women have been victims of insensitive and harsh treatment here. This situation made me aware of the assumptions made in New Zealand, that any Thai woman could be trafficked for the purpose of sex work. Many Thais are concerned about their residence status in New Zealand, following the distorted publicity given to allegations about Thai prostitutes living in New Zealand.¹⁰ On a personal level, it has (though not seriously) influenced my own standing in New Zealand. I am well aware of and uphold my rights as a Thai woman living in New Zealand. But other Thai women are not so

⁸ Jordan, Jan (1991) *Working Girls: Women in the New Zealand Sex Industry* Talk to Jan Jordan, Penguin, New Zealand, p.4

⁹ The New Zealand Herald, New Zealand: *Police and Television 'Stir up contempt' against Thai community*, 31 July 1990, p.12

¹⁰ Informal interviews with Thai people in the communities; they requested to be anonymous.

knowledgeable about their rights; hence they have blamed prostitutes for the difficulties they have encountered.

Although most Thai people discouraged me from revealing this negative aspect of Thailand and seeing Thai sex workers as a social problem.¹¹ There is still no dilemma for me as to whether or not it is humiliating to the image of Thai women to tell the story of these Thai prostitutes in New Zealand. It is my decision that the findings of this research should be made public. Part of my reason in writing this thesis is to help members of Thai and New Zealand society to adjust their attitudes toward Thai women prostitutes, understand the complexity of this issue, and reflect on its meaning.

General effect of prostitution on Thai women¹²

The sex trade in Thai women is one of the most significant industries in Thailand. Thai prostitution is the largest segment of the longstanding Thai market in the sexual exploitation of women.¹³ Ironically, in modern Thailand the sex industry's exploitation of women was apparently initiated by both Thai and western men.

Teeranath KarnchanaAksorn, a Thai feminist activist, has reviewed how Thailand politically situates women at the bottom of the economic and social structure, as a control mechanism.¹⁴ In Thailand, Thai men have possession of most of the sex businesses in the sex industry.¹⁵ Mirkinson has stated that the majority of Thai women have been valued not as persons but as things, pieces of property only to be bought and sold.¹⁶ Thai women are separated as an 'apparatus' only or informal sector of total labourers. The participation of women as owners in Thailand's sex industry has not increased. The trend in Thailand's sex trade to use poor and working class women, of 'inferior' quality, is a critical aspect.

Siriporn Skrobanek, the leader of The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), has described how the distribution of alternative work and business

¹¹ Informal interviews with Thai people in the communities; they requested to be anonymous.

¹² Please see more details in part two, *Assumptions and limitations*.

¹³ Archarvanitkul, Kritiya (1990) Situation, Opportunities and Problems Encountered by Young Girls in Thai Society, *Research report funded by Terre des Hommes*, Bangkok. p. 12

¹⁴ KarnchanaAksorn, Teeranath (1999) *Women, Men and the social change in the Thai society*, Thai translation from her Ph.D. thesis, Edison Press: Bangkok Thailand, p.78

¹⁵ Mirkinson, J. (1997) *Ibid*, p.31

¹⁶ Mirkinson, J. (1997) 'The global sex trade in women', *Earth Island Journal*, 1997, Vol.13, p. 31

opportunities in Thailand for women has not increased over the last twenty years, even though women carry out more menial work than men do.¹⁷ The female population of Thailand is dominated by poor and working class girls and women, who have fewer work and educational opportunities than educated and skilled women.¹⁸ In addition, the numbers of educated women with financial self-support are still very low in Thai society. Table 1 illustrates the small percentage of wealthy and educated women, and reveals the prevalence of deprived women who have the least opportunities.

Table 1: Percentages of Thai women with and without economic independence found from Research on women status in Thai society, in the year of 1999.¹⁹

Thai women with economic independence	3.1%
Thai women with inadequate financial opportunity	81.6%
Thai women who are insolvent	15.3%

The sex exploitation of Thai men also forced these working class girls and women prostitutes seek for better opportunity abroad by means of illegal migration. Thai women are currently being internationally trafficked to overseas countries to work as sex workers, or to become mail-order brides.²⁰ The mail-order bride business is now legally available internationally. Thai women seek marriage and decide to marry western men. Often they are uninformed about how these men may have rejected all ideas of women’s rights in their own countries and are seeking sex slaves and subservient Asian women.²¹ Contemporary Asian mail-order bride services promote Asian women as subservient, exotic and obedient – as ‘commodity women’.²²

By focusing solely on the problem as one concerning poor and working class Thai

¹⁷ Skrobanek, Siriporn (1997) *Strategies Against Trafficking in Prostitution: The case of Thailand*. The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), Bangkok, pp. 67-70

¹⁸ Skrobanek, S. (1997) *Ibid*, pp. 72-74

¹⁹ KarnchanaAksorn, Teeranath (1999) *Women, Men and the social change in the Thai society*, Thai translation from her Ph.D. thesis, Edison Press, Bangkok, Thailand, p.7

²⁰ Mensendiek, M. (1997) *Ibid*, p. 170

²¹ Small, Michael and Mathison, Dirk (1985) For men who want an old-fashioned girl, the latest wedding march is here comes the Asian mail-order bride, *People Weekly*, 1985, Vol.23, p127-130.

²² Halualani, R. T., (1995) The intersecting hegemonic discourses of an Asian mail-order-bride catalog: Philippine ‘Oriental Butterfly’ dolls for sale; *Women’s Studies in Communication*, Spring 1995, Vol.18, p.45

women only, other Thai women are concerned mainly about their own individual privileges and status. Conclusively, the factual economic and societal positions of the majority of Thai women do not amount to self-sufficiency.²³ Thus the 'choice' of prostitution has been made available for the majority of poor and proletarian Thai women sex workers.²⁴ After completing this thesis, it is my conclusion that both Thai and western men have been completely unconcerned about the high numbers of poor and working class Thai girls and women going into the sex industry. As a consequence, there is little or no support from powerful and influential Thai people for a healthier social transformation in Thai society.

Research Outline

This thesis is divided into seven parts: structure, assumptions and limitations, conditions, methodology, findings, analysis and overall conclusion. The first part, consisting of this chapter, forms the introduction.

In part two, thesis hypotheses and a literature review are presented to highlight the suppositions and limitations of the study. I compare this thesis with other research and outline the contributions from secondary and primary sources of information. Theses, dissertations, journals and articles published after 1990 were initially selected for appraisal from Thailand, New Zealand and numerous overseas archives. I analyse and assess, using feminist methodologies, how these researchers carried out their work and compare it with my own thesis. Other secondary sources, such as Internet sources, are also outlined.

In chapter two, I explain further the significance and uniqueness of this study and its relationship to previous studies, specifically theses, academic journals and articles on Thai prostitutes. Economic perspectives and debates are analysed. It critically states the fundamental hypothesis to explain how female poverty is the underlying reason for these poor women and girls becoming prostitutes, and how this has become entrenched through the double standard of Thai culture. I conclude with a

²³ Newman, F. and Cohen, E., 'Historical perspectives on the study of female prostitutes', Special Issue: *Feminist psychology: Single life and married life and women's sexuality*, International Journal of Women's Studies, 1985, Vol. 8, p.83

²⁴ Danial, Girard (1995) Alternatives for Thai sex workers, *Gender Equity*, IDRC reports, pp.12-13

summary of how most researchers take an economic focal point from which to claim expertise in studying the 'true' situations of Thai sex workers' lives in Thailand and overseas. By contrast, the focal point of this study, combining the oppressive financial circumstances and the traps inherent in prostitution, is shown to be different from that of previous research. This chapter describes how, in general, there has been some degree of stereotyping of poor and working class Thai prostitutes involved in commercial sexual activities, in order to define more important aspects.

Chapter three contrasts the various ways in which feminists analyse and synthesise female subordination and sexual exploitation in prostitution. This chapter assesses feminist insights regarding poor and working class prostitutes. The debates about practical feminist solutions, provided through the international feminist perspectives of liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist feminists on prostitution, are studied. These various feminist theories and methodologies are reviewed in the global context of the experience of Thai women prostitutes to show their effect in this study. Legalisation, decriminalisation and eradication of prostitution are discussed of the advantage to sex workers through feminist sight. I analyse the usefulness of each practical and theoretical solution provided by various feminists.

In part three, the circumstantial context of the situation in Thailand is set out, including the interrelation between Thailand's sex industry and the social, political, cultural and economic background of Thailand. This is to explain the hypotheses about the lack and ineffectiveness of prostitutes' rights in sex industries. In order to explain the disposition of patriarchal control in Thailand, the relationship between Thailand's cultural background and the political economy of the sex industry is also examined. I outline the hypothesis that male hypocrisy and the greed of Thai and foreign men in relation to the provision of commercial sexual services is the chief factor driving the dynamic which has induced such growth in the numbers of poor and working class Thai women entering the sex industry in Thailand and becoming global sex commodities. The corruption of politicians and the law enforcement authorities in Thailand are also analysed. I suggest that the law in New Zealand is more strongly enforced, and provide the reasons why I believe this to be the case.

Part four contains two chapters on methodology: feminist epistemology and thesis methods. In particular, chapter five explains why I select feminist methodology

as the underlying principle in this thesis. In particular, I identify and characterise Thai feminist methods and methodology. I analyse my own Thai feminist perspective and feminist performance. The unique features of Thai feminist approach, as used in this thesis, also highlight the contribution of this study to existing feminist knowledge. I outline the multidisciplinary nature of the feminist research process required for studies of 'colored' women, for example, a group of Thai women in New Zealand.

Chapter six describes the methods used in this research. Data was collected in Thailand and New Zealand through extensive informal interviews directed to three major groups: (1) Thai women prostitutes who were child prostitutes; (2) Thai women sex workers trafficked to other first world countries, excluding New Zealand; (3) Thai mail-order brides and Thai women sex workers in New Zealand. I describe my procedures of recruiting participants in the study and the feminist interviewing technique I used. Clarification of the interview place and setting is given. The methods of locating interview materials and other sources are explained. Most importantly, I explain the strict confidentiality procedures for use of information gathered and ethical concerns to establish the reliability of evidence. When expert interviews allowed these sex workers to share their individual stories, analysis was based on qualitative material used, such as triangulation of information. In conclusion, I explain how data from interviews as individual narrative accounts were interpreted.

In part five, chapters seven, eight and nine I set out thirty stories of interviewed sex workers. The assortment of the interviewees and the interview methods are re-summarised. The method of transcribing and translation and the interpretation of information are described for each chapter. The synthesis and summary of the accounts of these interviewees is presented in order to reveal the uncovering of the causes and consequences of entering prostitution. I also present how all stories are related, showing the similarities and the differences in their life circumstances. Chapter seven presents nine case studies of former child (girl) prostitutes in Thailand; these interviews were conducted in Thailand. Chapter eight presents nine case studies of current and former Thai women sex workers who were trafficked to first world regional countries; they too were interviewed in Thailand. Chapter nine contributes twelve case studies of current and former Thai mail-order brides and/or women sex workers who have at some time

worked or lived in New Zealand as sex workers. These interviews took place in Thailand and in New Zealand.

In part six, analysis, I discuss the effects of working in the sex business on these poor and working class girls and women. To confirm the interview results, there appears to have been mounting feedback from society toward these Thai prostitutes. I critically evaluate the findings to show the dilemma of Thai prostitutes. Chapter ten sets out the results of key aspects from the interviews by using feminist theories and methodologies to analyse the subject studied. I assess the parallel and uncharacteristic aspects of these poor and working class Thai women sex workers. Their family, educational and financial backgrounds are explored. The astonishingly strong incentives to enter prostitution are revisited, namely materialism and the bond between these sex workers and their families. Their choice of becoming prostitutes is defined from the research findings.

Consequently, I analyse the effects of sex work such as work conditions; saving; remittances; health care; drug use and contraception. The women's mishaps in their lives as sex workers, and how these result in trafficking to New Zealand and other countries, are explained. The ubiquitous sexual abuse and racism in mail-order brides' relationships with their husbands are described. Their plans for life after prostitution are outlined. Leisure options, such as gambling are analysed. I show that these Thai women prostitutes are to a large extent trapped in the sex industry.

Part seven, the final part of this thesis, gives the overall conclusion. It restates the established findings and their substantiation, and gives recommendations for future research. The suggestions for future research include the reassessment of the rights of Thai women and the freedom of Thai prostitutes in any society. This is to demonstrate how prostitutes' behaviour is affected by society in many different ways, and to show that sensitivities about and concern for these sex workers are lacking, and must be re-established. The interdependent solution of male collaboration and Thai women's liberation efforts in Thai culture are advocated for the future study. Further study of Thai and other Asian prostitutes' lives in New Zealand and of the significant role of middle-class, student prostitutes and the role of women owners in the sex businesses in Thailand's sex industry is suggested. Studies of employment alternatives to prostitution for poor and working class Thai girls and women are also needed.

Terms and Definitions

I now define some important words and phrases used in this thesis.

*A Thai feminist study:*²⁵ In a Thai feminist study, the subject of the studies is empowered and benefited by the viewpoint of gender equality. A Thai feminist study should locate the inter-related studied subjects of Thai implicated context and the knowledge of women's liberation. The subject is characteristically about any Thai girls and women, and could focus on the effect of gender inequality and/or injustice in Thai society for groups or individual Thai girls and women. It is not certain that only Thai people can supply precise Thai feminist studies. However, Liz Stanley points out that the internal steadfastness and judgment of each researcher can be a difficulty, for background is constantly a complication.²⁶ In a positive way, a Thai feminist study is preferably carried out by Thai feminists.

A Thai feminist is a Thai individual who has many different feminist perspectives, and believes in gender equity and in the liberation of Thai women and the establishment of equality between Thai women and men. Thai feminists should comprehend and be pragmatic about the entire context of Thai culture, including the politics, economy, culture and social expectations of Thai people. Thai feminists need to study feminist waves and theories in western countries as the root of gender equality's transformation. In spite of this, Sherry Gorelick asserts that studying white women will not include an understanding of their anti-Semitism or racism because they do not recognise such oppression internally.²⁷ To be a Thai feminist, by this criterion, is to make a valuable and subjective contribution to Thai society by using interchangeable feminist theories and regarding Thai women's rights as paramount.

Poor and working class Thai women sex workers are Thai girls and women from poor or working class backgrounds with few, or a complete lack of, work and educational opportunities. They are forced to work as a sex worker or a prostitute in

²⁵ Please see more details in chapter five, Feminist Epistemology.

²⁶ Stanley, Liz (1990) 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes', in L. Stanley (Ed.), *Feminist Praxis, Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, Routledge, USA, p. 34

order to survive economically. In addition, poor and working class Thai women sex workers are influenced to do sex work because of poverty and/or the pressure from their poor families, or are sold or lured into prostitution by people they known of, with offers of jobs other than sex work. The terms 'blue-collar', 'plebeian' and 'proletarian' here mean the same as 'working class'.

Thai sex workers and Thai prostitutes are defined as any persons who are Thai women who engage or are engaged in sexual activity for payment. Terminologically, I identify these two categories as meaning the same people. In this thesis these two expressions are taken to be synonymous and used interchangeably. The word 'prostitutes' is designed to use in this thesis with no intention of creating a colourful drama in this thesis.

Thai mail-order brides are Thai women who go or are trafficked to other countries as mail-order brides. These women join *mail-order bride agencies* with the hope of marrying a wealthy foreign husband, typically a wealthy European. These women are diverse in social rank and not always regarded as former or current prostitutes; a number of them are Thai working class women, and a few are middle class.²⁸ Meetings with foreigner husbands are arranged by an agent of one of the mail-order bride businesses which are numerous in Thailand, and usually available on the Internet.²⁹

Trafficking in Thai women means how Thai women are being sent or are taking themselves to other countries with the intention of prostitution, specifically, to first world cities and/or countries. They enter these first world regional countries with the particular purpose of engaging in sex work, both deliberately and unwillingly. These Thai women are going or being sent by people who may or may not be prostitutes. These people, called '*sex traffickers*', collect the profits from trafficking in Thai women.

²⁷ Gorelick, Sherry, 'Contradictions of feminist methodology', *Gender and Society*, Vol. 5, No.1, Dec 1991, pp.46-61

²⁸ Skrobaneck, S., et al (1988) *The Story of Mail-order Brides*, Foundation for women, Bangkok, p.68

²⁹ Skrobaneck, S., et al (1988) loc cit.

*Child prostitutes*³⁰ (in this study) are regarded as girls of up to 15 years old who engage or are engaged in sexual activity for payments. They entered the sex industry because their parents or other people who knew them sold or motivated them to work as prostitutes. Either intentionally, to support their families, or not, they sold their virginity for money.

Red light district areas are where sex work is candidly and openly carried on. In this study, the two areas of Pat Pong, situated in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, and Pattaya³¹, a large suburb in Chonburi, are where Thailand's sex businesses have been recognised and have existed for a long period of time.³² Most of the poor and working class Thai sex workers interviewed for this study used to work in these two areas.

Mamasang is an original Japanese expression which later Thai people called any woman who supervises sex workers. These women usually own or manage go-go dance clubs, bars and nightclubs, and deduct percentages of the wages of prostitutes.³³ Former prostitutes can evolve to be mamasangs after long period of sex work.

Corrupt police (in this study) means police force members, typically policemen, who deceitfully claim sums for their own personal gain from prostitution. In receipt of this money, they ignore the law on prostitution and have associations with people who control the payment of prostitutes.

Cheerman is a man who is servicing and assisting male customers to select girls and women sex workers, classically in a massage parlour or a brothel. In a licensed massage parlour in Thailand, prostitutes are waiting in the mirror hallroom where they cannot see patrons but a customer can see them; cheermen will then act as guides for clientele's requirements.³⁴ These cheermen have a great impact on prostitutes, as they are people who get customers for prostitutes, while prostitutes cannot do this legally for themselves.

³⁰ Please see more details in part two, *Assumptions and limitations*.

³¹ Please see appendix seven and eight, *Photos of contemporary Pat Pong and Pattaya*.

³² Odzer, Cleo (1990) *Pat Pong Prostitution: Its Relationship to, and effect on, the position of women in Thai society*, Ph.D. Dissertation. New School for Social Research, New York, p.102

³³ Boonchalaksi, W. and Guest, P. (1994) *Ibid*, p. 45

³⁴ The Nation, *The miserable life of prostitutes in massage parlour*, Bangkok, Thailand, August 1997, p.5.

Conclusion

This chapter sets out the problem facing poor and working class Thai sex workers which forms the assumption of this thesis. That in order to escape destitution, poor and working class Thai women enter prostitution; but once they have done so they are forced to stay and not to relinquish prostitution. Because most poor and working class sex workers cannot earn enough to do so.

The core objective of this thesis is to empower Thai prostitutes and establish their need for their individual rights on the same basis as other Thai women. My determination is to use my Thai feminist viewpoint to analyse the complexity in prostitution and bring to light the economic obstructions facing these sex workers. In addition, to give power to this subject studied, it was important to give this study a unique perspective, that is to investigate the lives of these sex workers from both sides, in Thailand and in New Zealand.

I have chosen New Zealand to study the lives of these poor and working class Thai women prostitutes with the aim of revealing the other side of their prostitution stories. I also want to make my findings as accessible as possible.

Part II: Assumptions and limitations

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS

Introduction

This chapter asserts the main hypothesis for this thesis: that female poverty is the cause of poor and working class Thai girls and women entering into prostitution worldwide. In this chapter, I provide a literature review on the economic debates on prostitution, to back my hypothesis. A contemporary literature on poor and working class Thai girls and women as prostitutes has arisen in the past twenty years. In Thailand there are countless studies carried out over the past thirty years. However, the literature review in this chapter excludes studies done before the 1990s. The sources of this literature review included various Thailand and New Zealand archives, overseas periodicals (Australia, Canada, USA, Japan, England and Thailand), journals and articles, Internet sources, and the World Wide Web from 1990 - 2001.

I have rejected research concerning wide-ranging prostitution subjects. Instead I focused on economic aspects that revealed the reality about Thai prostitution, and by feminist research on economic subjects and on poor and blue-collar Thai women prostitutes.

Theses written in New Zealand and in the USA, Germany, Canada, France and Australia are available on the OCLC facilities search in the library database of Victoria University of Wellington. It indicated that there were no Ph.D. theses in New Zealand focusing directly on the lives of Thai women prostitutes in Thailand and in New Zealand. Among overseas dissertations from the USA, Germany, Canada, France and Australia, seventy-two studies draw on Thai prostitution background and thirty-nine theses focus on Thai women.³⁵

³⁵ [Http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/catalogue/oclc](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/library/catalogue/oclc), 14/11/1999.

So, in this thesis, I focus on the key arguments found in studies and reports related to the financial context for Thai women prostitutes. These included two divisions of the analysis of feminist and non-feminist debates on female poverty matters, and manifest grounds and detriments in prostitution. Significant studies on Thai women prostitutes also focus on stereotypes as their main concern.

Research questions

This thesis explores the origins of and results from sex work in Thailand and elsewhere, interwoven with the theme of empowering Thai working class women sex workers in any country. This study revisits different aspects such as the social lifestyle, health issue, leisure activity, mental health, money and career, marriage, love and relationship, family side and mind purpose which coupled by damaging result in their lives. Somehow or other, the efforts that Thai working class women sex workers made to evade poverty failed, and their lives are severely affected. This statement may be the effect of Thai mores, as Thai women are inferior in Thailand.

Moreover, the negative nature of sex work is specified as the reason behind the need for new thought about women's rights for Thailand. The thesis is also modified with Thai analytical feminist viewpoints, which attempt to analyse the previous studies. A number of researchers have agreed largely on the effect of poverty, seeing it as functioning to face poor and working class Thai girls and women with an extensive social dilemma. However, this thesis is different, in that it enables Thai working class women prostitutes to speak for themselves, revealing that similar modes of female impoverishment have caused poor and working class Thai women to enter prostitution in different ways. In addition, the entrapped consequence of financial inadequacy from prostitution is clarified by their stories. It evaluates the various workings of economic force among Thai working class girls and women sex workers and assess why they chose the alternative of continuing sex work from among the various options available.

Economic debates on prostitution

Another formally focused study of this thesis is the relationship between economic conditions and prostitution. Though this study is relevant to Thai prostitution, but looked at questions such as how the economic changes of sex work affect the

construction of prostitution. This thesis partly focused on equal rights but not the law, morality and religious control of prostitution. Though seeing the choice of sex work as a trap for economic survival, I look at ethical factors of the sex profession as only background, especially in Thai society, which focuses on empowerment of women prostitutes, as well as emphasising the dilemma of sex work.

Assumptions

While this study revisits the needs of these Thai women sex workers as a heterogeneous group of women, I assume that these poor and proletarian girls and women sex workers are afflicted continually by female poverty initiated by gender inequity in Thai society. As a Thai feminist, I view prostitution as the effect of societal problems, but the impoverishment among Thai women of the working class is the primary focus for my approach.

In 1990, Patricia Green wrote a Masters thesis on the mental and health conditions of Thai women living in slums. This revealed the appalling economic and psychological conditions of poor and working class Thai women lives in the last ten years.³⁶ Green's findings are most relevant to the mental health conditions of Thai women living in slums. Her conclusion did not argue that this psychological impact had driven them into prostitution, but agreed that prostitution caused social problems and poor environments.³⁷

The evident effects in the lives of prostitutes are assumed to confirm the consequence of social problems such as financial insecurity for Thai women prostitutes. In this thesis, the negative impact of sex work is specifically considered as another reason that inspired most sex workers to leave Thailand for an improved standard of living elsewhere. The thesis findings were expected to prove that the norm of living in New Zealand is much advanced over that of Thailand, particularly as the rights of Thai women are better recognised than in Thailand, though this may not be evident in their personal lives.

³⁶ Green, Patricia J. (1990) *Psychological impacts of slum eviction: women in Bangkok*: M.Soc.Sc. (Psychology), University of Waikato, p.47

³⁷ Green, P. (1990) loc cit.

Secondary sources of information

Several feminist books have been written about prostitutes which methodologically analyse their stories as generalised and specified accounts in order to empower the subject studied. Kathleen Barry explains how the Asian women sustain men who are promiscuous, unfaithful, racist and incapable of accepting the gender equalities of western men, using many Thai and English citations.³⁸ Barry addressed the rising number of forced and child prostitutes in Thailand and collected with resulted stories of Thai women who were illegally trafficked to first world countries.³⁹ Roberta Perkins has reported about sex work and sex workers in Australia; in one chapter she focuses on how Thai women sex workers come to Australia to do sex work, but does not state exactly the economic consequences for Thai sex workers in Australia.⁴⁰ Consequently, Barry and Perkins did not state the dilemma of prostitutes related to the consequence of sex work and the mediocre economic rewards it brings, which is the essence of this thesis.

Jan Jordan carried out a study of New Zealand prostitutes in 1991. Her work includes remarkable stories of prostitutes in New Zealand, but she did not include any Thai prostitutes.⁴¹ Jean Turvey is convinced of the economic choice factor in the increasing numbers of foreign prostitutes in the first world.⁴² However, other non-feminist writers, such as Ronald Flowers, see sex work as an extravagant 'vocation', rather than investigating the lives of prostitutes in order to empower them.⁴³

Most feminist and non-feminist writers understand the difficulties of poverty and the true effects of sex work, but slightly do state the real needs of sex workers. Most non-feminist writers regard prostitutes as the objects (not the subjects) of their studies. Rita Brock has explored the relation of poverty in women caused by the conceptualised Asian culture; Thai women sex workers are included as part of the book

³⁸ Barry, Kathleen (1995) *Prostitutes of Sexuality*, New York University Press, USA.

³⁹ Barry, K. (1995) *Ibid*, pp.293-294.

⁴⁰ Perkins, Roberta (1994) *Sex work and sex workers in Australia*, UNSW Press, Australia, p.159

⁴¹ Jordan, Jan (1991) *Working Girls: women in the New Zealand sex industry talk to Jan Jordan*, Penguin, NZ, p.10

⁴² Turvey, Jean (1999) *The wages of sin: a New Zealand prostitute's story*, Random House, New Zealand, p.45

⁴³ Flowers, Ronald B. (1998) *The prostitution of women and girls*, McFarland, England, p.56

and as part of the social problem.⁴⁴ Nickie Robert challenges widespread views about history and movement of prostitutes though her historical and socialist viewpoint regarding inequality as related to the double standard for prostitutes in some parts, but does not discuss Thai women sex workers.⁴⁵

Newspaper stories about Thai prostitution are too numerous to deal with in terms of qualitative or quantitative analysis. Stories from newspapers such as the *Bangkok Post* (a Thai newspaper) and other sources frequently use the modern, colourful and dramatic stories of prostitutes as undying anecdotes. Most challenge the Thai government's attempts to improve Thailand's poor image as a sex capital and AIDS center, by discrediting prostitutes. Some newspapers criticise the problem of sex tourism and the Thai government position that prostitutes are the root of social problems such as AIDS, but do not refine their stories to state the real needs of prostitutes. For example:

'The Thai government hates its country being labeled [SIC] the sex paradise of Asia'.⁴⁶ (*Bangkok Post*, 10/8/97, p.3)

'The promotion of tourism has been disrupted by negative news about prostitutes, HIV/AIDS, child prostitutes'.⁴⁷ (*Melbourne Age*, 22/8/97, p.12)

'The child sex trade, feeding on fear of AIDS among adults, is also gaining around, with children as young as ten years of age being forced into sex and Thai prostitutes in the West'.⁴⁸ (*Thai Rath*, 17/4/2001, p.13)

Journals, articles and research reports

Most journal articles are usually based on studies presented first at conferences or contemporary seminars in Thailand and New Zealand or elsewhere. Nonetheless, studies on Thai prostitutes in New Zealand have not been contributed formally. Articles from overseas address the problems suffered by prostitutes in various ways. Several foundations for women in Thailand and globally are intended to help Thai women sex workers by conducting many researches, annual reports, and providing handbooks and

⁴⁴ Brock, Rita Nakashima (1995) *Casting stones: prostitution and liberation in Asia*, Norton, USA, pp.69-89

⁴⁵ Robert, Nickie (1992) *Whores in History: Prostitution in Western Society*, Grafton: England, pp.224-225

⁴⁶ Tansubhaphol, S, *Crime-bogus Police Nabbed After Sex in Street*, Bangkok Post, 10/August/1997, p.3

⁴⁷ The Melbourne Age, *Australia: News Thai sex workers in debt crown*, 22/8/97, p.2

information, to uphold the rights of Thai women. The most effective that from exploring through journals and conference papers argues the image that most Thai sex workers are mainly poor, young and uneducated. This thesis challenges that though the weakness of their opportunity is influential enough to take risk for money. Organisations for women are working on papers to formulate more effective strategies to protect the rights of prostitutes. Action will stimulate further international networking by relevant organisations to cooperate internationally by supporting and servicing Thai girls and women prostitutes.

Most research representations are aimed at establishing the claim for the elimination of child prostitutes in Asian sex tourism and effective assistance against trafficking in Thai women prostitutes. Nearly all reports considered economic issues regarding prostitution and in relation to unemployment and poverty. Most researchers particularly encouraged the acceptance of rehabilitation and a free sexual health service for all sex workers as the most effective means of support. However, there has been hardly any research on the effects of culture on female poverty and its structural adjustment, and the demands of Thai women prostitutes individually.

Most research involves case reports on the exploitation of children and young girls and women working as prostitutes.⁴⁹ Marilyn Waring reported on the national and international actions taken by relevant organisations to examine and assess the magnitude of the problem of child prostitution.⁵⁰ Jasmine Caye carried out a survey of the number of child prostitutes and forced prostitutes, but did not deal with the number of returned juvenile sex workers.⁵¹

The Centre for Protection of Children's rights (CPCR) is another organisation that has contributed studies on the increase of sexual exploitation and trafficking, but most research deals with prevention and solutions in specific areas, such as programs of

⁴⁸ Thai Rath, *Prostitutes: The big social problem*, Thailand, 16/8/2000, p.3.

⁴⁹ The Center for the Protection of Children's Rights International Relations Team (1996) *Case Study Report on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in Thailand*, CPCR, Bangkok, Thailand, p.12

⁵⁰ Waring, M., et al (1995) *Counting for Nothing*, Case study report on commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand, CPCR, BKK, Thailand, p.28

⁵¹ Caye, Jasmine (1995) *Preliminary Survey on Regional Child Trafficking for Prostitution in Thailand*, UNICEF Eapro, August-November 1995, CPCR, BKK, Thailand, p.53

health education.⁵² The organisations such as Foundation For Women (FFW), Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW) and Image of Asia also set out to provide assistance to prevent trafficking in Thai women.⁵³ The organisation End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) aims to eliminate trafficking, child prostitution and forced prostitution, though some of its reports have worked on other areas such as pornography and family structure in Thai society.⁵⁴

New Zealand studies of Thai prostitutes in economic theme

No thesis in New Zealand has previously been produced directly on the theme of Thai Prostitutes to the year 2001. Kamolmas Jaiyen, a Thai socialist, gave significant political economy descriptions about the sex tourism in Thailand, using international relations theories; prostitutes play a role as only one element of her report.⁵⁵ In addition, Jaiyen concentrated on the political economy analysis that emigration of Thai prostitutes in sex tourism is caused by poverty and global market forces.⁵⁶ Primarily on the international relations theories of Thai government, her thesis did not concentrate on the financial consequences of the trafficking in Thai girls and women for the purpose of prostitution and as mail-order brides to overseas countries, including New Zealand.⁵⁷ Her thesis dealt with these things only as a side issue.

Numbers of Thai prostitutes

Orathai Ard-am and Chanya Sethaput, in their book about Thai child prostitutes, estimated about the number of child prostitutes and presented an overall picture on this issue.⁵⁸ The numbers of prostitutes can indicate that Thai women are suffered by female poverty since the amount of sex workers is growing. Pasuk Phongpaichit completed a

⁵² Centre for Protection of Children's rights (CPCR) *Corrected Final Version NOV 1995, Preliminary survey on Regional Child Trafficking for Prostitutes in Thailand*, commissioned by UNICEF EAPRO, Foundation For Children (FFC), BKK, Thailand, pp.41-42

⁵³ Foundation For Women (FFW) (1996) *The Crime Sex Trade*, Video Documentary, 28 minutes, Bangkok, Thailand.

⁵⁴ Ecpat Australia, *End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and Trafficking*, Australia Incorporated, Australia, March/April 1998, No.46, p.7

⁵⁵ Jaiyen, K. (1997) *The international political economy of sex tourism in Thailand*, Master of Arts in International Relation Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, p.147

⁵⁶ Jaiyen, K. (1997) *Ibid*, p.58

⁵⁷ Jaiyen, K. (1997) *Ibid*, p.149

⁵⁸ Ard-am, et al. (1994) *Child Prostitution in Thailand: A Documentary Analysis and Estimation of the Number of Child Prostitutes*, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Bangkok Thailand, p.106

survey in early 1996; he recorded 7,318 sex establishments overall in Thailand. However, his estimated number of 100,000 prostitutes seems too small.⁵⁹ Gender disparity and societal catastrophe have led to crises in political economy which have promoted the global sex industry. Most notably it has generated many more poor and working class Thai women prostitutes. They have in turn been converted into sex workers who are globally trafficked legally and illegally, including into New Zealand. Their numbers are now countless.

The types and workplaces of prostitutes make identification and enumeration of numbers difficult. A report on NGO projects states that there are estimated to be 300,000 Thais who work directly and indirectly in the sex businesses, and that the number is unclear.⁶⁰ Where understatement of prostitutes does occur, it is most unlikely that prostitutes are working directly and earned a living beneficially.⁶¹ Hence employment as a commercial sex worker is often hidden behind a façade of other occupations. Table 2 shows the categories of workplaces and forms of sex workers in 1993 in Thailand from the Institution of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University.⁶²

Table 2: Direct and indirect workplaces for sex workers in Thailand

Direct ⁶³	Indirect ⁶⁴
Brothel Massage, Parlours Escort Agencies, Street sex workers, Call Girls.	Hotel, Sauna, Hair Salon Bungalow, Guesthouse Nightclub, Discotheque, Karaoke Restaurants, Café.

⁵⁹ Phongpaichit, P., et al (1999) *Guns, Girls, Gambling, Ganja: Thailand's illegal economy and public policy*, Silkworm Books: Chaing Mai, Thailand, p.107

⁶⁰ Weeramunda, A.J. (Dr.) *NGOS Working with Sex Workers, A personal perspective*, A report of NGO Projects in four countries, Dept of Sociology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka, UNDP Regional Project on HIV and Development, New Delhi, India, pp.27-31

⁶¹ Wijers, Marjan and Lap-Chew, Lin (1997) *Trafficking in Women Forced Labour and Slavery-like Practices*, Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV), The Netherlands, p.14

⁶² Boonchalaksi, W. and Guest, P. (1994) *Prostitutes in Thailand*, The Institution of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Thailand, Thai Translation, p.38

⁶³ Please see also, appendix ten, *categories of workplace for sex workers in Thailand*.

⁶⁴ Please see also, appendix ten, *categories of workplace for sex workers in Thailand*.

Female poverty: the ground for entering prostitution

The lack of economic opportunity and insufficiency of education led to increased joblessness, gender disparity and the imbalance of development in the capital and rural areas. This effect had formerly engaged working class women from rural-urban migration have weakened family structures, and encouraged acceptance of sex work as the only or most profitable technique of sustaining the family.⁶⁵

Roguski's Ph.D. thesis is a critical assessment of the power of prostitutes in New Zealand. He makes clear that prostitutes in New Zealand came from different backgrounds and nationalities, including Asians, and that white prostitutes are far more controlling of their own value.⁶⁶ However, he did not really pay particular attention to Asian and/or Thai prostitutes in New Zealand. This thesis states the findings that Thai prostitutes play an insignificant part in setting the price for their services.

Sunindyo took a similar feminist stand in her thesis on the subject of Indonesian prostitutes.⁶⁷ The study focused on the way sex work allows sexual and economic independence under some biased economic conditions. Sunindyo argued that the beliefs about women's subordination affect the cultural and individual identities of female prostitutes.⁶⁸ She looked beyond the analysis that Indonesian women engaged in prostitution as inert victims of patriarchy. Affirmatively, patriarchy is described as the background of the inequity between Thai men and women and Thai women prostitutes are victims of oppressively unequal economic opportunity in Thai society. The snare of sex businesses plus the double standard in Thai society is also the reason that made these women unable to do better.

Shu Ling Hwang's research on Taiwanese prostitutes (1995) examines both the causes and consequences of prostitution.⁶⁹ The sample includes both older and younger Taiwanese and aboriginal women, almost all of whom come from poor or working class

⁶⁵ Nagaraj, D.R. *Images of Asia: Selections from 'Asian Action'*, Asian cultural forum on development, ECPAT, BKK, Thailand, pp.9-10

⁶⁶ Roguski, M. (1997) *The discourse of the prostitutes: an ethnographic study of the power of prostitutes in New Zealand* : Ph.D. Thesis in Social Anthropology, Massey University, New Zealand, pp.196-199

⁶⁷ Sunindyo, S. (1993) *She who earns: The Politics of Prostitution in Java, Indonesia Prostitution*, Ph.D. Dissertation in Feminism, The University of Wisconsin- Madison, USA, pp.325-326

⁶⁸ Sunindyo, S. (1993) *Ibid*, pp.78-79

⁶⁹ Hwang, S.L. (1995) *Agents, Victims or Deviants? Female Prostitutes in Taiwan(China)*, Ph.D. dissertation, School of Sociology, Institution, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, pp.318-319

families. This is similar to my thesis. In addition, as indicated by Hwang, 'juveniles fell into prostitution mainly through the concomitant traumas of poverty, family disruption, school problems, effect from sexual and psychical abuse'.⁷⁰ Importantly, Hwang points out that lifestyles in prostitution were affected by age, parental and spousal abuse and economic conditions.

Nonetheless, Hwang demonstrated that consistency in the social and legal demarcations of prostitution bring about definite advantages for sex workers. In this thesis, I argue that economic and educational evenly balanced equal rights for poor Thai girls and women leads to a reduction of the exploitation of women.

The lack of economic opportunities

Furthermore, if parents have sufficient money not to sell their daughters, then sex work is not the only result of the poverty structure in Thai society. Thai working class women fail financially in the norms of Thai society, which hold that women are supposed to support the family under poor conditions of life. The sanctions of prostitution provide resources to young women to contribute their labour in the sex industry.

Tienchai Wongchaisuwan wrote a Ph.D. in 1993 support this idea that the political economy led to sexual exploitation in Thailand. His thesis is relevant to this study on Thai women and female poverty, as a sociological contribution.⁷¹ Wongchaisuwan argued that capitalist development created over-exploitation, which made women's labour production inclusively unacceptable.⁷² Nevertheless, he did not detect that this effect motivated prostitutes individually to return repeatedly to prostitution, unlike my thesis. His political science study focused mainly on the growth of the Thai economy, in which income reduction and economic crisis forced many Thai women into low education and service employment.⁷³ My thesis strengthens the argument about economic exploitation not only of prostitutes but of Thai women in general.

⁷⁰ Hwang, S.L. (1995) Ibid, pp. 47-49

⁷¹ Wongchaisuwan, T. (1993) *The Political Economy of Thailand: The Thai Peripheral State, 1958-1988*, Ph.D. dissertation, School of Politics Studies, Institution, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA, pp.325-328

⁷² Wongchaisuwan, T. (1993) Ibid, pp.119-120

⁷³ Wongchaisuwan, T. (1993) Ibid, pp.93-95

The insufficiency of education

Poverty can prevent women from gaining basic schooling and affect the demand for commercial sexual services. Lynn Goolsby's study, written in 1994, gives priority to the impact of waged labour and access to education on Thai women's lives and family roles in a provincial capital town in northeastern Thailand.⁷⁴ In the study, women's status improved in Thailand in the last thirty years and in areas such as access to education and to employment. It claims that Thailand meets the standard of women's rights.

Nevertheless, using data gathered during fieldwork in Thailand, Goolsby indicated that the results of the feminist movement from 1984-1994 have been to the disadvantage of many young elite women seeking to repeat the economic successes of the older generation in a substantially changed economic environment.⁷⁵ On the contrary, my thesis reveals that the majority of working class and poor women suffer more from the exploitation of Thai and foreign men because of the way in which the goals of feminism are not acknowledged in Thailand.

Though I agreed that the advance of women in Thailand is not sufficient, according to my thesis's findings. But I believe that the marginalisation of women in Thai education as older generations in the past has contributed to the fact that certain numbers of women have migrated into commercial sex work legally and illegally. This thesis assumes that insufficiency of education strengthened the numbers of women drawn into victims of deceived pattern by sex traffickers. The other issue is that sex work skill offered no alternative of other vocations.

Summing up Thailand's sex industry in the Thai economy

Forced prostitution refers to the situations in which women engage in the sex industry against their own will.⁷⁶ Middlemen, pimps and nightclub owners exploit women's ignorance about job regulations and their desperate hopes for a better life. In overseas

⁷⁴ Goolsby, R.L. (1994) *The impact of Waged labour and Access to education on women's lives and family roles in a provincial capital town in north-eastern Thailand*, University of California(L.A.), USA, pp.46-47

⁷⁵ Goolsby, R.L. (1994) *Ibid*, pp.45-47

⁷⁶ ECPAT Bulletin (1998) loc cit.

cases, when the women arrive, they have to surrender their passports and are coerced by physical and sexual abuse to do sex work.

Ironically, prostitutes working with illegal status as free prostitutes usually work according to their own self-determination.⁷⁷ However, illegal and legal escort and massage parlours are regulated. This makes most massage parlour owners easily charge sex workers and in some cases, prostitutes have to hand over all their money.⁷⁸

It is estimated that industrialisation in Thailand led to a dramatic increase in free and forced prostitutes, so that the sex trade became big business in Thailand. The sex industry has generated estimate between \$THB 450 – 540 (\$NZD 20-28) billion a year from 1990 to 2001.⁷⁹ Due to the sluggish economy and increasing unemployment, illegal activities such as gambling, drug smuggling, prostitutes and illegal trafficking now account for as much as 20% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).⁸⁰ Nonetheless, Thai women have received no increase of employment opportunities in other areas, and in the sex labour force the chances of a positive outcome have decreased.⁸¹ The connection of the growth of the sex industry and the inequalities in women's income has widened the number of women changing to the entertainment industry.⁸² The poverty issue and the lives of Thai women prostitutes elsewhere are linked with the serious health effects from sex work.

The economic and health consequences of prostitution

Panadam's study assumed that both Thailand and Singapore are internationally recognised tourist locations with a high prevalence of prostitution.⁸³ Her study stated that projections for the number of cases and the management of the sexually transmitted

⁷⁷ ECPAT Bulletin, *Of flesh and blood, forced prostitution: one family recounts a journey into hell and back*, May 1998, Vol. 5, pp.17-22

⁷⁸ Warren, K. and Erkal, N. (1997) *Ecofeminism: women, culture, nature*, Indiana University Press, England, p.85

⁷⁹ Menzies, K., 'Imagination in Theory: Culture, Writing, Words and Things', *The Canadian review of sociology and anthropology*, Toronto, Canada, Vol.38, Feb 2001, p.106

⁸⁰ Krech, R. (1997) Mobilisation and Training Programme on Preventing and Monitoring Traffic in Children in the Greater Mekong Area, United Nations Office at Vienna, 17-19 April 1997, Bangkok, Thailand, p.90

⁸¹ Boneparth, E. and Stoper, E. (2001) *Women, Power and Policy toward the year 2000*, 2nd edition, Pergamon Press, USA, p.58

⁸² Lloyd, S. (1996) 'Pleasure's golden bait: prostitution, poverty and the Magdalen Hospital redefining sex in eighteenth century London', *History Workshop Journal*, England, Vol.41, pp.51-72.

disease epidemic in Thailand are not reassuring, as in Singapore. In my thesis, the interview results indicate awareness of disease prevention education, but there can be no exact comparison between Thailand and New Zealand.

Several studies have been done concerning the cause and effect of the poor levels of well-being of Thai women prostitutes. Most studies show sex work to be a trap in terms of improving the health quality of life among Thai prostitutes but they do not state that it is also a trap in terms of improving their economic wellbeing.

Caroline Mallory completed a Ph.D. thesis in 1998 on women prostitutes in Canada.⁸⁴ A major finding from this thesis was that women slid into survival sex as a result of complex interactions between abuse, drug misuse, poor self-perception, and economic crises. Mallory also provided a different perspective, in that women entering sex work go through a process of conforming to the work, and developing a specific set of attitudes to develop different behaviors that facilitate doing sex work. However, my study shows that most sex workers found prostitution to be an impractical solution to their financial problems. In addition, gambling, alcohol and drug use are comforting set the disposition in order to facilitate sex work.

A master's thesis by a public health specialist, Schaefer studied the causes and consequences of female sex workers in the Northern of Thailand.⁸⁵ It hypothesised that a relationship of variable factors is similar basis as in the USA, including less education, unemployment, trauma experiences, and negative self-conception, motivated female inmates engaged in prostitution. Her study offered suggestions in clinical points of view. In my thesis, the family demand and the key reasons of privation are seen as the key rationale that forced Thai girls into prostitution. However, Schaefer asserts that young prostitutes tended to have no control over their money and drug use became a huge problem among them.⁸⁶ On the other hand, she assumed that Thai sex workers suffered most from being affected unfavorably later in their lives because of drug use.

⁸³ Panadam, Hugh Rani (1992) *An overview of the policies and management of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Thailand and Singapore (Immune Deficiency)*, M.P.H., New York Medical College, USA, pp.114-115

⁸⁴ Mallory, C. M. (1998) *Street Prostitution Law Enforcement and Alternative Responses*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Alberta, University of Ottawa, Canada, pp.100-101

⁸⁵ Schaefer, Michael Arthur (1994) *More Than a Vector: A Contextual Examination of Factors Related to Self-Protection from HIV/AIDS Among Female Sex Workers In Northern Thailand Prostitution Immune Deficiency*, PhD Dissertation, The John Hopkins University, School of Health Sciences, USA, pp.245-255

My thesis counteract this idea since the destructive effect from sex work is more varied than only drug use issue, but economic difficulty is sustained.

Stereotypes of women prostitutes

Although most writers conclude generally that Thai sex workers lead underprivileged lives, they see them as stereotyped, and only hypothetically include them as a segment of their investigations. To counter this point, Thai prostitutes themselves do not see sex work as different generally though they are individual women.

The increasing concern in Thailand has led to a study by a Thai woman, Kanokchan Suksomboon.⁸⁷ Her master of law thesis pinpointed the principal factors responsible for the emergence of child prostitutes. Suksomboon argued that international cooperation could provide a concrete solution to the problem. Her thesis designated the effect of sex work but considered the appearance of prostitutes in law conservatively.

There are a number of foreign prostitutes in Thailand, in fact; one reason that their numbers are increasing is the relative poverty and scarcity of good jobs for women worldwide. Prostitutes are divided into different ranks by how the work is done and what form it takes. The divisions include child prostitutes, sex workers in massage parlours and red-light districts, those who traffick themselves to other countries, and mail-order brides, a form of legal trafficking.

Immaculate sex production; child prostitutes (girl)

Girl prostitutes are testimony to the shocking unpalatable fact that the practice of sexual abuse by men offers a solution for many poverty stricken girls. According to Ron O'Grady, 'sexuality is corrupted when it becomes a pattern by which powerful adults can force children into behavior which is unnatural and unhealthy'.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Schaefer, M. (1994) Ibid, pp.68-87

⁸⁷ Suksomboon, K. (1998) *Prostitution Infantile En Thaïlande: Les Droits Internationaux Des Enfants Et Le Droit Interne Thaïlandais*, LL.M., (Translation from French language), French texts, Lutte Contre La Université Laval, Canada, p.88

⁸⁸ Ron O'Grady (1994) *The Rape of the Innocent*, ECPAT, Thailand, p.119

Many research studies deal with the numbers of child prostitutes, but researchers pay very little attention to the women's movement to prevent Thai prostitutes returning to sex work. By contrast, most research reports from non-governmental, non-profit organisations, such as ECPAT, pay attention to the rehabilitation program to prevent girl prostitutes from going back to prostitution.⁸⁹ Thus, Redd regards parents as, ideally, primarily responsible for their children, but sees most poor Thai parents as losing the role of establishing healthy beliefs and approach in their children.⁹⁰ Vanistendael and Vogel have written about the values of life of child prostitutes.⁹¹ He has translated the demand for child prostitutes as a higher purchasing power that places the price of sex work for young girls as a way to get out of poverty.

Another thesis, by Edton Mock, bases research on the issue of child prostitutes in a sociological method.⁹² His report provides a basis for redirecting and unifying global efforts to allow international movements strong enough to rival the spread of criminal networks and halt the development of child prostitution. Several reports have similar approaches to the issue of preventing young girls becoming prostitutes. Not only this thesis exactly investigated the impoverishment of young prostitutes and the strong connection of family in Thai society but it also provided the causes of former child prostitutes returning to sex work.

Women sex workers at the red-light areas and massage parlours⁹³

After the Vietnam War, Pattaya became one of the most famous centers for prostitutes in Thailand.⁹⁴ Now, Pattaya experienced a boom in sex tourism. Consequently, today Pat Pong and other massage parlour areas in the capital city, Bangkok, are presently regulated and urbanized, and form the foundation of the Thai political economy. There are several reviews on the subject of these workplaces, covering the making of money

⁸⁹ ECPAT Philippines, *The Challenge: Rehabilitation of Prostitute Children*, National Consultation – Workshop, March 31- April 1, 1995, PCEP Hostel, UP Diliman, QC, pp.124-137

⁹⁰ Redd, B. (1991) *Position paper on commercial sexual exploitation of children*, International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA), ISCA Assembly Meeting, June 1991, Japan.

⁹¹ Vanistendael, S. (1997) *Children world wide, The family and child resilience*, ECPAT: BKK, Thailand; and Vogel, Per (1996) *Children in Prostitution in Thailand, Causes and Prevention among Hilltribe Groups in Northern Thailand*, Minor Field Study Report Autumn 1996, Thailand, p.53

⁹² Mock, Edton (1997) *Child Prostitution in Thailand*, Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania, Honours Thesis in International Relations: USA, p.24

⁹³ Please see also appendix seven, eight and nine, *contemporary photos of Pat Pong, Pattaya and Massage Parlours Road (Ratchadapisek Rd.) Bangkok, Thailand*.

⁹⁴ McGown, A., et al. (1991) *Thailand's tourist industry, Beached, Pattaya*, The economist, July 6th, p.2

out of prostitutes, but hardly any research includes the pressure of sex worker lives. Cleo Odzer who investigated the red-light area of Pat Pong.⁹⁵ Odzer's research did condemn the responsibility of the Thai culture for allowing Thai women fewer rights and choices, but presenting them with highly predictable roles. Odzer discussed precisely the point that Thai women must demand and obtain more equal rights before any other kind of help can be effective.

Odzer's thesis came close to the heart of this social problem, bordering on the truth about women's struggle to earn a proper wage from prostitution. Odzer also supplied data on the consequences of sex work, obtained from prostitutes in Pat Pong. In a similar way, my thesis examines the ways in which girls and women enter into the sex industry, through interviews with Thai women prostitutes who worked in massage parlours and red-light areas both in Pat Pong and Pattaya. I also ensure that sex workers remain subjects in my research. And this research purpose is related to the effect of poverty stemming from sex work, and I interview workers outside Thailand as well. It can be presumed that the promotion of sex tours in Pat Pong and Pattaya there led to the trafficking of prostitutes to overseas countries.

Global sex commodities: Thai women exported to other countries

Thai women prostitutes are easy targets for sex trafficking. They are sent to other countries with illegal documents, or simply overstay their visas; they seek for better employment, regardless of the circumstances of illegality. Research studies about trafficking in Thai women have regularly focused on countries which a number of Thai women prostitutes go to, and on improvements in helping to prevent such women from living in those countries.⁹⁶ By contrast, my thesis predicts that the number of Thai women sex workers in New Zealand will increase, because of the better living conditions and advancement of women rights in New Zealand, particularly better recognition of the human rights of Thai women.

Some research is concerned with the legal authorities involved in the business of sex trafficking. My thesis investigates the viewpoint of prostitutes themselves, and their

⁹⁵ Odzer, C. (1990) *Pat Pong Prostitution: Its Relationship to, and effect on, the position of women in Thai society*, Ph.D. Dissertation. New School for Social Research, New York.

needs. While it does deal with trafficking in terms of these women entering other countries, the situation of sex work as such and the living circumstances of the sex workers, are the principal focus.

Thai women prostitutes trafficked to New Zealand

Though there has been no study directly about Thai prostitutes being trafficked to New Zealand, nonetheless a few studies have been carried out on the lives and trafficking of Thai women to other countries. A dissertation analyzing the living conditions of prostitutes in Asturia, Spain, by Anton Ignasi Ponsi, discovered that the majority of the prostitutes demand the recognition of their dignity and their civil and work rights.⁹⁷ Although the traditional systems of exploitation have considerably decreased the number of Spanish prostitutes, the rising number of foreign prostitutes were identified as mainly Third World prostitutes. In New Zealand, similar circumstances mean that the central question is the quality of life of Thai women prostitutes (previous and existing) and how best to assist them.

A Ph.D. thesis written in 1998 by Sanghera studied the sexual labour of Nepali and Thai women in the Asian sex industry.⁹⁸ This study analysed the integration of sexual labour of Nepali and Thai women in the sex industry. The degradation of women's labour through the criminalisation of prostitution globally is explained. This thesis relied on real stories, but the theme was constructed to turn the women into objects being studied. Sanghera indicated that the pressure of globalisation was increasing the numbers of women entering into prostitution. While not particularly significant, this research did however implicate various factors contributing to various different distressing effects among prostitutes.

⁹⁶ Shamin, I. (1996) *Trafficking in Women and Girls for Prostitution: Bangladesh Perspective*, paper presented at the parallel sessions: Child Sexual Exploitation, Trafficking Session, pp.4-5

⁹⁷ Ponsi, A.I. (1993) *La cara Oculta De La Luna: Condiciones De Vida De Las Prostitutas En Asturias; the Dark Side of The Moon: Life Conditions of the Prostitutes in Asturia (Spain)*, PhD thesis, Universitat De Barcelona, p. 67 (Spanish)

⁹⁸ Sanghera, J. (1998) *Poverty, Patriarchy and Prostitution: a study of the sexual labour of Nepali and Thai women in the sex industry in Asia*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, USA, pp.306-322

Mail-order brides: an unusual form of prostitute

Barry argues that the trafficking in Asian mail-order brides or prostitutes in western countries shows the promiscuity, infidelity and even racism of western men.⁹⁹ For mail-order brides, there are advertisements published legally for foreign men who are interested in having many alternatives; particularly through the Internet.¹⁰⁰ A mail-order bride service is a form of trafficking in women and a kind of prostitution, begun by men buying women for sexual and domestic service. Mail-order brides are like a product. This kind of trafficking in Thai women takes place around the world.

An important study on Thai mail-order brides in Germany, by Eve Humbeck, examined the fact of marriage migration and changes in cultural identity.¹⁰¹ The study investigated the situation of Thai women married in Germany and their cultural adaptation. According to Humbeck:

‘Due to economic development and an increase in sex tourism in Southeast Asian in recent years prostitution often serves as a last resort for women from rural areas looking for work in the cities and overseas.’¹⁰²

Humbeck’s research was carried out in Thailand and Germany. The gender disparity regarding power and status of women within the marriage relationship indicates more research is needed in this area. There is a similar aspect of my study, on how the language difficulties encountered by women migrants imbalanced the bond between Thai mail-order brides and their New Zealand partners, and created far more problems of upsetting experiences.

My thesis examines the situation by looking broadly at means, including mail-order-brides, involving women who find they have no alternative, in order to survive in Thailand or seek a better life abroad. I did not expect to see it as another kind of prostitution, but I now believe that it is in fact another kind of sex work. For these Thai women prostitutes, it is the choice to go to a better place.

⁹⁹ Barry, Kathleen (1989), *Female Sexual Slavery*, New York University Press, USA, p.185

¹⁰⁰ Please see appendix six, *Mail-order Brides Internet Exemplary Sources*.

¹⁰¹ Humbeck, E.M. (1994) *Marriage Migration and Changes in Cultural Identity: Thai women in Germany*, PhD Dissertation, Arizona State University, School of Women’s Studies, USA, pp.22-27

¹⁰² Humbeck, E.M. (1994) *Ibid*, pp.34-35

Feminist viewpoints on economic rights of women and prostitution

The bodies of Thai women have become one of the main factors in the growth of the Thai economy. There are a number of feminist theses written in a variety of overseas countries that focus on Thai women as prostitutes. Nevertheless, none of them focus on the plight of the women prostitutes and/or include the prostitutes' own views, openly stated. Some of this work has been carried out inside and/or outside Thailand but it was written in languages other than Thai. Most journal articles maintain the feminist position that prostitution results from deprivation of women's opportunity. As a Thai feminist, I correspondingly consider the condition of economic and social factors as the reflection of the pattern of inequality in Thai society.

Leslie Jeffrey examines prostitution policy in Thailand as a product of debates over gender and national identity in the context of western global hegemony.¹⁰³ She sees prostitution as a creation of state capitalism and patriarchy as evident in the importance of the female body to the production and maintenance of national identity. On the contrary, as I explain in this thesis, prostitutes are stereotyped individually.¹⁰⁴ Elite women in Thailand have been able to use their roles as supporters of national identity to legitimise criticism and disciplinary of gender equity.

However, similarly to my study, Jeffrey recognises Thai prostitutes' own demands for their rights as women, workers and political agents. But the debates over economic circumstances are selected as having only subsidiary meaning.

Stephanie Wahab's Ph.D. thesis about social work practice with women who exchange sex for material goods dates back to the beginnings of the social work profession in the United States, in the settlements and charity organisations.¹⁰⁵ In the early 1900s, social workers continued to be active in helping women escape the sex industry, but few services existed to support female sex workers who did not want to leave the sex industry, but needed some assistance with aspects of their lives. Lucas

¹⁰³ Jeffrey, L.A. (1999) *Sex and borders: Gender, national identity and prostitution policy in Thailand*, Ph.D. Dissertation, York University, Canada, pp.44-46

¹⁰⁴ Jeffrey, L.A. (1999) *Ibid*, pp.34-39

¹⁰⁵ Wahab, S. (1997) *Let's Talk about Sex Work: Feminisms, Social Work and The Sex Industry. (Prostitution, Women)*, PhD Dissertation, School of Women's Studies, University of Washington, USA, pp. 32-33

states that because of the stigma attached to sex work and the criminalisation of prostitution, sex workers avoided seeking social services from service providers.¹⁰⁶ In this thesis, I interpret this to mean that the feminist movement needs to help Thai women prostitutes to stand and contend with their position initially.

Conclusion

Worldwide female impoverishment has led to the particular momentary and practical decision to choose the available option of prostitution. The fact that Thai women prostitutes are subjected as a group proves the subordination of women in Thailand. In most research studies of these issues, however, women prostitutes are typecast; their work is observed to be humiliating and they are seen as in need of assistance to leave it. The women themselves are evasive in these studies, and are generally seen as objects. In my study, I have tried to make certain that the women themselves speak out about their own needs and probable empowerment. I have also made the concepts of the empowerment of women and the studied subject central to the particular analysis of the predicament of sex work. The feminist studies on prostitution which I have found most useful are contemporaneous, and related to different viewpoints on how to empower women with comparable cultural, political and economic bases.

¹⁰⁶ Lucas, A.M. (1998) *The Dis(-)ease of being a Woman: Rethinking Prostitution and Subordination*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California Berkeley, USA, pp.128-129

CHAPTER THREE

FEMINIST THEORIES ON PROSTITUTION

Introduction

Feminist activism has increased access to human rights for many women. This chapter examines international feminist debates on prostitution. In this chapter, I give an overview of feminist theory on prostitution published since 1990, by focusing the key solutions put forward to prevent sexual exploitation of prostitutes. The experiences of Asian and western prostitutes are examined of the similar and different accounts along with Thai prostitutes' context. I discuss that feminists see female subordination, sex exploitation and patriarchy as the base of coercion of sex work. Thus, I conclude by assessing the value of these feminist theories and methodologies in light of my research on Thai women prostitutes. Because prostitutes need effective rights and a degree of control over their working conditions. I review specific approaches of different kinds of feminism, which analyse women's oppression. Their key arguments are based on liberal, Marxist, radical or socialist feminist theories about prostitution.

In addition, I also specify different feminist theoretical analysis on prostitution by focusing on legislation and solutions for sex workers. The discussion of legalisation versus decriminalisation of prostitutes is given, as well as the eradication of forced prostitution and the social welfare benefit.

I first define important terms used in this chapter.

Female subordination

Female subordination is used in this thesis to describe the ways women are ranked as second-class citizens by the laws and customs of society. McKeganey states that this ideal concept of appropriate female behaviour exists solely in male-dominated society.

¹⁰⁷ With regard to Thai women who are subject to power or authority that makes women subservient or dependent in the society, feminist theory has produced diverse

¹⁰⁷ McKeganey, Neil (1996) *Sex Work on the Streets: Prostitutes and their Clients*, Open University Press, France, p.95

and competing concepts about both the general patterns of inequality and the broader structures, belief systems and institutions which produce and organise particular experiences. In challenging the male-dominated society, any feminist theory needs to refer to historical accounts that are based on western traditions.¹⁰⁸ In order to analyse and understand feminist theories with regard to Thai women's subordination, I also have to take into account the tactics, grounds and profit techniques used by Thai and foreign men to exploit Thai working class women prostitutes.

Sex exploitation

In general, Thai women have engaged in labour and performed a mass of work equal to the engagement and work of men. By contrast, however, their returns for their labours have not been equal to those of men. Sexual exploitation is the term used to describe an unethical benefit from the work or actions of prostitutes. Typically, Thai and foreign men and women who are not prostitutes gain the main profit from the sex industry, through cheating on prostitutes.¹⁰⁹ In Thailand, sexual exploitation of children nowadays occurs in many parts of the country, and is not just confined to the larger organised areas.¹¹⁰

Moreover, sex exploitation explained the humiliation's narrative in Thai women's chronicle. In the last thirty years, sex work has become genuinely ingrained in modern Thai culture.¹¹¹ Since 1975, when the American army landed at Pattaya, on the border of the eastern part of Thailand, in the Vietnam War, the number of prostitutes has increased rapidly. Now Pattaya is the biggest red-light district in Thailand.¹¹² The American military apparently believed in sex activities as a special relief for the soldiers.¹¹³ Later on, this resulted in foreigners regarding Asian women as 'other', and

¹⁰⁸ Pateman, C and Gross, E. (1986) *Feminist Challenges Social and Political Theory*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, p.203

¹⁰⁹ Skrobanek, S., et al (1988) *The Stories of Mail-order Brides*, Foundation For Women (FFW), Bangkok.

¹¹⁰ Narvesen, O. (1989) *The sexual exploitation of children in developing countries*, Redd Barna, Norway, pp.225-228

¹¹¹ Muntarbhorn, Vitit. (1996) *Sexual Exploitation of Children: World Campaign for Human Rights Study Series 8*, Geneva, Centre for Human Rights, United Nations, p.4

¹¹² Sturdevant, Sandra P. and Stoltzfus, Bienca (1992) *Let the Good Times Roll, Prostitutes and the U.S. Military in Asia*, The New York Press, USA, p.24

¹¹³ Boonchalaksi, W. & Guest, P. (1994), op cit., p.20

as exotic sexual objects, or 'slave-girls', available for purchase by western men.¹¹⁴ In regards to Asian women, they are also participated in the deleterious practice of sexual slavery. The war crimes committed against comfort women during World War II in countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Philippines and Korea is another classical description of Asian women's sex exploitation.¹¹⁵

However in this study, barriers such as language and communication or bias add to the likelihood of Thai women prostitutes being sexually exploited in New Zealand and overseas countries.¹¹⁶ This practice could lead to the repeat of the phenomenon of sex exploitation in the overseas sex trade. Feminists should reflect that sexual exploitation by Thai and foreign men can occur for any woman, even though in this thesis I focus only on poor and proletarian Thai women prostitutes.¹¹⁷

Male hypocrisy

Hence male hypocrisy is the practice whereby men pretend that they have higher standards than others do, yet do not perform activities consistent with their statement. In its exact sense, this male two-facedness is assumed to be the basis for the growth of female poverty and misery in Thailand. Writing on the exactness of social parity between the sexes, Weedon points out that many different groups of men persistently exhibit this type of hypocrisy.¹¹⁸

In this study, the term covers the situation where men are responsible for determining whether they go to prostitution in order to buy sex and power; but despite this, men then condemn prostitutes as social trouble, and bring about the appalling effect of their excessive denigration in society.¹¹⁹ Thai male hypocrisy is considered as

¹¹⁴ Mensendiek, Martha (1997) Women, migration and prostitutes in Thailand, *International Social Work*, April 1997, Vol. 40, No.1, p. 165

¹¹⁵ Sangmie Choi Schellstede. (2000) *Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military: Includes New United Nations Human Rights Report (Science and Human Rights series)*, Holmes & Meier Publishers, USA.

¹¹⁶ Skrobaneck, S., et al (1997) *Trade in Women: Is it Thai mores?: Research report*, Thai translation, Foundation For Women (FFW), Bangkok, p.22

¹¹⁷ Wahab, S. (1997) *Let's Talk about Sex Work: Feminisms, Social Work and The Sex Industry. (Prostitution, Women)*, PhD Dissertation, School of Women's Studies, University of Washington, USA, pp. 136-138

¹¹⁸ Weedon, Chris (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford, pp.12-42

¹¹⁹ Hon, L.C. (1995) 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Public Relations', *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 1995, Vol.7, No.1, pp.27-31

the base of gender inequality which caused economic and cultural turmoil for Thai women.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a form of social organisation in which male rules control society and its culture. According to Hartmann:

‘We (feminists) define patriarchy as a set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men and solidarity among them which enable them in turn to dominate women.’¹²⁰

According to feminist theorists, a patriarchal societal structure is responsible for the stigma surrounding prostitution.¹²¹ Since patriarchal assumptions pervade the female occupation and consign women workers to the lowest-paying and least-desirable jobs. In addition, women sex workers' involvement in Thai sex labor confines them at patriarchal ideologies that had earlier limited them to a narrow societal and economic role in society.¹²² Conclusionally, analytical explanations of the poor and working Thai women sex workers' situation are grounded inside the scope of a culturally patriarchal context. It is expected that findings of this study will enkindle solutions to patriarchal effect on poor and working class Thai women sex workers' life in order to empower them.

International feminist analysis on prostitution

For many decades, feminism puts forward as many different solutions for the problems identified as political theory does. The first wave until third wave feminists heighten understanding, create order out of confusion, and find solutions to complex problems for women in western world. Though different feminists such as liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist feminists perceive the root of gender inequality in many different ways. But the political exploration of relationships and sexuality involves

¹²⁰ Hartmann, H. (1993) ‘The unhappy marriage of Marxism and Feminism’, *Women's studies Essential Readings*, New York University Press, New York, USA, pp.12-15

¹²¹ Boneparth, Ellen & Stoper, Emily. (1997) *Women, Power and Policy toward the year 2000*, Pergamon Press, UK., pp.211-229

¹²² Wahab, S. (1997) *Ibid*, p.221

feminist theory in composite ways. The basic foundation of feminist theory is its focus on women's rights, empowerment, equality and freedom.¹²³

Teal contributes a study that constructs a new gender ideal and offers a criticism of the analysis of the figure of the western prostitutes by pre-modern feminists.¹²⁴ However, the philosophical context of Teal's work leads to a theoretical feminist approach which reworks the figure of the prostitute into a modernist gender stereotype. In my thesis, western feminism is used as an innovative theory of gender equality to analyse first of all the economic and social issues facing Thai women. In addition, I believe that women empowerment will specify preventive patterns for Thai prostitutes of coping with patriarchal conflict.

Studies of the experiences of present day prostitutes establish some empowering context for a further evaluation of feminist theories of prostitution. Sanchez draws upon the experience of prostitutes of different races, and looks at the economic circumstances among American prostitutes.¹²⁵ It investigates 'the framing of commercial sex against the backdrop of global capitalism, including the relationship between macroeconomic forces and the formation of local sex markets and the everyday life experiences of participants in these sex markets'.¹²⁶ This liberal feminist study also describes the double standard and patriarchal society itself as significant forces in prostitutes' lives.

Considering this viewpoint, Thai women's choice of sex work is already determined by this patriarchal condition. In western prostitution, sex work alternative is decided by the termination of being exploited as a low-paid worker. Basically, Sheila Jeffreys asserts that it is the women's freedom to choose their individual job alternative to become a sex worker.¹²⁷ While Asian women and Thai women are faced with severe poverty, they apparently have the only choice in the aspect of poverty-stricken living circumstance.¹²⁸

¹²³ Mary Holmes (1999) 'Feminism and Sexuality', *Women's Studies International Forum*, New Zealand, 2000, pp. 235-246

¹²⁴ Teal, L.J. (1993) *'Sellers of Illusion': Prostitution and The Discourses of Modernism (Feminist)*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Brown University, USA, pp.211-212

¹²⁵ Sanchez, L.E. (1998) *Sex, Violence, Citizenship, and Community: An Ethnography And legal Geography of Commercial Sex in One American City*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, USA, p.72

¹²⁶ Sanchez, L. (1998) *Ibid*, pp.89-90

¹²⁷ Jeffreys, Sheila. (1997) *The idea of prostitution*, Spinifex Press, Australia.

¹²⁸ Brock, Rita Nakashima (1995) *Casting stones: prostitution and liberation in Asia*, Norton, USA.

Asian economy is almost universally controlled by Asian men, so any benefit to Asian women is, often violated by Asian men.¹²⁹ The impoverishment of Asian third world women including Thai women is the transformation of inequality through legal and social definition. Sanghera examines that 89% of Southeast and South Asian women faced with discrepancy of poverty and found no or less choice of occupation.¹³⁰ In Taiwan, Hwang's study indicated that Taiwanese and Chinese immigrant women who are caught in poverty can easily turned to prostitution or being trafficked to neighbor countries/regions such as Hong Kong, Korea or Japan.¹³¹

Sunindyo also asserts the fact that sex and women's bodies are easily traded since the role of women in Indonesia's economy has resulted in tragic direction.¹³² For western prostitutes, Laurie Bell analyses that in western societies, prostitution has been seen as the establishment of trading, of women's bodies, though with desperate acquiescence.¹³³

Nevertheless, particular various reasons such as prior sexual abuse, incest experience in the home and underpaid in the labor force can sensibly turn sex work as a mean of preferred living.¹³⁴ This can be concluded that poor Thai women's alternative of sex work in Thailand and Asia is the only choice and a coercion to survive. While prostitution in western countries is a selected choice of work, which better than keeping up with an unjust salary in the work force's system. However, the choice of sex work in both Asian and Western association is the constraint by means of male hypocrisy. Men intended for poor and working class women to be trapped into total economic destruction. According to Jan Jordan,

'While men persist in regarding a woman's sexuality as her most prized and valuable commodity, and while patriarchal control of labour relations

¹²⁹ Brock, R. N. (1995) Ibid, p.59

¹³⁰ Sanghera, J. (1998) *Poverty, Patriarchy and Prostitution: a study of the sexual labour of Nepali and Thai women in the sex industry in Asia*, PhD Dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, USA, pp.306-322

¹³¹ Hwang, S.L. (1995) *Agents, Victims or Deviants? Female Prostitutes in Taiwan(China)*, Ph.D. dissertation, School of Sociology, Institution, The University of Wisconsin-Madison, USA, pp.31-39

¹³² Sunindyo, S. (1993) *She who earns: The Politics of Prostitution in Java, Indonesia Prostitution*, Ph.D. Dissertation in Feminism, The University of Wisconsin- Madison, USA, pp.325-326

¹³³ Bell, Laurie (1987) *Good girls/bad girls: feminists and sex trade workers face to face*, Seal Press, USA.

¹³⁴ O'Neill, Maggie (2001) *Prostitution and feminism: towards a politics of feeling*, Polity Press, USA.

continues to marginalise women economically, prostitution will remain a viable alternative to many women'.¹³⁵

Not only poverty, the lack of education and economic opportunity plays very important roles in causing women entered the sex industry, but also hierarchical family and institutional structures in Thailand heavily influence poor and working class Thai women sex workers to enter the sex industry. In New Zealand, Jordan's findings demonstrated that family ignorance conducted psychological effect, in their initiation toward prostitution.¹³⁶ Furthermore, it is not a norm in Thailand; as traditional responsibility for family value makes Thai women sex workers different from other Asian and western prostitutes.

Mothers or fathers are not blamed for selling daughters into Thailand's prostitution. It is considered that a traditional pattern for Thai daughters is to spend financial dependability as compensations to their parents because the aversion of being a daughter, which influenced by the culture's preference of a son.¹³⁷ This social expectation has driven Thai mothers sells daughters into prostitution without guilt. Similarly, other practices in different societies' terms can demonstrate individual double standard in particular social belief. For examples, female genital mutilation in Africa and Middle East is a painful and dangerous practice, whereby part or all of the female child's external genitalia are cut away.¹³⁸ And the advantages of natural feet and the disadvantages of bound feet of a daughter in Chinese cultural; mothers will be responsible for this abuse.¹³⁹

To my concern, if a mother still believe that the endurance of these culture values would not ruin the future of their own daughter, women's empowerment will not be based on the premise that it is enabling condition for women's expedience in their society.

¹³⁵ Jan Jordan. (1992) *Feminism and Sex Work: Connections and Contradictions* In Rosemary Du Plessis et al (eds): *Feminist Voices: Women's Studies, Texts for Aotearoa, New Zealand*, p.185

¹³⁶ Jordan, Jan (1991) *Working Girls: Women in the New Zealand Sex Industry Talk to Jan Jordan*, Penguin, NZ, p.128

¹³⁷ Limanonda, B., 'Families in Thailand: Beliefs and realities', *Special Issue: Families in Asia, Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 1995, Vol. 26, No.1, pp.67-82

¹³⁸ Robinson, B. (2001) Religious tolerance, http://www.religioustolerance.org/fem_cirm.htm, USA.

¹³⁹ Mackie, Gerry (1996) *Ending Footbinding and Infibulation, A Convention Account*, p.61

In term of the effect of sex work, Thai, Asian and western sex workers reflects the similar financial strain and traps of sex exploitation of patriarchal power. Toward the Thai social and economic context, double standard in patriarchal Thai society has reinforced and alleviated poor and working class Thai women to accept sex work condition.¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, Jeffreys points out that prostitution is created by the disadvantage of women in a global society on whose economic, political and sexual account are controlled by men.¹⁴¹

In a similar practice, the exploitation of sex industrial workers through management among Thai and other Asian women sex workers is purveyed, by a group of people who involved in the sex business; such as sex trafficker, mamasang, cheerleader, client, police and/or even family.¹⁴² Similarly, western women sex workers tended to have calamity of sex exploitation and abuse, though by other people in the sex business than from family/relations. Perkins explains that Australian clients' assault is women sex workers' risk because sex worker owns no right of denial to meet client.¹⁴³

In term of working condition; violence on the job and health pressure is normal concern of sex workers in Asian and western societies. In Thailand, A patriarchal system that enjoys the support of men but not of women is likely to establish a crisis of unfair treatment to women sex workers.¹⁴⁴ From Maggie O'Neill's viewpoint, it is understood that the preposterous patriarchal conservatives can make the most powerless man to abuse or rape prostitutes without guilt since he was convinced he has the rights to act.¹⁴⁵ It is a humiliation that women prostitutes in Asia and in the West belong to the males of this ruling class. In reality, women sex workers deprecated with sexual violence and enslavement, though were forced to accept this circumstance as an output of male domination.

¹⁴⁰ Brock, R.N.(1995) Ibid, pp.22-28

¹⁴¹ Jeffreys, Sheila. (1997) Ibid, pp.56-71

¹⁴² Lim, Lin L. (1998) The Sex Sector, The economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia, International Labour Office, Geneva.

¹⁴³ Perkins, Roberta (1991) *Working girls: prostitutes, their life and social control*, ACT, Australia.

¹⁴⁴ Lim, Lin L. (1998) Ibid, pp.25-27

¹⁴⁵ O'Neill, Maggie (2001) *Prostitution and feminism: towards a politics of feeling*, Polity Press, USA., p.22

In some Asian countries like Korea or Japan, such female subordination and patriarchy is much acclaimed to ruin the campaign of safe sex and safe drug use purposeless. The narrow influence of feminism and the rapprochement of women comfort in Japan do not give justice to them, who need gender equality's adequacy and endeavor to end all forms of inequality.¹⁴⁶ Sex workers in Japan is a mean to satisfy men, safe sex is also considered as another intention to dissatisfy men.¹⁴⁷ In contrast with Thailand's situation, the combat against the spread of HIV and other STIs among prostitutes is more effective than the safe drug use.¹⁴⁸ With particular attention to safe sex practice, Thai sex workers tended to gain the make negotiation of condom use possible.¹⁴⁹ Though the awareness of clients' physical power to deny sexual service or profit were determining factors in condom use negotiation among most prostitutes.¹⁵⁰

However, male values such as false morality and cautious patriarchal thoughts are adequate to resist and insult the progress of safe drug use among other Asian women prostitutes.¹⁵¹ In Thailand, illicit drug use among prostitutes has not been given assistance because of morality concern.¹⁵² Health education is neither provided. The problem of drug use among prostitutes between Thailand and New Zealand is determined conversely. While safe drug use in New Zealand is recognised and provided by mutual support and information for and by sex workers.¹⁵³ In Thailand and all Asian countries, it remained unclear whether increasing numbers excluded or included AIDS cases involved drug use among prostitutes.¹⁵⁴ However Perkins points out that women sex workers in Australia also had an extensively higher severity of drug use. From this point, drug use is determined as the major alertness in the global sex industry.

¹⁴⁶ Khor, Diana (1999) Organizing for change: women's grassroots activism in Japan: *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 3, Fall 1999, pp. 61-63

¹⁴⁷ Cobb, J & Buruma, I. (1995) *Geisha: The Life, the Voices, the Art*, Knopf Alfred, USA.

¹⁴⁸ Hanenberg, R. and Rojanapithayakorn, W., Changes in prostitution and the AIDS epidemic in Thailand, *AIDS Care*, 1999, Vol.10, pp. 69-79

¹⁴⁹ Hanenberg, R. and Rojanapithayakorn, W. (1999) *Ibid*, p.141

¹⁵⁰ Cusick, L., 'Non-Use of condoms by prostitute women', *AIDS Care*, Carfax Publishing, USA, 2000, Vol.10, No.2, pp. 133-146

¹⁵¹ Jayawardena, Kumari & Procida, Mary A. (1996) The white woman's other burden: *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 30, No.1, pp. 54-56

¹⁵² Phongpaichit, Pasuk, et al (1999) *Guns, Girls, Gambling, Ganja: Thailand's illegal economy and public policy*, Silkworm Books, Chaing Mai, Thailand, p.27

¹⁵³ Interview with Catherine Healy, the National Coordinator at New Zealand Prostitutes Collectives, NZPC, 19 June 2001.

¹⁵⁴ Pyett, P.M. and Warr, D.J., 'Vulnerability on the streets: female sex workers and HIV risk', *AIDS Care*, Carfax Publishing, USA, 1999, Vol.9, pp. 539-547

The alleviation of mental and emotional problems though spending money on gambling is popular among Asian women. From the findings, Thai women sex workers exhausted their money in the Auckland's casino in New Zealand. As long as Thai and other Asian women are inclined to relieve their personal stress by spending their money on gambling and alcohol. Nevertheless, in Asian countries, illicit drug use is the crime against women prostitutes especially forced and child prostitutes in order to transform them obey and pursue advent of client's comfort.¹⁵⁵ But most feminists agreed that drug use became a strong influence the life of western sex workers. Roberta Perkins states that women may enter prostitution in order to fund their drug use and to increase confidence, control and closeness to others and to decrease feelings of guilt and sexual distress.¹⁵⁶ From my findings, most prostitutes who are trafficked to New Zealand and overseas are drugs and/or alcohol addicted.

Feminist views on Thai women trafficking

Though sex work has not brought Thai sex workers economic security, they still have virtually no chance of being trafficked in order to improve their financial circumstances in overseas. My findings illustrated that women are trafficked to marry foreign women to be divorced and return to prostitution in overseas' sex industry. It is also shown that the work conditions of sex workers who are trafficked to first world countries suffered by inferior condition than origin or western prostitutes. Most women who were trafficked to overseas, may have to work in order to pay off their visa/travel arrangement's money, the owner of the bar/massage parlour is paid with the deduction from their earnings.¹⁵⁷ From findings, some prostitutes who travel to first world countries in Asia, such as Japan or Singapore, are placed in worse situations.

Most countries in the third world have for longer or shorter periods been colonised and governed by a foreign and colonial power.¹⁵⁸ The theory of 'Orientalism' provides an excellent perspective for seeing how Asian women serve as sex

¹⁵⁵ Phongpaichit, Pasuk, et al (1999) *Guns, Girls, Gambling, Ganja: Thailand's illegal economy and public policy*, Silkorm Books, Chaing Mai, Thailand, p.27

¹⁵⁶ Perkins, Roberta (1991) *Working girls: prostitutes, their life and social control*, ACT, Australia.

¹⁵⁷ Skrobaneck, S. (1997) *Strategies Against Trafficking in Prostitution: The case of Thailand*. The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), Bangkok, p.13

¹⁵⁸ Collins, Patricia H. (1991) *Work, family and Black women's oppression in Black Feminist Thought*, Routledge, USA and England, pp.54-56

commodities.¹⁵⁹ 'Orientalism' is a term used to account for the western male view, especially as imperial rulers, of others in the Asian world.¹⁶⁰ A key feature of Orientalism is the way in which it regards Asian women, including Thai women, as obtuse exotic sexual merchandise.

Nowadays, prostitution, labor migration and illegal trafficking in Thai girls and women are growing in importance as profit-making activities.¹⁶¹ According to a study on Thai sex workers in Sydney, by Linda Brockett and Alison Murray imported Thai sex workers have the lowest status and are already marked out in the Australian sex industry by the high level of exploitation and of foreign client violence they suffer.¹⁶²

Mail-order-brides, in particular, suffer from racism. For Thai women sex workers who are trafficked internationally to work abroad as prostitutes, they are treated harshly when they get caught. They also suffer from miserable working conditions, sexual harassment and racism. In New Zealand when they are arrested, because of overstaying their visa, they are deported to their home countries with traumatic consequences. Rehabilitation programs are not provided for them when they go back home. Consequently, poor and working class Thai prostitutes usually fall back on their previous sex profession. This is a vicious cycle.

In conclusion, prostitution associated in the West at least, with particular Asian societies is the crime against women with international, national, or regional patriarchal influence, including violent that are transient in nature. In addition, Perkins states that western women in prostitution faced with the hypocritical male sexual morality that socially condemned prostitutes for being a sex commodities.¹⁶³ The explanation about violence and exploitation of sex workers became the chief responsibility in Asian and western countries; convince that any victim of patriarchal effects elaborates on well within the underclass. The attention given here is that feminism in association with ideology of 'internationalism' and a modernistic politics of 'globalism' are capable to

¹⁵⁹ Cobb, J & Buruma, I. (1995) Ibid, pp.86-88

¹⁶⁰ Mendus, S. and Rendall, J. (1994) Sex and Race: The Construction of Language and Image in the Nineteenth Century; Chapter 3, *Sexuality and Subordination*, New York Press, USA, p.94

¹⁶¹ Sassen, Saskia. Women's burden: counter-geographies of globalization and the feminization of survival: *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 53, No. 2, Spring 2000, pp. 23-24

¹⁶² Brockett, L. and Murray, A. (1999) 'Sex work and Sex workers, Thai sex workers in Sydney', *Sex work in Australia*, Pentagon, Sydney, pp.191-202.

¹⁶³ Perkins, Roberta (1991) *Working girls: prostitutes, their life and social control*, ACT, Australia, p.38

persuade ambient factors to accept a global vision of Asian and western political and social change conforming to the standard defending male sovereignty over global prostitution. It is assumed that findings of this study will prove that the majority of prostitutes have suffered emotionally from doing sex work; empowerment of the 'life situation' of these women sex workers is necessary.

Different feminist thoughts

Feminism does not offer a singular or unified feminism. Since feminists always try to place and analyse women and men in various complex of power. Contemporary feminist studies are characterised as multi-disciplinary feminism of an evolving body of theory and practice informed by different wide-ranging intellectual beliefs.¹⁶⁴

Thus the paradox of feminist contexts may develop an understanding of freedom that recognizes several ways in which patriarchal contexts set the standard within women's power. The difference has gradually become important concept of two sorts as 'independent' and 'interdependent' society. I will now examine gender in the context of liberal, Marxist, radical and socialist feminism's division and perspective.

Liberal feminism

Liberal feminists see women as discriminated against by societal systems. Liberal feminist solutions to women's oppression are aimed to produce equal opportunities in relationships between men and women.¹⁶⁵ I define liberal feminists as interested in removing patriarchy from the larger institutions governing society, and sincerely believing in equal provision of education and employment. Jagger assert that liberal feminists criticise the economic oppression of women within the patriarchal free market.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Zinn, Maxine Baca. Theorizing difference from multiracial feminism: *feminist Studies*, Vol. 22, No.1, Summer 1996, pp.321-331

¹⁶⁵ Anttonen, Anneli Maria Irmeli (1997) *Feminism Ja Sosiaalipolitiikka: Mitten Sukupuolesta Tehtiin Yhteiskuntateoreettinen Ja Sosiaalipolitiikka: Miten Sukupuolesta Tehtiin Yhteiskuntateoreettinen Ja Sosiaalipolitiikka Avainkasite*, Translated title: *Feminism and Social policy: A study on the conceptual construction of gender in feminist scholarship on social policy*, A Ph.D. Dissertation, Tampereen Yliopisto (Finland), p. 35

¹⁶⁶ Jagger, Alison M. (1983) *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, Rowman & Allanheld Publishers, The Harvester Press, USA, p.20

Furthermore, liberal feminists essentially want to even out the existing status and power in society. The available democratic structures are seen as capable of providing effective legal reform for women.¹⁶⁷ While such reforms would generate a form of equality for women, this political path alone would not lead to excessive change in economic, political and cultural areas of Thai society.

Conceptually, Alice assert that liberal feminists have moved far towards asserting specifics and differences among women, and have in the course of this shift encountered the confines as well as the value of politics based on identities.¹⁶⁸ The hallmark of liberal feminist theory is the type of formal political activity practiced by larger organisations of the feminist movement. In addition, Ianello explains that liberal feminists accept the reality of having to work within hierarchical organisations in order to work for equality.¹⁶⁹

In favor of liberal feminists, the roles of women are seen as equal and interchangeable with those of men. McIntosh states that the liberal feminists conceive of their role as an attempt to provide a risk-free but visible sphere of action for women's equality.¹⁷⁰

The issue of cooperative gender equality is related to the issue of prostitution. Morgan states that issues of public and private power relations, self-esteem, historical significance, the importance of female connections, and the need for a viable political movement have all apparently been responded to by liberal feminism.¹⁷¹ Liberal feminists are concerned with things such as employment and education.¹⁷² In this respect, liberal feminists do tend toward general agreement with what most people wish for and see as possible.

¹⁶⁷ Jagger, A. (1983) Ibid, p.21

¹⁶⁸ Alice, L. (1995) 'What is Post-feminism? Or, having it both ways', in *Proceeding of the Feminism Post-modern/ Post-feminism Conference*, Massey University, New Zealand, 17-19 November 1995, p.8

¹⁶⁹ Ianello, K. P. (1992) *Decisions Without Hierarchy: feminist interventions in organisation theory and practice*, Routledge, USA, pp.67-99

¹⁷⁰ McIntosh, Mary (1996) 'Feminist debate on Prostitutes', chapter 9 in *Sexualizing the social: Power and the Organisation of Sexuality*, St. Martin's Press, USA, pp.96-97

¹⁷¹ Morgan, B. L., 'Putting the feminism into feminism scales: Introduction of a liberal feminist Attitude and Ideology Scale' (LFAIS), *Sex roles*, 1996, Vol.34, No.5/6, p.22

¹⁷² Alice, L. (1995) Ibid, p.23

Ultimately, liberal feminists see prostitution as a result of economic and educational insufficiency's pressures on women to survive. In economic terms, prostitutes are acceptable; however, liberal feminists want to see prostitutes entitled to the right to live without prejudice.¹⁷³

Marxist feminism

For most Marxist feminists, the claim that women were exploited by the system of the free market in capitalism has characteristically referred to women from the poor and working class.¹⁷⁴ Marxist feminists understand the class demarcation, and according to Karl Marx's words, 'openly attack theoretical leftists who attack capitalism, scorn the consumed and yet themselves scramble for the rewards of the speculative status system'.¹⁷⁵ By examining the use of women's labour-power, the partnership of patriarchy and capitalism can be systematically related.

Marxist feminists see women as oppressed by sex class differences, rather than economic class, in capitalist societies.¹⁷⁶ Women are seen as suffering from societal discrepancy within an economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than by the state. Marxist feminists see prostitution as a problem occurring mainly because of free market enterprise.

Marxist feminists believe that women are oppressed in specific ways that are attributable to patriarchy rather than to capitalism. Karl Marx once wrote that 'money turns everything into its opposite- virgins to prostitutes'.¹⁷⁷ Therefore, the oppression of women is a core attribute of capitalism, and socialism cannot be accomplished without a struggle against patriarchy. Sex work is an inherently unequal practice defined by the intersection of capitalism and patriarchy. Free markets favor those who have power,

¹⁷³ Jagger, A. (1983) Ibid, p.89

¹⁷⁴ Gorelick, Sherry, 'Contradictions of feminist methodology', *Gender and Society*, Vol. 5, No.1, Dec 1991, p.60

¹⁷⁵ Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1964) *The German Ideology*, Vol.1 Progress Publishers, Moscow.

¹⁷⁶ Jackson, Stevi, et al. (1993) loc cit.

¹⁷⁷ Marx, K. and Engels, F. (1964) Ibid, p.78

therefore poor women who are often the most vulnerable members of their societies rarely benefit from the free market.¹⁷⁸

Marxist feminist theory implies that the annihilation of free enterprise begets the abolition of prostitution. It is not clear whether Marxist feminists think the opportunity to affect gender parity in this way can be achieved solely as a side effect of the abolition of capitalism. The fact that Marxist feminist theory seeks to limit widespread self-interest is one way of expressing the need for universal altruism. In terms of the situation of Thai prostitutes, I argue that entrepreneurship does not wholly produce their substandard way of life, as Marxist feminism supposes, but is in fact only part of the problem.

Finally, the Marxist feminism concept sees gender social conformity as perpetuated through male dominance. Marxist feminists regard women's role as being the opposite of men, so that, according to Marx, men 'lift up the male brain at the expense of the female body'.¹⁷⁹ I concur that Thai women are regarded as a sex commodity in Thailand. Though Thai female bodies' trade is not only grounded at the inferior role of Thai women contrasted Thai men's patrician position. But the discrimination of Thai prostitution's control is also rooted by male hypocrisy in the view of radical feminists.

Radical feminism

The radical feminists consider that women's status is the root of the subordination of women. Radical feminists believe that women are oppressed by men. Barrett and Phillips define women's oppression, as viewed by radical feminists, as archetypal; in terms of female socialisation, women are viewed very differently from men, by the reinforcement of a cultural tradition.¹⁸⁰ Radical feminists would try to eliminate every kind of degradation such as pornography and prostitution.¹⁸¹ While elimination is an ideal situation, it is not a realistic solution, and many are critical of radical feminism's stance.

¹⁷⁸ Warren, K. and Erkal, N. (1997) *Ecofeminism: women, culture, nature*, Indiana University Press, England.

¹⁷⁹ Rein, S. (1998) *Ibid*, p.177

¹⁸⁰ Barrett, M. and Phillip, A. (1992) 'Introduction', in M. Barrett and A. Phillips (Eds) *Destabilising theory: Contemporary feminist debates* (pp. 1-9), Cambridge Polity Press, England, p.8

Iannone sees radical feminists' views as the energy supply of most types of feminism.¹⁸² Sherven criticises that radical feminists do not want progress, but only to ensure retribution for men, although this undermines the object of equality.¹⁸³ Sherven, a liberal feminist, charges that radical feminists have their personal agenda of requital, and they have not conceived a balanced and caring vision for the lives of women and men together.¹⁸⁴

Bell and Klein oppose this idea, arguing that radical feminism has been misused and disjointed in the retelling of liberal feminists and post-modernists.¹⁸⁵ They add that radical feminism is 'theory shy', and that radical feminists challenge the cornerstones of patriarchy and injustices which are rightly recognised as constituting a threat. Predictably, there are consequences for them from identifying the sources of oppression.¹⁸⁶ Women's subordination is seen as the basic structure of tyranny, prior to class or race.¹⁸⁷ Positively, radical feminists stress that men are bad and see the solution to prostitution as elimination.

In reality, Thai women sex workers are discriminated against by Thai and foreign men. It is radical feminists' analysis that the socialist emphasis would lead to the persistence of sexuality-related and male violence issues in Thailand. Radical feminists see the occurrence of prostitution as one of the aspects of oppression, because it exerts a precise power on women.¹⁸⁸ Radical feminists view the double standard as an inappropriate condition in society. Monique Wittig assumes that even though the typical male hypocrisy denies promiscuity, for radical feminists the double standard appears to be an inheritance of natural selection.¹⁸⁹ Wittig also asserts that radical

¹⁸¹ Bell, Diane Ed. (1996) 'Radically Speaking': *Feminism Reclaimed*, Spinifex, USA.

¹⁸² Iannone, C. (1995) 'What moderate feminists?', *Commentary*, June 1995, p.48

¹⁸³ Sherven, J. (1995) 'Radical feminism's mistake', *Free Inquiry*, Spring 1995, Vol.1, No.1, pp.17-18

¹⁸⁴ Sherven, J. (1995) *Ibid*, p.18

¹⁸⁵ Bell, D. and Klein, R. (1996) 'Foreword- Beware Radical Feminists Speak, Read, Write, Organise, Enjoy Life and Never Forget', *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed*, Spinifex Press, Australia, p. 361

¹⁸⁶ Bell, D. and Klein, R. (1996) *Ibid*, p. 368

¹⁸⁷ Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Basil Blackwell Ltd, Oxford, pp.12-42

¹⁸⁸ Bell, D. and Klein, R. (1996) *Ibid*, p. 369

¹⁸⁹ Weedon, C. (1987) *Ibid*, pp.22-25

feminists want a revolution to end the imposition of all coercive natures, in order to achieve maximum independence in human expression'.¹⁹⁰

The radical feminists conclude that men explicitly attempt to control the sexuality of women. Radical feminists also acknowledge factors such as race and class, as well as gender, as significant in oppression. They prefer to view men as oppressors and women as victims.¹⁹¹ I reach an understanding with radical feminists' viewpoints, insofar as Thai women hardly ever display power, because the least show of power on their part can be attacked by men.

Socialist feminism

Socialist feminists believe that social policy can empower women's lives. In addition, it can control women's subordination. However, socialist feminist theory has also created a challenge to the androcentric principles embedded in western welfare state concepts and discourses to analyse development from the viewpoint of women.¹⁹² Socialist feminists have developed different conceptual tools to explain the women subordination that affects women's lives in gender relations.¹⁹³ The core of socialist feminism is the theory of creating equality for different groups of women in the society.

The different issues of economic class difference, patriarchy and capitalism are politically connected, according to socialist feminist constructions. A socialist feminist approach sees gender issues as both multidisciplinary and encompassing diversity, and specifically involving ethnic, racial and class relations.¹⁹⁴ Socialist feminists argue that effective social transformation requires social policy which is a practical version of socialist feminism.¹⁹⁵

Socialist feminists thus hold that a long-term solution to the problem of prostitution requires economic and political knowledge, devolution and power for

¹⁹⁰ Wittig, M. (1992) *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, Beacon Press, USA, pp.21-32

¹⁹¹ Stacey, J. (1993) 'Untangling Feminist Theory', in D. Richardson & V. Robinson (Eds), *Introducing Women's Studies*, MacMillan Press, USA, pp.49-73

¹⁹² Donovan, Josephine (1985) *Feminist theory: the intellectual traditions of American feminism*, Ungar Public, USA.

¹⁹³ Anttonen, Anneli Maria Irmeli (1997) loc cit.

¹⁹⁴ Hon, Linda C., 'Toward a Feminist Theory of Public Relations', *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 1995, Vol.7, No.1, pp.27-29

women.¹⁹⁶ The alternative, based on socialist feminist theory's values, is extra activities of emergency assistance such as rehabilitation and education. So prostitutes are distinguished as a collection of women who are 'casualties' of the system.

Consistently, socialist feminists attempt to disengage state and other institutions from the sex industry, to revert to communal rights for decision making over unrestricted matters. According to Kathleen Barry:

'Prostitution is also an activity or life style with positive meaning adopted by some women in defiance of the gender order's insistence on monogamous feminine sexuality'.¹⁹⁷

Therefore prostitution is not considered deviant by socialist feminists, but rather the label of '*prostitutes*' creates the bias towards prostitution. Socialist feminists argue that prostitution is a label of deviance, used by both men and women to keep all women in line.¹⁹⁸ I deal with socialist feminists' description in which the definition of prostitution as a deviance in gender. Since I principally investigate the needs of the Thai women prostitutes as an individual, not as part of a group of the same composition. However, the label of deviance contributes the defective consequence of sex work.

Empowering prostitutes through decriminalisation

Decriminalisation is considered by liberal feminists to be the best way to protect prostitutes' rights. Most liberal feminists state that prostitution is not a matter of individual pathology or immorality, but that prostitution epitomises male dominance.¹⁹⁹ Thus patriarchy perpetuates the systems and practices that permit sex work to flourish under capitalism.²⁰⁰ Women are servicing men's sexual needs under capitalist and patriarchal conditions. Liberal feminists want to even out the existing status and power

¹⁹⁵ Curtis, K., 'Constituting Feminist Subjects', *The American Political Science Review*, Menasha, 2001, Vol. 95, pp. 207-208

¹⁹⁶ Menzies, K., 'Imagination in Theory: Culture, Writing, Words, and Things', *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology*, Toronto, Feb 2001, Vol. 38, pp. 105-108

¹⁹⁷ Barry, K. (1995) *Ibid*, pp.126-127

¹⁹⁸ Firestone, S. (1970) 'Radical Feminism: Women's Oppression as the Fundamental Oppression', *The Dialectic of Sex*, Bantam Books, USA.

¹⁹⁹ Bullbeck, C. (1998) *Re-orienting western feminisms, women's diversity in a postcolonial world*, Cambridge University Press, USA, p.79

²⁰⁰ Bullbeck, C. (1998) *Ibid*, pp.79-80

(social and economic rewards) between men and women in society and attempt to do this through changing laws.²⁰¹

Liberal feminists also assert that decriminalisation may be part of a solution because individual women have the right to sell their own bodies. In New Zealand, Jordan asserts that decriminalisation will conduct equivalent political and social opportunities, completed safer sex practices and health implication in New Zealand sex trade for sex workers.²⁰² In the case of the laws, New Zealand presents a good model for Thai feminists to follow that decriminalisation is provided for and by prostitutes.

In New Zealand, the NZPC holds that decriminalisation would offer prostitutes more freedom from prosecution while also giving social control.²⁰³ These sorts of changes would make a huge difference to the prostitutes' work environment. They could control their earnings and get protection from exploitation, child prostitution and pimps. NZPC states, however, that legalised prostitution is not the way for New Zealand to go, as legalisation also can exploit prostitutes.²⁰⁴

The decisive review of prostitutes reform bill is coming in by November, 2002 in New Zealand parliament. The bill covered the rights of prostitute that sex workers will have the same legal status as clients, health promotion will be accessible, labour laws is opened.²⁰⁵ Prostitution Law Reform seeks to gain prostitutes' rights and legal protection if the worker refuses a client.²⁰⁶ This will answer the rape and violence's reports from prostitutes.

I agree that individual women have rights over their own bodies. The law in Thailand should include a review of government policy and of service delivery for better access to information and health care, as well as an acceleration of adoption of

²⁰¹ Butler, J. (1993) 'Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity', Nicholson, Linda J., *Thinking Gender*, Routledge, USA.

²⁰² Jan Jordan. (1992) *Feminism and Sex Work: Connections and Contradictions* In Rosemary Du Plessis et al (eds): *Feminist Voices: Women's Studies, Texts for Aotearoa, New Zealand*.

²⁰³ Interview with Catherine Healy, the National Coordinator at New Zealand Prostitutes Collectives, NZPC, 19 June 2001

²⁰⁴ Interview with Catherine Healy, the National Coordinator at New Zealand Prostitutes Collectives, NZPC, 19 June 2001.

²⁰⁵ <http://www.nzpc.org.nz/lawrefor.htm#Problems>, New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, New Zealand, 13/7/2002.

²⁰⁶ <http://www.nzpc.org.nz/lawrefor.htm#Problems>, New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, New Zealand, 13/7/2002.

the implementation of anti-discrimination laws and the repealing of laws that penalise sex workers.²⁰⁷

To follow decriminalisation' suggestions and solutions for prostitution, several changes in Thai law would have to be made. Thailand would have to treat prostitution as an occupation so that prostitutes, like other workers, can be protected under the Labour Protection Act. In Thailand prostitutes are considered necessary for a healthy economy, but at the same time, prostitutes are branded as a social evil and as a cause of social crisis.²⁰⁸ Decriminalisation must entail no official change in prostitutes' social status, but guide to an acceptance on the part of the authorities, including the police and juridical workers, of the women's work.²⁰⁹

Feminists in some other Asian countries, such as Japan, also support decriminalisation. In Japan, Japanese feminists point out problems in the anti-prostitutes law. It has no provision to punish those who have sex with prostitutes, it calls only for punitive measures against the prostitutes themselves and their agents.²¹⁰ One of my interviewees, Nid who told me that she was not worried because 'she could be a prostitute without paying for arrested'. Likewise, she could be actually confident that it was her option if she wanted to be hired by a client. It is her responsibility to her own decision.

It is also significant that decriminalisation appeals to the best interests of those who make use of prostitutes, even though decriminalisation might make Thai prostitutes uncontrollable. Since the complex of this solution is not only the uncountable numbers of prostitutes is but also the sex exploitation known as Thai male-beneficiary of prostitution. Jeffreys asserts that male violence and violation of women's human rights is recognised as men's abuse of women in prostitution.²¹¹ Nonetheless, I assume that the decriminalisation of Thai prostitutes should be obviously reassessed so

²⁰⁷ Donovan, J. (1985) *Feminist theory: the intellectual traditions of American feminism*, Ungar Public, USA.

²⁰⁸ Skrobaneck, S. (1997) *Strategies Against Trafficking in Prostitution: The case of Thailand*. The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), Bangkok, pp.9-10

²⁰⁹ Interview with Catherine Healy, the National Coordinator at New Zealand Prostitutes Collectives, NZPC, 19 June 2001.

²¹⁰ Barna, Redd (1991) *Position paper on commercial sexual exploitation of children*, International Save the Children Alliance (ISCA), ISCA Assembly Meeting, June 1991, Japan.

²¹¹ Jeffreys, Sheila. (1997) *The idea of prostitution*, Spinifex Press, Australia, pp.45-46

that women working in prostitution can get legal assistance; corruption will also be reduced.

Legalisation: government pimping?

Marxist feminists claim that if prostitution is legalised, the government will malfunction as a pimp. It is doubtful whether legalisation is intended for effective control over prostitutes or for sex workers' own benefit. I analyse that legalization has done nonexistence of the taboo's elimination associated with the sex trade.

Moreover, legalisation implies that prostitutes have to pay taxes and also asserts men's self-evident right to be customers.²¹² Ann, one of my interviewees states that if prostitution is legalised, she will quit work by reason of her rejection to work under authorization. Ann told me,

'I work for a call girl's agency, it means that 50% of payment from each customer will be taken, I can deal with it, but if I have to pay tax, I will quit and sell illicit drugs instead.'

From this point, it is my concern that sex workers must be participated in the governmental arbitration, as well as the right to participate in society.

Prostitution has long been legal in the Netherlands though only for European Union citizenry, as in Germany.²¹³ In these countries, legalisation included special taxes for prostitutes, restricting prostitutes to working in brothels or in certain zones, licenses, registration of prostitutes and government records of individual prostitutes and health checks as a punitive quarantine.²¹⁴ Many (or most) societies in Europe allow European prostitutes do sex work by giving the state control over their own lives and own businesses.

However, prostitution law reform usually use the term 'legalization' to mean any alternative to absolute criminalisation, ranging from licensing of brothels to the lack of

²¹² Alice, L. (1995) 'What is Post-feminism? Or, having it both ways', in *Proceeding of the Feminism Post-modern/ Post-feminism Conference*, Massey University, p.20

²¹³ Evans, Richard J. & Lindemann, Mary. (2000) Tales from the German Underworld: *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 33 No. 4, Summer 2000, pp. 86-89

²¹⁴ Leuchttag, Alice. Merchants of flesh: international prostitution and the war on women's rights: *the Humanist*, Vol. 55, No. 1, Mar./Apr. 1995, pp. 11-16

any laws about prostitutes.²¹⁵ Thus legalisation does not mean acceptance among German and Dutch prostitutes. Legalisation of prostitution in Netherlands puts the state in the role of ensuring that only customers are provided with people who are HIV and STD free in Netherlands.²¹⁶ In Germany, the duties of prostitutes are established but none of the advantages were promised by the government.²¹⁷

Governmental ignorance on prostitution in China and Cuba can symbolise another unfavorable consequence of arranged prostitution. In Cuba prostitution is

autonomy and self-regulation. This concept is presumably difficult to be accepted in Thailand's political sphere, where corruption and patriarchal effect is too strong.

The ideal solution: eradication of prostitution

In Thailand, the policy of the Thai government for resolving the problems of prostitution is currently based on the eradication of prostitution, which has been a priority for the government since 1993.²²³ However as corruption, double standards, inequality and a lack of law enforcement makes the policy of the elimination of prostitution impossible to carry out. The prostitution policy should in this case, provide equal opportunities for prostitutes to choose to be prostitutes. Radical feminists believe that to penalise customers will help eradicate prostitution. Most radical feminists see prostitutes as victim. They regard men as the cause of women selling sexual services.

According to radical feminists, they tend to regard prostitutes as female sex slaves, and see all sex workers as degrading to women in general. In terms of radical feminism, women can choose any context of sexual objectification and dehumanisation of the self as they lose themselves.²²⁴ In this respect, western feminism has tended to reproduce the attitudes of their predecessors, the 'first wave' feminists of the nineteenth century. A landmark Thai bill is the first legal effort to punish the customers of child prostitutes. The age of minors has also been extended from 15 to 18 years old.²²⁵ Penalising customers can be a radical solution.

Though I agree with this radical feminist perspective, but it is workable with child and forced prostitution. I ideally believe that penalising customers will prove to be effective. It is preferable to propose fines and prison terms for clients and brothel owners who exploit minors. However, in liberal terms, a woman has the right to be a prostitute as long as society fails to give her alternatives so that she experiences as preferable.²²⁶ And in Thailand and interminably, where powerful men create unequal

²²² Skrobaneck, S. (1997) Ibid, pp.45-55

²²³ Thorbeck, S. (1987) *Voices from the city: Women of Bangkok*, Zed book, USA.

²²⁴ Butler, J. (1993) 'Gender Trouble: Feminism and The Subversion of Identity: Nicholson, Linda J., *Thinking Gender*, Routledge, USA.

²²⁵ Waring, M. (1995) 'Counting for Nothing', *Case study report on commercial sexual exploitation of children in Thailand*, CPRC, BKK, Thailand.

²²⁶ Emanuela, Bianchi (1999) *Women, Identity, and Philosophy, Is Feminist Philosophy?*, Northwestern University, USA.

practice and corruption, imagining a world without male violence and where men take responsibility for their own actions seems rather ideal in validity.

In an ideal world, I would agree with radical feminists that prostitution should be eliminated and; men forced women to transact sex work must be punished. In reality, this is not likely to happen in Thailand unless decriminalisation and elimination of child prostitution resolves the problem, in accordance with the view of liberal feminists empowerment of women prostitutes will be the effective way.

The system of social welfare benefit in Thailand

Socialist feminist theory advocates, as a solution, education, explanation of the discourse around prostitution, and offering other financial solutions. Socialist feminist theory has also pointed out that the capitalist economic system ignores the fundamental needs of women with regard to the state.²²⁷ One of the best ways of preventing transnational crime is to contribute to the development of countries experiencing economic difficulties and to introduce transparency in their political and social life, with the assistance of the international community.²²⁸

Secondly, socialist feminists assert that women are regarded socially as a group, but not as individuals.²²⁹ The current methodology of socialist feminist research and theory on prostitutes is concerned with the experience of the prostitutes and with the meaning of the creativity and activity for those who engage in it. The social institutions, forces and supports that influence the life and choices of the prostitutes are topics of study, rather than individual solutions for individual women.²³⁰ I correspond with this idea that education and expertise's instruction can certainly strengthen Thai women and alleviate economic pressures in the lives of Thai women. But this cannot decrease the number of prostitutes, because compared with the lack of jobs and the low financial rewards for legitimate alternative work, the influence of education alone is rather weak.

²²⁷ Yesim, A., 'From emancipation to liberation: The changing role of women in Turkey's public realm', *Journal of International Affairs*, New York, Fall 2000, Vol. 54, pp. 107-125

²²⁸ Menzies, K. (2001) *Ibid*, p.106

²²⁹ Bullbeck, C. (1998) *Re-orienting western feminism, women's diversity in a postcolonial world*, Cambridge University Press, USA.

²³⁰ Stacey, J., 'Untangling Feminist Theory', in D. Richardson & V. Robinson (Eds) *Introducing Women's Studies*, MacMillan Press, USA, pp.49-73

In Thailand, there are no social welfare benefits, and this has not been significantly considered. The laws about prostitution also required the OPDC (Occupation Protection and Development Committee) to map out prevention policies, protective mechanisms and measures to equip former prostitutes with the skills to enter other occupations.²³¹ Many establishments for women assistance around the world are trying hard to provide job opportunities to prevent women working abroad as prostitutes.

In Thailand, these efforts have paid off only to a limited extent because of Thai feminist movement of limited power and authority. In modern days, western women have far more alternatives since programs and policy like, empowerment has virtually located exemplary effective terms such as women's welfare, rehabilitation, community participation. This poverty alleviation will specify the goal of woman development in Thailand as a life mechanism for prostitutes. I consider that employment and economic opportunity must contribute to not only poor and working class women in general, but also girls and women sex workers.

Conclusion

The patriarchal comparative status, of which various identities within the circumstances of poor and working Thai women sex workers and their inferiority in sex industry is the quandary in their life. Male canning engenders this situation and they blame women concurrently.²³² In conclusion, many reflective thinking within mainstream feminism have responded to the critiques with efforts to contextualise prostitution and its patriarchal effect. The patriarchal factors that led to their prostitution are the core of the solution for prostitutes.

Liberal, Radical, Marxist and Socialist feminists have different presumptions about the lower status of women in society, regardless of bringing about liberating social changes. On the issue of prostitution, feminists have different concepts of what the political priorities are.

²³¹ Barry, Kathleen (1995) Ibid, p.49

²³² Skrobaneck, S. (1997) Ibid, p.10

These branches of feminist thought have valued direct accounts of female experience, as revealed in consciousness raising. In terms of prostitution, my thesis tends to create a feminist viewpoint based on the experience of the women themselves. In the next chapter I share an analytical comparable standpoint toward prostitution. The context of Thai politics, economy, culture and society is explained in order to provide a background for the discussion on prostitution that follows.

Part III: Conditions

CHAPTER FOUR

THAI SOCIETAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

In this chapter, I consider that female poverty has resulted through male prejudice that has been rooted deeply in the structure of Thai society for a long time. This has influenced the forcing of Thai working class women to do sex work in order to survive economically, and to support their families.

The theory whereby I presume that male hypocrisy is the essential sources of gender injustice within Thai society originates from the belief that female poverty is both the grounds and the effect of the exploitation of poor and working class Thai girls and women through prostituting.

As a Thai feminist, I consider that it is necessary in this thesis to analyse the Thai context. The unjust sexual characteristics in Thai culture are entrenched by male hypocrisy and materialism. Thai women's role is analysed, as well as the position of women in legal and social definition. The relevancy of female poverty and male double standards in Thai society is shown by women's inferior position in politics, economy and culture.

The entangled social democracy of Thailand

The public democratic system of Thailand seems basic. Overtly, Thai men and women have parallel voices in the exercise of power toward the government, typically through elected representatives; the government is elected to hold office for four years.²³³ The masses of ordinary people are the conventional base of the country's system of government.²³⁴ There are now more women candidates than before.

²³³ Schlossstein, Steven (1991) *Asia's new little dragons: the dynamic emergence of Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia*, Contemporary Books, USA.

²³⁴ Schlossstein, S. (1991) *Ibid*, pp.58-63

Though all Thai women appear as ordinarily equivalent in a classless society as the law stated in 1997.²³⁵ But this is misleading since while individual people have dissimilar backgrounds and beliefs with reference to political ideas, the political contest seems to be based on the gap between proletariat and elite. Thai traditions play a robust part in relation to Thai women's roles in political beliefs.²³⁶ Men are still the insiders in Thai politics.²³⁷ Therefore, while most Thai men profess that politics are based in the 'grassroots', among 'the people', this is a device to mask gender discrimination.²³⁸

Thai women representatives are less than 15% of all affiliates.²³⁹ The long-established regime's history made Thai women an invented enhancement to bolster political credibility. The odd thing is that women receive a very limited form of power. This is shown through looking at which Thai women can vote and be selected.²⁴⁰ The women candidates are, unsurprisingly, mostly women of higher education, class, and more flexible than men with their political principles.²⁴¹ Most Thai people are contented with this outcome. Thai men are in command of politics in almost every area.²⁴² So the prostitution problem is seen more or less exclusively through male eyes in Thailand's democracy. Lamentably, this is the viewpoint that Thai people give a positive response to. The result is that poor Thai girls and women with few prospects are easily induced to enter the sex trade as goods.

Social expectation of Thai women

Role expectation factors in Thai society and culture influence the fact that working class women supplied with fewer opportunities in education and employment enter

²³⁵ Please see appendix eleven, *Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, B.E. 2540 (1997), Foreign Law Division Office of the Council of State, Chapter III: Rights and Liberties of the Thai People, p. 8, Section 30.*

²³⁶ Lewis, N. (1999) *Thai-ed up, un-Thai-ed: Toward a genealogy of Thai-western relations*, PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada, pp.158-159

²³⁷ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Women, Men and the social change in the Thai society*, Thai translation from a Ph.D. thesis, Edison Press, Bangkok, Thailand, pp.43-45

²³⁸ Lewis, N. (1999) *Ibid*, pp.83-99

²³⁹ Lim, Lin L. (1998) *The Sex Sector, The economic and social bases of prostitution in Southeast Asia*, International Labour Office, Geneva.

²⁴⁰ Briton, Stephen G. (1982) *Political Economy of Third World Tourism, Annals of Tourism Research*, Genius, England.

²⁴¹ Lim, L. (1998) *Ibid*, pp.119-120

²⁴² Dunn, C. (1994) *The politics of prostitution in Thailand and the Philippines: policies and practice*, Monash University, USA, pp.66-68

prostitution. Thai women accept low wages and generally expect Thai men to obtain more material assistance.²⁴³ Thai women maintain living standards for their families and are responsible for their child/children's mental and economic wellbeing, while Thai men are responsible only for their standing as sons who maintain family name.²⁴⁴

From this position, Thai men can avoid nurturing their own families, as women are answerable and are blamed for the men's carelessness.²⁴⁵ For example, when a husband abandons his family, it is the woman's job to provide for her dependent children, or else the general public and her family will reproach her.²⁴⁶ This ordinary obligation is a convention among Thai women.

It is important to draw attention to the deeply rooted cultural expectation that Thai women will contribute to the support of their families and relatives. A life of poverty reinforces this traditional belief. Female poverty is not addressed but ignored in Thai culture. If parents can hardly feed themselves and find it nearly impossible to refuse money for selling their daughters, it is hard to change their attitudes, as sex work can make enough money for parents to live on.²⁴⁷ This excessive irregularity of selling daughters has become commonly accepted among Thai women.

In addition as Phongpaichit notes, Thai culture places women in a derivative, subordinated position. Indirectly, Thai women are regarded as merely degraded by nature. In the modern day, the myths about the position of Thai women have changed, but they denote men's gaining of control.²⁴⁸ Men in Thai society demand that women contribute something to men and culture. For an instance, women are answerable to their husbands if they lose their virginity.²⁴⁹ Another case is that if women are raped, they are liable to be reproached for their carelessness of virginity's protection for their husbands.²⁵⁰

²⁴³ Limanonda, B., 'Families in Thailand: Beliefs and realities', *Special Issue: Families in Asia, Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 1995, Vol. 26, No.1, pp.67-82

²⁴⁴ Limanonda, B. (1995) *Ibid*, p.76

²⁴⁵ Zinn, M.B., *Feminism and family studies for a new century*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Sep 2000, Vol.571, pp. 42-57

²⁴⁶ Limanonda, B. (1995) *Ibid*, p.67

²⁴⁷ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Ibid*, pp.28-29

²⁴⁸ Phongpaichit, Pasuk, et al (1999) *Guns, Girls, Gambling, Ganja: Thailand's illegal economy and public policy*, Silkworm Books, Chaing Mai, Thailand, p.27

²⁴⁹ Thorbek, S. (1987) *Voices from the city: Women of Bangkok*, Zed book, USA, p.85

²⁵⁰ Thorbek, S. (1987) *loc cit*.

The power of Buddhism

Moreover, being born as a Thai woman, as a consequence of bad karma and lack of sufficient good merit (following the Buddhist cosmological texts), places women at the lower end, or more corporeal and less spiritual end, of the human spectrum.²⁵¹ In Thailand, ethnic Thais constitute 80% of the population of 60 million, and 95% of Thais are Buddhists.²⁵² Nonetheless, Buddhism teaches people to believe in being virtuous and improve as human beings. Poverty is the karma from acquisitiveness of material things in the previous life, and the endowment is a rule to break away.²⁵³ Being a monk or a rich man is already a good deed. Being a prostitute is an indication of past lives' dreadful actions, in the Buddhist belief.²⁵⁴

This set of beliefs about being a woman forces a Thai woman to do something for her family/society as reimbursement for her evil karma, such as being a sex worker. In conclusion, Thai culture has continually allocated women as a social comfort, so they can never share the same social rank as men in the upper class. According to Lim, 'In upper-class Thai society, women were totally separated from economic activities and were expected to pursue 'feminine' interests.'²⁵⁵

Thai aristocracy

The belief in materialism in Thai society originates from the fact that poor people are so very poor and the rich are so very rich. Sanitsuda Ekachai describes the Thai aristocracy as having access to higher protection, so that rich Thai men are able to take advantage of lower class women.²⁵⁶ The position of higher-class women is lesser than that of men. Polygamy was widely accepted by upper class Thai men as a privilege of rich status in every way.²⁵⁷ Studies of minor wives in Thailand indicated that this norm is normal though women are not allowed to do the same.²⁵⁸ From the findings, this has been the

²⁵¹ Thorbek, S. (1987) *Voices from the city: Women of Bangkok*, Zed book, USA.

²⁵² Limanonda, B. (1995) *Ibid*, p.77

²⁵³ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Ibid*, p.192

²⁵⁴ Ekachai, S. (1999) 'Buddhism and the Sexual Society', *The Journey*, New Zealand, p.32

²⁵⁵ Lim, Lin L. (1998) *Ibid*, p.52

²⁵⁶ Ekachai, S. (1999) *loc cit*.

²⁵⁷ Ekachai, S. (1999) *Ibid*, p.28

²⁵⁸ Limanonda, B. (1995) *Ibid*, p.36

usual instance among prostitutes as additional choice of role other than sex work with foreign clients.

Consequently, men normally evade any rebuke for their use of prostitutes. For instance, if a Thai man behaves promiscuously and is unfaithful, this is seen to be because his wife cannot satisfy his sexual demands, and people blame his wife.²⁵⁹ By contrast, when Thai women desire sexual freedom, in Thai culture they are seen as malefactors.

The political economy of Thailand's sex industry

The hypocrisy of men is made clear in the fact that the debasing strategy of political economy put into effect in Thailand has made Thai women accessible as commodities to be transacted. It is a derisive answer of the Thai regime that it has 'solved' the problem of prostitution by making prostitutes and prostitution illegal. Though the sex enterprises such as licensed massage parlours and strip clubs can be the legal assets of sex businesses.²⁶⁰

The beliefs of Thai culture have resulted in soliciting being illegal. Under Thai law, anyone who offers his or her body or any other person's body for the purpose of prostitution in a public place is soliciting, and is liable to imprisonment.²⁶¹ Anyone who is known to be a pimp is liable to incarceration as well.

In terms of 'political correctness', Thailand is against 'immoral' business. Though Thai culture rules sex businesses to be ethically unacceptable, but capitalism in Bangkok ensures that a great deal of money gained through prostitution is converted into the economic base of the country.²⁶² Men's wealth has been built up through the sex industry that allowed Thai women to become accessible as sex merchandise. The sex trade in Thailand forms the main basis of the Thai political economy, apart from drugs, weapons and gambling.²⁶³ Thailand's formerly agricultural economy has

²⁵⁹ Odzer, C. (1990) *Pat Pong Prostitution: Its Relationship to, and effect on, the position of women in Thai society*, Ph.D. Dissertation, New School for Social Research, New York, pp.111-112

²⁶⁰ Phongpaichit, P., et al. (1999) Ibid, pp.134-145

²⁶¹ Odzer, C. (1990), Ibid, pp.114

²⁶² Boonchalaksi, W. & Guest, P. (1994) *Prostitutes in Thailand*, The Institution of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Thailand, Published in Thai.

²⁶³ Phongpaichit, Pasuk, et al. (1999) loc cit.

changed into an economy where a high proportion of women sex workers derived from the export of industrial goods and the provision of services.²⁶⁴ The sex trade has grown so much that it has now taken over from the export of industrial goods and the provision of other services.

Double standards in Thai society

Male hypocrisy in Thai society is the basis of gender discrimination. In Thailand, public opinion is based on the double standard. Sex work is an unacceptable way of earning a living for women. In Thai culture, women prostitutes are labeled as a despised underclass, or as sinners against family and society.²⁶⁵ In contrast, it seems that men control women covertly by simultaneously degrading women sex workers, and totally basing their wealth on sex marketing. In Thailand's private enterprise, women are the products that mainly male proprietors deliver to male clients. The male ratio in running sex enterprises is 95%.²⁶⁶

However, indirect forms of prostitution are legal, such as massage parlours or escort agencies, serving both Thai and foreign male's sexual demand.²⁶⁷ The male owners of these businesses are officially authorised to run them, so although incidentally, they are gaining money from sex work, this is socially condoned.²⁶⁸ Thai men have achieved the right to rule lower class Thai women and compel these women to serve them in this way.²⁶⁹ Because male domination has ensured that there is less opportunity in education or employment for Thai working class women.

Greed and corruption

Greed and corruption are linked with the selfish desire for power and wealth among some Thai men, based on the sufferings of most Thai women. Rich men are highly connected to corruption. Policemen and male politicians in Thailand are

²⁶⁴ Pettman, Jan J. (1996) *Body, Boundary, Politics: International Sex Tourism*, Paper for the International studies Association Convention, San Diego, April 1996, p.67

²⁶⁵ Mock, E. (1997) *Child Prostitution in Thailand*, Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania, Honours Thesis in International Relations, USA, p.55

²⁶⁶ Lim, L. (1998) *Ibid*, pp.167

²⁶⁷ Phongpaichit, Pasuk (1982) *From Peasant girls to Bangkok Masseuses*. ILO, Geneva.

²⁶⁸ Phongpaichit, Pasuk (1982) *Ibid*, pp. 120-123

²⁶⁹ Archavanitkul, K. and Havanon, N. (1990) *Situation, Opportunities and Problems Encountered by Young Girls in Thai Society*, Research report funded by Terre des Hommes, Bangkok, p.37

generally rewarded by simple corruption; this has obstructed women improving their position.²⁷⁰ Failure by the authorities to control the illegal traffic in women, the lack of equality in the Thai legal system, and the widespread corruption have all forced Thai women prostitutes to work outside the law and run the constant risks of being in this position.²⁷¹ This does not apply to those who earn a living from prostitutes, such as owners of massage parlours.

It is difficult to get rid of the mafia business, since it involves powerful people in Thailand, typically men. Illegality in the sex businesses can be problematic, since women cannot give evidence that will be believed against evidence provided by men. The power of men makes women believe that they need men's protection to avoid having problems with the authorities.²⁷²

The rights of Thai women sex workers

Because of the illegality factors that affect prostitutes unfairly, many Thai women seek to work abroad illegally and migrate to support their families, as this brings better benefits.²⁷³ This has been an important issue since every aspect of women's lives in Thailand is affected by the way in which, because of the circumstances of Thailand's political economy, poverty has emerged and increased among Thai women. This feminisation of poverty is based on Thai society's initial gender discrimination and oppression of women.²⁷⁴

Thai laws on prostitution and trafficking in women have failed to suppress either prostitution itself, or trafficking in women for the purpose of prostitution. This seems to be mainly because of a lack of law enforcement, corrupt enforcement mechanisms, and cultural beliefs, which have largely left offenders unpunished. The job of Thai police is to control the illegal trafficking in sex businesses; but other authorities, such as NGOs, have power to override the laws on prostitution. Moreover, police and government officials are often themselves the owners of sex trade establishments, or

²⁷⁰ Archavanitkul, K. and Havanon, N. (1990) *Situation, Opportunities and Problems Encountered by Young Girls in Thai Society*. Research report funded by Terre des Hommes, Bangkok.

²⁷¹ Archavanitkul, K. and Havanon, N. (1990) *Ibid*, p.104

²⁷² KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Ibid*, p.125

²⁷³ Shamin, I. (1996) *Trafficking in Women and Girls for Prostitution: Bangladesh Perspective*, paper presented at the parallel sessions, Child Sexual Exploitation, November, p.19

²⁷⁴ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Ibid*, p.90

take pay-offs to avoid arresting brothel owners.²⁷⁵ In Bangkok, more than 800 massage parlours, 400 nightclubs and 55 gay bars are owned mainly by Thai politicians and police chiefs.²⁷⁶ Therefore instead of being people who provide solutions to the problem, officials are often part of the problem.

Laws are made for people with social power, such as prosperous men. Thai society destroys the efficacy of beneficial laws, because Thai women prostitutes are illegal. However, it is very difficult for prostitutes to get justice, because of the number of traditional rules that result in prostitutes being seen as immoral.

Under Thai law, prostitution is currently illegal, whether she agrees to it or not by the approaches of persons in charge and clients. Wherefore prostitution becomes a civil offence, punishable by a fine.²⁷⁷ This will make prosecution of people who taken advantages of sex workers extremely difficult.

The official basis of Thai law is the same as that of New Zealand in the past.²⁷⁸ However, since proposed Prostitution Reform Bill was sent (after a conscience vote) to a select committee in New Zealand's parliament on 8th of November 2000.²⁷⁹ This shall decriminalise soliciting which offering sex for money. In addition, a brothel is not illicit. This will offer safe-conduct of the rights of sex workers and object sexual exploitation.²⁸⁰

From this viewpoint, Thai prostitutes' rights are more effectively protected in New Zealand than in Thailand. There is no further legal action since 1996 for correct legitimate condition of sex work, neither decriminalisation nor legalisation decision is expressed. Women's rights issues are better understood in New Zealand society, possibly because women's freedoms are approved of. However, Thai culture is very different from New Zealand culture in this respect. Thailand needs to improve its legislation on health issues and equal rights for all women, including prostitutes, as

²⁷⁵ Skrobanek, S., et al (1997) *Trade in Women: Is it Thai mores?*, Research report, Published in Thai, Foundation For Women (FFW), Bangkok.

²⁷⁶ James, P., 'Free Markets, AIDS and Child Prostitutes, Sings', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1992, Vol.17, No.4, pp.107-109

²⁷⁷ Srisang, K, et al. (1990) loc cit.

²⁷⁸ Turner, K & Vaver, P. (1976) *Women and the law*, Hicks Smith & Son, New Zealand.

²⁷⁹ <http://www.womenz.org.nz/pol%20alerts/bills.html>, 13/7/2002

²⁸⁰ <http://www.nzpc.org.nz/lawrefor.htm#Problems>, New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, New Zealand, 13/7/2002.

New Zealand has done.²⁸¹ Consequently, Thai prostitutes may want to work in many overseas countries, like in New Zealand. However, the conditions under which foreign women prostitutes are employed in those countries may mean that there is pressure on trafficked prostitutes to repay money.²⁸²

The major obstacle facing Thai women sex workers in New Zealand is their position under immigration law. Their preference is to marry a New Zealander to acquire permanent residency. The rights of free determination to live in New Zealand came before the reflection over language barrier and cultural difference. Most women do not plan for their future if their marriage happens to fail, as a number have chosen the 'authorised' route of escape from the unjust society in Thailand by marriage to foreigners.²⁸³

Conclusion

Sexual discrimination has been maintained in the relationships between men and women in Thai society. This chapter has ascertained that gender inequalities in Thai society mean that the majority of Thai women are poor and working class, and many become sex workers. Not only powerful Thai men, but women too, treat these poor and working class women sex workers as second-class citizens. These women also suffer from prejudice in a hypocritical male society. Meanwhile, Thai prostitutes are judged quite differently and seen as quite separate from the men, who have made prostitution illegal, but have simultaneously patronised prostitutes.

The pattern of women's lives in Thai culture is connected to Thai male selfishness. Political power in Thailand is dominated by men and because men in Thai civilisation are seen as having the socially significant role, and their political tactics take advantage of this. Thai society presents the misrepresentation that Thai women accept the double standard. Therefore gender inequality is increased, without any blame attaching to Thai men.

²⁸¹ Information from interview with a staff at ECPAT and CRPF.

²⁸² Shamin, Ishrat (1996) *Ibid*, p. 15

²⁸³ Humbeck, E.M. (1994) *Marriage Migration and Changes in Cultural Identity: Thai women in Germany*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Arizona State University, School of Women's Studies, USA, p. 72

The shameful awareness of Thai women in all Thai contexts rejects the idea that Thai culture can be developed, empowerment has come to be directly desired. In an ideal Thai constitution and culture, balanced gender opportunities will lessen poverty, which based at gender inequality. The next section of this study outlines the theory and methodology informing the research.

Part IV: Methodology

CHAPTER FIVE

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGY

Introduction

Feminists have made strong claims about the importance of speaking about our own lives and the destructiveness of presuming to speak for others.²⁸⁴ In this chapter, I explain the research approach of this thesis.

Firstly, I explain the significance of using feminist methodology. Then I discuss the confines of western feminist theory for Thai women. The character of feminist multidisciplinary research and its essence are comparatively described. I use a feminist methodology as the underlying principle in this thesis. Hence I analyse my Thai feminist perspective and compare this with other feminist perspectives. Specifically, my Thai feminist methodology will expand upon and highlight existing feminist knowledge. By approaching this study with a Thai feminist methodology, I am attempting to expand feminist knowledge about 'coloured' women, in this case, a group of Thai women prostitutes in Thailand and in New Zealand.

The methodology I use in this thesis has been applied by a number of feminist researchers. (E.g., Anne Opie 1992, Anne Phillips 1992, Joyce Neilson 1990, Liz Stanley 1993, Lorraine Code 1991, Michele Barrett 1992, Monique Wittig 1992, Patti Lather 1991, Rosemarie Tong 1989, Sandra Harding 1993 and Shulamit Reinharz 1992.)

Groundwork: feminist methodology

Feminist methodology provides a basis for most feminist research in various studies of the relationships of women and men. Feminist methodology can be used in many of the social sciences. Consequently, researchers often manage to combine elements of a number of methods and methodologies in their work.

Stanley and Wise (1993) describe the four main principles of a feminist approach to research as follows:²⁸⁵

- 1) The continuum of feminist epistemological approaches is conceptual
- 2) Feminist knowledge is not one-sided
- 3) Feminist wisdom is the mixture of several perceptions
- 4) There is the refutation of an exact fixed system of feminist epistemology.

A feminist methodology is an appropriate perspective for the nature of this thesis. Cotterill gives a concise, powerful definition, which is the core idea of this research:

‘Feminist methodology creates a sociology in which women are subjects not objects; a reconstruction of meaning which both articulates the individual experience and promotes women’s collective interests.’²⁸⁶

Feminist methodology makes women constantly the subjects of its research, and the styles are not permanent. According to Neysmith:

‘Feminist methodologies address the purpose of the research enterprise, and they are not a particular set of techniques or procedures for gathering data. To study the project, feminist research will be evaluated, criticised and produced as a priority.’²⁸⁷

From this point, Reinharz makes it clear that a feminist method analyses ‘oppressions as the consequences of an unjust social order, and examines the knowledge that the oppressed have had to acquire just to survive under oppression’.²⁸⁸ Rosemarie Tong an American feminist, asserts that feminist research should also benefit and empower the people who have been researched.²⁸⁹ It is anticipated that this research will contribute to the eventual empowerment of the Thai women sex workers concerned. Lather asserts that ‘feminist researchers see gender as a basic organising

²⁸⁴ Lugones, Maria C. and Spelman, Elizabeth V. (1990) ‘Have We Got a Theory for You’, *Hypatia Reborn*, Azizah Y. Al-hibri and Margaret A. Simons (eds.), Indiana Univ. Press, USA, p.233

²⁸⁵ Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) ‘Breaking out again: Afterward’, *Feminist ontology and epistemology*, Routledge, USA, pp.186-233

²⁸⁶ Cotterill, P. (1992) ‘Interviewing women: Issues of friendship, vulnerability, and power’, *Women’s Studies International Forum*, USA, Vol. 15, No.1, pp.593-606

²⁸⁷ Neysmith, S.M. (1995) ‘Feminist methodologies: A consideration of principles and practice for research in gerontology’, *Canadian Journal on Aging*, Vol. 14, p.111

²⁸⁸ Reinharz, S. (1992) ‘Feminist Survey Research and Other Statistical Research Formats’, in S.Reinharz, *Feminist methods in social research*, Oxford University Press, USA, pp.18-45

²⁸⁹ Tong, R. (1989) ‘Postmodern feminism’, in R.Tong *Feminist Thought*, Routledge, UK, p.88

principle which profoundly mediates the concrete conditions of lives'.²⁹⁰ It is acknowledged that the focus of this research is on one group of Thai women who influenced by double standard in Thai society, but the experiences of these women are used as examples of other women's lives. As Stanley puts it:

'Feminist methodology concerns understanding social relationships, pointing out inequalities, injustices and discrimination, how resources are allocated, why women's lives have been marginalised and ignored because they belong to the domestic sphere of servicing others'.²⁹¹

Regarding postmodernist feminist research, Harding claims that women's research and scholarship should be revisited, as these have tended to be trivialised when compared to a man's work.²⁹² With this in mind, this thesis on Thai prostitutes has value for its work on women. It is surrounded by an irreplaceable context of feminist methodology, and it also offers practical solutions for gender equality.

Feminist methods

I learnt from feminist theories and methodology how to benefit and empower those being studied. An American feminist, Code, states that a feminist standpoint is distinct from a female standpoint, because it has achieved feminist consciousness and 'is more than just another perspective on the world'.²⁹³ For the last few years, I have used feminist perspectives to study the communal reality of these Thai sex workers. Using feminism, I take the view that the dominance of Thai men is not only the basis of Thai society, but also the source of misery for Thai women.

Ethical issues are of central concern to feminist research.²⁹⁴ I used the type of feminist methodological strategy best suited to the situation and the participants. The

²⁹⁰ Lather, P. (1991) 'Feminist perspectives on empowering research methodologies', in P.Lather *Getting Smart: Feminist research and pedagogy with/in the postmodern*, Routledge, USA, pp.70-85

²⁹¹ Stanley, L. (1990) 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes', in L. Stanley (Ed.), *Feminist Praxis, Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, Routledge, USA, p.59

²⁹² Harding, S. (1987) 'Introduction: Is there a feminist method', in S.Harding (Ed.) *Feminism and Methodology, Social Science*, Indiana University Press, USA, pp.1-14

²⁹³ Code, L. (1995) 'How do we know? : Questions of Method in Feminist Practice', in S.Burt and L.Code *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, Broadview Press, USA, p.3

²⁹⁴ Neilson, Joyce M. (1990) 'Feminist Research Methods Exemplary Readings', *The Social Sciences*, Westview Press Inc, Colorado, USA, pp.69-93

main point is to ensure that both the participants and I have equal control over the research circumstances.²⁹⁵

Feminist methods can include surveys, interviews and/or interpretation of other people's works.²⁹⁶ In many respects, the praxis of feminist method is to ensure that the research subject is not hindered and not overly disrupted by the individual demands of data collection system. Opie asserts that the feminist mode of unstructured and responsive interviewing reflects the empowering contribution that significantly describes and analyses a social issue for public gaze.²⁹⁷ In this research, the interview technique was selected to gather information and therefore add to knowledge within the model of feminist research, through new findings.

The interactive, reciprocal self-determination of research participants is a feature of feminist research. The feminist paradigm is mixed, however, as its results must refer back to and call on the establishment to resolve and eliminate sex-based inequality.²⁹⁸ Feminist methodology aims to find a solution that will validate women's perceptions and confirm the soundness of the assumptions for further transformation.²⁹⁹ In this thesis, feminist methodology is the basis of the endeavour to empower women that informs my research intention.

Feminist research writing

Tong (1989) suggests that feminist writing is multiple, varied and open to the possibility of many solutions.³⁰⁰ Alison Jones, a New Zealand feminist, has stated that feminist writing is not limited by the rules or governed by formal theoretical principles; if it were, it could possibly lead to the comfortable and unselfconscious expression of 'patriarchal voice'.³⁰¹ My concern is that feminist writers change the way people think

²⁹⁵ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

²⁹⁶ Opie, A. (1997) 'Qualitative research, appropriation of other and empowerment', *Feminist Review*, USA, pp.52-59

²⁹⁷ Opie, A. (1997) loc cit.

²⁹⁸ Lather, P. (1991) *Getting Smart: Feminist Research and Pedagogy within the Postmodernism*, Routledge, USA, pp. 70-85

²⁹⁹ Lather, Patti (1991) op cit., pp. 71-75

³⁰⁰ Tong, R. (1989) 'Postmodern feminism', in *R.Tong Feminist Thought*, Routledge, UK, p.88

³⁰¹ Jones, Alison (1999) 'Writing Feminist Educational Research: Am 'I' in the Text?', *Women and education in Aotearoa 2*, Penguin, NZ, pp. 18-32

about the subject they are dealing with, giving different women's perspective in the world.

Therefore, the particular formulas of feminist writing are valid for including, excluding and analysing information. Barrett and Phillips state that feminist theory is designed to undermine and or subvert the hierarchical twofold oppositions which form the basis of the gender injustice of western culture.³⁰² Finally, the last challenge is to identify the focus or standpoint from which one writes.³⁰³ I formed a profound identification in this thesis with these women interviewees, who shared their intimate thoughts and feelings.

The chief argument in feminist writing is to demonstrate some position that is succinctly true and confirmed, which has not previously been established. While I interpret the accounts from the interviews, I have taken the opportunity to convey the moving validity of what the women said in their own words. I have to be very careful to ensure that my own perspective and opinions do not place the subjects in a powerless position. Reinharz suggests that in writing a qualitative study, direct and innovative writing methods are feasible.³⁰⁴

Feminist writers may exert a good deal of influence over the way in which the research is communicated. Hence in feminist writing, freedom occurs when individuals have rights of mobility which the writing affords the researched.³⁰⁵ Therefore I conclude that feminists should select methods of writing that enhance their findings and effectively put forward their gender equality solution, without dominating the subjects of the research.

Feminist knowledge and its contribution to this study

This study is about Thai women prostitutes in Thailand and New Zealand, using Thai feminist methodology. Theories that apply to white or western women may not apply to Thai women living in Thailand; however, they may be relevant to Thai women living in

³⁰² Barrett, M. & Phillips, A. (1992) *Destabilizing Theory: Contemporary Feminist Debate*, Polity Press, England, pp. 1-9

³⁰³ Barrett, M& Phillips, A.(1992) loc cit.

³⁰⁴ Reinharz, S. (1992) Ibid, p.213

western countries. One example is New Zealand. The consequence of this propensity is that Thai women cannot conceive of a culture or a society where white women would not have power. Harding dismisses the idea that women have only played the role of victims and have never fought back; therefore women cannot be effective social agents on behalf of themselves or others.³⁰⁶ However, women in Thailand may not be able to be effective social agents. The socialisation of Thai women is traditionally more imperative, in what it teaches Thai women about the instrumentality of dedication. Therefore, it is wiser to assume that western feminist theory does not apply to non-western women as a rule.

At this point, I wondered whether, as a Thai feminist researcher, I might be overlooking opportunities for these Thai girls to revolt? Thai girls and women were forced into prostitution by economic pressures, to cope with their family's debts, or to support children with no child support from ex-husbands. The social benefit welfare policy has never existed in Thai society.³⁰⁷ The women's rights movement also has not become established, informally or formally.³⁰⁸ As such, Thai women prostitutes have little economic, social or emotional support to leave sex work.

Thai feminism is not acknowledged as being important in most Thai studies. Therefore, the intermixed analysis of feminist theories and methodologies is useful. Judith Galtry states that western feminism originally investigated and criticised the world scientifically through the viewpoints of white middle class women, while in the past twenty years, feminist thought has recognised 'coloured' women.³⁰⁹ The upheaval this has caused in studies of white women, one way or another, can be used as a good pattern for this Thai feminist study.

For this reason, an equal challenge is raised in this study as a Thai feminist perspective. The core of this Thai feminist realisation is specified as a methodological implement and a general direction or means of bearing the theme in mind. This study

³⁰⁵ Collins, P. H. (1997) 'Comment on Hekman's ' Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited' Where's the power?', *Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1997, Vol.22, pp. 375-381

³⁰⁶ Harding, S. (1992) The instability of the analytical categories of feminist theory, in H. Crowley & S.Himmelwelt (Eds) *Knowing Women: Feminism and Knowledge*, Polity Press, England, pp.338-354

³⁰⁷ Archavanitkul, K. and Havanon, N. (1990) *Situation, Opportunities and Problems Encountered by Young Girls in Thai Society*, Research report funded by Terre des Hommes, Bangkok, p.78

³⁰⁸ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Women, Men and the social change in the Thai society*, p.257

can be recognised as a *first-wave Thai feminist* research because it focuses on emphasising the need for the empowerment of Thai women. As well as, there were no previous and critical innovators of initial feminist wave's movement in Thailand.³¹⁰

The significance of this Thai feminist study

A Thai feminist study has its subject Thai women, and in this research takes a Thai feminist standpoint. The research principally places emphasis on male hypocrisy in Thai society. In fact, any Thai feminist must be knowledgeable about male power in Thailand, in all of its aspects: political, economical and social. Moreover, a Thai feminist should give attention and voice to the concerns of lower class Thai women, as these women are the most subjected to male dominance, due to their position and their being a majority of the female population.

The circumstances of these sex workers should be examined before a Thai feminist analyst can embark on documenting case histories. Female subordination and sex exploitation are two gender imbalances already present in the Thai social structure. Along with this philosophy, this thesis contributes to feminist knowledge by providing insight into the consequences of abuse of power by Thai and foreign men for Thai women prostitutes. Two issues are explored. One is the subordination of Thai women by Thai and western men, which is assumed to be the catalyst pushing these women into the vicious cycle of prostitution. The second is the sexual exploitation in relationships or the sex trade itself that Thai women experience in Thailand and New Zealand. This thesis highlights the gender inequity in Thai society for poor and working class Thai women prostitutes.

As a Thai feminist, I have to see who is systematically privileged in Thai society, in order to undertake this research. Thus this thesis has to reflect the power structures present in the lives of Thai women prostitutes. Code adds that feminists have to understand the power structures that affect their own restrictions of the possibilities

³⁰⁹ Galtry, Judith (2000) *Suckling in Silence: Breastfeeding, paid work and feminist thought in New Zealand, the USA and Sweden*, Ph.D. Dissertation, Victoria University of Wellington, NZ, p.18

³¹⁰ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) Ibid, p.223

of the present.³¹¹ I have the perception that such considerations have resulted in restoring my confidence in what I am undertaking.

Principally, as a Thai feminist researcher, I give power to Thai sex workers, which is in itself a divergence from Thai culture. Cotterill agrees that feminist researchers are eventually faced with discrepancies between their prototypes and their own experiences.³¹² I cannot avoid criticism of some Thai people, who did not desire their country to be presented with the awful facts about male prejudice and Thai prostitution. It is crucial that feminist theorists raise the responsiveness of Thai people, by inducing awareness of poor Thai women prostitutes.³¹³

I have used feminist methodology to report on the lives of poor and working class Thai women prostitutes. I use feminist theories to look at the overwhelming economic state of affairs affecting them both in Thailand and in New Zealand. Feminist theories and methodologies help to explain why poor and proletarian Thai women entered prostitution and came to live overseas. Using feminist theories and methodologies to study Thai women is conspicuous, and may mean that this thesis meets resistance from Thai men. Feminism is rarely acknowledged in Thai culture or Thai educational systems. Only 13.34% of Thais have the opportunity to graduate from Universities in Thailand.³¹⁴ However, women's studies knowledge has recently been accessible in a few educational programs at Thammasat and Chaing Mai universities in Thailand, started from the year 2001.

My Thai feminist perspective

A Thai feminist study is the term used to show that this constitutes a particular kind of feminist study. To contribute a Thai feminist study, the subject of the studies is empowered and benefited by the viewpoint on gender equality. The subject is characteristically about any Thai girls and women. In a positive way, a Thai feminist study is preferably carried out by Thai feminists.

³¹¹ Code, L. (1995) How do we know? : Questions of Method in Feminist Practice, in *S.Burt and L.Code Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, Broadview Press, USA, pp.13-44.

³¹² Cotterill, P., Interviewing women: Issues of friendship, vulnerability, and power', *Women's Studies International Forum*, USA, 1992, Vol.15, pp.593-606

³¹³ Zinn, Maxine B., *Feminism and family studies for a new century*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Sep 2000, Vol.571, pp. 42-57.

A Thai feminist is a Thai woman or man who has many different feminist perspectives, and trusts in the unique value and justice of gender equity. To be a Thai feminist is to produce a valuable and regarding Thai women's rights as principal. Moreover, subjective interpretation of Thai society is assembled by using a variety of feminist theories. Maria Mies, a liberal feminist, asserts that feminism is a crucial step in developing an adequately sensitive methodology to learn and see what is not there, and hear what is not being said, and to be accountable to this hidden information.³¹⁵ From this stance, I try to give voice to each invisible Thai woman sex worker as being another Thai woman in the corresponding society.

Reinharz argues that feminists must concern themselves with looking at many sides to a problem; as each always conditions the others.³¹⁶ From her point of view, I conclude that the way to conduct this study is to unite many kinds of feminist voices. By using my Thai feminist methodology to analyse the problem, I combine feminist methodology with the theories of postmodernist, liberal, socialist, radical and Marxist feminism. Wittig challenges that the concept of difference between the sexes rationally represents women from a range of different aspects, all vying for attention.³¹⁷ I use different kinds of approaches from other feminists to study this group of Thai women.

Most other research about Thai prostitution has focused more on economic and political terms, in which the solutions are described in a theoretical way.³¹⁸ Reinharz concludes that a learning situation is not a laboratory state, but approximating everyday life.³¹⁹ I agree with Reinharz that what works in theory does not always translate to real life experience. The practical solution as opposed to the theoretical solution is preferred in this thesis, because the prostitutes illuminate their own aspirations.

As a Thai feminist, I deduce that Thai prostitutes may need atypical solutions. I argue that they are a cluster of individual women. The sex industry is nowadays one of

³¹⁴Phongpaichit, P., et al (1999) *Guns, Girls, Gambling, Ganja: Thailand's illegal economy and public policy*, Silkworm Books, Chaing Mai, Thailand, p.107

³¹⁵ Quoted in Code, L. (1995) 'How do we know? : Questions of Method in Feminist Practice', in S.Burt and L.Code *Changing Methods: Feminists Transforming Practice*, Broadview Press, USA, p.23

³¹⁶ Reinharz, S. (1992) *Feminist multiple methods research*, p.211

³¹⁷ Wittig, M. (1992) *The straight mind and other essays*, Beacon Press, Boston, pp.21-32

³¹⁸ Please see more details in chapter two, *Literature Review and Hypothesis*, section *Assumptions*.

³¹⁹ Reinharz, S. (1992) 'Feminist Survey Research and Other Statistical Research Formats', in S.Reinharz, *Feminist methods in social research*, Oxford University Press, USA, pp. 18-45

the key parts of the Thai economy. In an ideal world, Thai prostitution could be eradicated. However, this may be unachievable in Thailand because of the widespread corruption, and the basis of male desire for the purchase of women.

Conclusion

Feminist theories and methodologies are varied in practice. But feminism is, overall, a unique method for giving power to gender matters. Feminist methodology both hypothetically and practically provides a valuable way for researchers to study gender. To prevent falsification as a feminist researcher, I need to understand my feminist methodology and conform to my thesis objectives.

This study uses feminist theory and methodology with the aim of examining Thai women prostitutes. To find an ideal method of analysis, I required the advantage of wide and varied feminist knowledge adapted to my own individual background as a Thai feminist. This assisted me to find and use feminist methods of collecting, analysing and interpreting the qualitative data that forms the basis of this thesis, as demonstrated in the following chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss four aspects of the research methods used in this thesis. These are:

- 1) The recruitment process;
- 2) Interviewing;
- 3) The conjunction of qualitative research with feminist methodology;
- 4) The accumulation and use of facts.

Initially, I set out to show that the recruiting procedure and interviewing process for Thai sex workers in this study are appropriate for Thai mores. The analysis in this chapter is an account of the interaction with the research participants. In addition, I give a detailed explanation of the narrative context.

This thesis began with the assumption that the effect of female poverty on poor and working class Thai women is a cause influencing the trafficking of Thai girls and women internationally. The purpose of the interviews was to verify whether female poverty is a primary issue, which led or leads these women to prostitution. To strengthen this argument, data was collected to examine cause and consequences in their sex work through in-depth interviews with a total of thirty *exclusively Thai* women prostitutes. The interview group consisted of:

(1) Nine former and current women prostitutes in Thailand who entered the sex industry when they were under 15 years of age (now 19-28 years old);

(2) Nine former and current women sex workers in Thailand who were trafficked to first world regional cities and/or countries (now 21-33 years old);

(3) Twelve former and/or current Thai women sex workers and/or mail-order brides in New Zealand (now 22-31 years old). These women had sex work experiences in the Thailand and/or New Zealand sex industry.

I compared perspectives on interviewing methods with my interview objectives and modified methods to match my objectives. I employed feminist epistemology to validate and amplify the idea of Thai feminist methodology.³²⁰

The Victoria University Code of Ethics required that I consult with the interviewed sex workers on how they wanted to have their case stories represented.³²¹ As a researcher, I was aware that my interpretation of what they said had to be done carefully, particularly as I was translating from Thai to English. I had to carefully consider to what degree an individual life story can provide similar evidences of wider changes, and how well it symbolises its time and place. With this methodology, I hoped that solutions would emerge which were consistent with what these women said they needed.

Selection of participants in the research

The selection of interviewees for this study was non-random. I selected thirty previous and current Thai women sex workers who lived in either Thailand or New Zealand. The interviewees were divided into three groups, from the different areas of workplaces in the sex industry, as sex workers whom are/were mail-order brides, as trafficked prostitutes and as (initially) child prostitutes.

Types of sex workers³²²

According to a report by the Thai National Police Division, there are four classifications of prostitutes:³²³

- 1) Poor class: the prostitutes who are commonly forced to do sex work or child prostitutes who are kept in illegal brothels in large numbers;
- 2) Working class: the prostitutes who work in massage parlours, with little ability to negotiate the price for their sex activity;

³²⁰ Please see more details in chapter five, *Feminist Epistemology*.

³²¹ Please see appendix one and two, *Letters and The Informed Consent to Participants*. (English and Thai version)

³²² Please see more details in chapter two, *Literature Review and Hypothesis*, section *Stereotypes of sex workers*.

³²³ Prasitiratasint, S. (1998) *Child Prostitutes, Current situation, grounds and solution*, Published in Thai, National Research Institution of Thailand, Sociology department, BKK, p.14

- 3) Middle class: the prostitutes who work in direct and indirect businesses, with a tendency to provide sex for clients who want to make exclusive use of their services.
- 4) Global class: the prostitutes who are appeared as mail-order brides or women sex traffickers who go to, typically, first world countries for the purpose of sex work.

Although I have separated the interviewees into three categories (see above), some fitted into more than one of the four categories listed here. A few participants were child prostitutes who later trafficked themselves to overseas countries as sex workers. Some women went to overseas countries and then joined a mail-order bride business. Some former women prostitutes have renounced prostitution, but others developed into being a sex trafficker or an owner in a sex business.

General characteristics of the interview group

Overall, the interviewees are former and current Thai women prostitutes aged from 19 to 33 years old; they come from assorted origins and sex work backgrounds in Thailand.³²⁴ The majority of these participants are from the provinces in the North, Northeastern, East or centre part of Thailand. (Prostitutes originally coming from the West and the South of Thailand tend not to transfer themselves to other areas of Thailand.³²⁵ All are from either poor farming backgrounds or urban/slum working class backgrounds. There are very few who came originally from Bangkok, the capital city. However, the families of some interviewees migrated from other parts of Thailand to Bangkok, so they occasionally consider their place of origin to be Bangkok, even though they were not born in Bangkok.

These interviewees are diverse individuals. Some interviewees retain both Thai residency and New Zealand/Australian/British permanent residency or citizenship by their marriage. However, they are of Thai cultural background and ethnicity. They are mainly Buddhists; only a few of them are Christians. Those who are Christians changed their religion from Buddhism to Christianity after getting married to a foreigner.

³²⁴ Please see appendix twelve, *Map of Thailand*.

³²⁵ Foundation of Women, (1996) *The Crime Sex Trade*, Video Documentary, 28 minutes, Bangkok Thailand.

Overwhelmingly, the Thai language is their first language. Some interviewees are also able to speak Chinese, Japanese, German and/or English, but only to a limited extent. This is due to their trafficking and marriage repositioning in those countries as mail-order brides.

Former and current sex worker interviewees who came to live in New Zealand and/or worked in the New Zealand sex industry

I arranged the earliest interviews with a group of twelve former and current Thai mail-order brides and women prostitutes in New Zealand in May 1999. Thai prostitutes are estimated to be 5% of the total number of prostitutes currently working in New Zealand.³²⁶ These interviewees once worked or are still working as sex workers in Thailand and/or in New Zealand. All originally came from different parts of Thailand and were trafficked to New Zealand. I interviewed Thai former and current sex workers and/or mail-order brides who were living in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.

Figure one³²⁷ displays the percentages of the total number of Thai sex workers, working in New Zealand, who are living in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch.³²⁸

Most importantly, I excluded from my study any mail-order brides who had not ever done sex work in Thailand or elsewhere. I interviewed only Thai women mail-order brides or sex workers in New Zealand who had also been sex workers in Thailand or somewhere else. This means that some of them could be/were trafficked to other

³²⁶ Information from the interview with Catherine Healy, the National Coordinator of New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, Wellington, New Zealand, 19/6/2000.

³²⁷ Information from the interview with Catherine Healy, the National Coordinator of New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, Wellington, New Zealand, 19/6/2000.

³²⁸ Please see appendix thirteen, *Map of New Zealand*.

countries such as Australia, Japan or Germany as sex workers before coming to *New Zealand* as one of their destinations. These sex workers (or mail-order brides) do not include those who were child prostitutes, that is, who have ever engaged in prostitution at under 15 years old. Even so, they commenced their sex work at the youthful age of 17-20 years old. Most were persuaded to work as a sex worker by families and friends; a few were forced to do sex work unintentionally.

The mail-order bride participants were aged from 22 to 31 years old. Their length of sex work experience in Thailand and/or in New Zealand ranged from 1 to 8 years. The longer their experience, the more information they were able to give. However, the knowledge of all participants is advantageous to this research. I did not try to obtain a spread of interviewees according to their length of experience of sex work, because some of them worked on and off.

These interviewees have worked in a massage parlour, a go-go bar, an escort agency or a café, both directly and indirectly, in sex enterprises in Thailand. However, in New Zealand, most worked in an escort agency and/or a massage parlour, that is, directly in the sex business. None worked as street prostitutes.

In terms of marriage, some of these women are still married; others had divorced Thai husbands and later married foreign husbands. Three interviewees are no longer married to foreign husbands. Their family circumstances vary: some had a child/children with their first Thai husbands, but none had a child/children with their foreign husbands. Some of these interviewees did not live with their children, but have supported them financially by transferring money back home to Thailand.

Before coming to New Zealand, some of the mail-order brides trafficked themselves to other first world countries such as Australia or Japan to do sex work. As a group, these interviewees came to New Zealand through marriage relocation; some afterward unintentionally engaged in the New Zealand sex industry.

Most interviewees quit prostitution temporarily after marriage, because they might return to prostitution. Some traveled to New Zealand to do sex work for a short period of time, such as 2-6 months. Only interviewees, Dalat and Nuna were working as a sex worker with an overstayed visa when interviewed. Some of these interviewees

wish to begin their own sex businesses. One of the participants had permanently abandoned prostitution and was helping girls in the village by preventing them from being trafficked to do sex work, for example, Tiaa's story.³²⁹

Former child sex workers interviewed in Thailand

For interviews in Thailand, eighteen Thai girls and women sex workers were chosen from red-light areas such as Pat Pong in Bangkok and Pattaya in Chonburi.³³⁰ By reason of the necessity to compare with findings from interviews with Thai mail-order brides and sex workers in New Zealand above. I picked the summation of nine former child prostitutes and nine prostitutes who all were trafficked to work as a sex worker in first world regions excluding New Zealand.

Nine of these women were former child prostitutes and originally came from different parts of Thailand. These nine former child prostitutes were selected from Thai former and current prostitutes aged 19-28. They were first engaged in the sex industry when they were 15 years or younger. **No prostitutes aged 15 years old or under were interviewed.**

I searched for prostitutes who were once child prostitutes because I was uncomfortable with the idea of interviewing child prostitutes. Child prostitutes' immaturity and lesser understanding means that asking them to share their stories with others would be grounds for concern.³³¹ However, the former child sex workers I interviewed were relatively relaxed about recalling their past experiences. This openness about talking mandated the exclusion of child prostitute participants aged only 15 or under.

Some of these interviewees were sold, tortured or convinced to do sex work for the first time by their own parents, relatives or friends. These participants worked as a child prostitute for a brief period of time in unseen illegal brothels, and most were only

³²⁹ Please see Tiaa's story, p.156

³³⁰ Please see contemporary photos at appendix seven and eight, *Contemporary Photos of Pat Pong and Pattaya*.

³³¹ Thailand National Police Division, *A report of prostitution problem*, National Police Resources, Published in Thai, Bangkok, Thailand, 1999, p.17

there to sell their virginity for money, from two weeks to one month; some continued to do sex work unwillingly.

Later, all these interviewees who were child prostitutes became adult sex workers deliberately. Some of them were trafficked to do sex work in other first world countries or cities such as Australia, Japan, Taipei (Taiwan), Hong Kong and Germany. Other interviewees were planning to start their own businesses (in countries other than New Zealand). One unusual interviewee is a sex trafficker who is only 20 years old. (Panna) One is a mail-order bride in Australia. (Rung) Another has opened a bar and has become the runner of a sex business. (Tong) These former child prostitute interviewees have been working, mostly sporadically, in the sex industry for between 1 and 11 years.

In terms of relationships with partners, some were living with their boyfriends; others were engaged or married. Some were mistresses, one was single and another was divorced. A couple of these women had a child/children, parents, spouses and/or relatives to support financially.

Former and current sex workers interviewees who trafficked to other countries, excluding New Zealand, interviewed in Thailand

These nine participants included sex workers who were trafficked to and/or had lived in first world regions such as Australia, Japan, Germany, England, Singapore and Netherlands, but not New Zealand. They are not regarded as child prostitutes because they entered the sex industry when they were over 15 years old, at 16-22 years old. Nine former and current sex workers were selected from Thai women aged 21-33 years old. They were motivated to do sex work for economic reasons by their own parents, relatives and friends.

Nearly all of these interviewees have been working in a direct sex business such as a massage parlour, beer bar or a-go-go bar in the red-light areas of Pat Pong and Pattaya. One of these participants was a college student; who worked for a Thai escort agency. Their length of sex work experience in Thailand and overseas sex industries ranged from 1-5 years. They too worked intermittently in the sex trade. Some of these women were planning to be mail-order brides or to go overseas to do sex work.

The relationships of these sex workers are intriguing, as most were married at an earlier age of 14-17 years. Later, they divorced and became single mothers. None were married during the time of the interview, although most have a boyfriend or are mistresses. One of these interviewees has not informed her boyfriend that she was a prostitute, as she is a student.³³² I chose to interview her because she planned to go to Japan to do sex work. Some of these women have a child/children, parents and/or relatives to support financially. Another individual is a sex trafficker of Thai women to England.³³³

Informants other than prostitutes

The information from the interviews with prostitutes is my primary data. However, this thesis has also been informed by interviews with participants other than prostitutes; this information has been extremely useful for the analysis of findings.

I informally interviewed Catherine Healy from NZPC and approximately ten clients of Thai prostitutes in New Zealand. I also spoke with clients, participants and people who get involved with or respond to prostitutes in Thailand. Such people include a cheerman, a mamasang, taxi drivers, two staff from non-profit organisations. All of them are Thai, but the clients include both foreigners and Thai men.

Discussions with each staff from NGO organisations, such as the End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT) and the Children's Rights Protection Foundation (CRPF) in Thailand, were informative about how to enlist the interviewees. I am a member of the CRPF in Thailand and I donate money to help the organisation every year; the annual report from this organisation is sent to me every year. In New Zealand, the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NZPC) and members of the Thai community networks of sex workers assisted me with useful information for this thesis. My diary of the progress of the research helped me to arrange the data.

³³² Ann's story, chapter 8, p.129

³³³ Jieb's story, chapter 8, p.117

Recruitment procedure in New Zealand

I arranged the interviews in New Zealand assisted by a former Thai sex worker in the Thai community network in New Zealand. She asked to be anonymous in this study. She and her friends gave the contact phone details of Thai women sex workers and mail-order brides (previous sex workers) to me so that I could arrange the interviews.

In New Zealand, I rang these interviewees and asked lots of questions during the phone conversations. In some cases, I called these sex workers and left my contact details. After they rang back, I notified all the interviewees about the core objective of interviews, to provide unbiased and up front information for this study. I primarily paid attention to sex workers who were suited to this investigation. Over several phone calls, I inquired about several details to determine inclusion and exclusion of participants. For instance, when the person who called me was a mail-order bride who had never been a sex worker either in Thailand or in New Zealand, I decided not to hold the interviews, but thanked everyone for their time and information. For interviewees, I informed them about the consent form and the compensation and let them make their minds up whether or not they wanted to participate in this research.

When they agreed, I mailed interviewees copies of an informed consent form and a letter informing them of the purpose of the interview on addresses given. This information was in Thai. These women sex worker participants contacted me to set meeting times.

Recruitment procedure in Thailand

In Thailand, as explained above, eighteen sex workers were interviewed: nine women who had been child prostitutes and nine women who had begun sex work at a later age. These interviewees in Thailand called me after seeing posted advertisements³³⁴ which were located in areas where prostitutes were working, such as bars and nightclubs in the red-light districts in Bangkok and Pattaya in Chonburi. I personally asked policemen, mail-order bride business' agents and nightclub owners for a permit to put the advertisement posters in many areas. I gave some inducement such as gift and/or dinner coupons to these people. The consequence was their carelessness as I was able to visit

and have frank communication to prostitutes without encumbrance before starting interviews.

In the posted advertisement³³⁵ I sought out sex workers in Thailand with an offer of payment for an hour, meals (and cigarettes) and paying the cost of transport. There are several young women sex workers who were informed about my interview by massage parlour proprietors whom I had visited and given copies of the advertisement. I also left my contact details with a few former sex workers who are now experts in women's organisations, such as the rehabilitation centres for girls and women in Bangkok.

Many sex workers called because of the recompense. During the phone discussion, I inquired about the details I required for participants, just as I did for interviews in New Zealand such as their previous and current workplaces. I declined prospective participants when the person who called me was a former child prostitute but had never returned to prostitution, or when a person was a mail-order bride who had never done sex work. Thai women who planned to be trafficked to any other countries for the purpose of doing sex work were accepted.

Once I resolved who was eligible to take part, I mailed copies of an informed consent form, and a letter informing them of the purpose of the interview, in the Thai language, to them at their workplace or the address given. The particulars about the consent form, the objectives of the research and the reassurance of payment were given. These women sex workers soon contacted me to make an appointment.

Ethical issues

This report used appropriate methods of obtaining informed consent from the interviewees. These included: an application of approval for research projects, consent to participate in the research (English and Thai version) and letters informing them of the objectives of the interview (English and Thai version).³³⁶ There were approved by

³³⁴ Please see appendix four, *The copy of advertisement for interviewees wanted for this research.*

³³⁵ Please see appendix four, *The copy of advertisement for interviewees wanted for this research.*

³³⁶ Please see appendix one and two, *Letters and The Informed Consent to Participants.* (English and Thai version)

Human Subjects, the Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.³³⁷

At the interviews, I gave all participants the letter stating the purpose of the consent interviews and gave them another English copy of the consent form. All women had moderately or thoroughly limited comprehension of written English, so they did not want to sign the consent form in English, because they were uncertain of what it actually said. So, I gave them a consent form in Thai to sign.

While various ethical requirements are therefore fulfilled in this thesis, the ethical issues are still complex. As stated before, one research objective is to portray the factual state of affairs of these young women sex workers. Therefore, the ethical issues are ongoing, requiring a procedure which suits the goals and methods of this thesis. Feminists require methods that are unambiguous and accommodating. Stanley believes that feminists have to maintain a high norm of capability and keep up with current information methods in the areas that they are researching.³³⁸ As a Thai feminist, I am liable for my own ethical etiquette. Thus, the code of ethics for this thesis provides a functioning model of principles for Thai feminists to use with respect to research participants.

As a Thai feminist, I aim to update knowledge of ethical issues in relation to gender equality research behaviour. I informed the participants of my approach to the interviews requesting a focus on their personal circumstances, such as family relationships, expectations in their sex work career, the government policy on helping Thai prostitutes, and their viewpoints of feminism, as the basis of records. The assistance of feminist methodology is that its methods are not rigid, thus they allow more information to be obtained. I let them speak out about what their viewpoints are, without confining their thoughts with my own idea structure.

This methodology is concerned with respect for information, both for the researcher and the participants. Stanley and Wise claim that an ethic is a gender

³³⁷ Please see appendix three, *The Ethical Statement (with the signed approved from VUW Ethic Committee)*

³³⁸ Stanley, L. (1990) 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes', in L. Stanley (Ed.), *Feminist Praxis, Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, Routledge, USA, p.45

framework of thought concerned with morality and ethical choices between things and actions seen as good or bad.³³⁹ Conclusively, Stanley and Wise state that the research ethic should represent the reality and treat information as motivated construction or version to be subject to critical feminist analytical inquiry.³⁴⁰ Data analysis for this study is intended to deal with information about the real situation of Thai sex workers and mail-order brides honestly and precisely, in order to empower them. I encouraged the participants to have feelings of control. For use as direct quotes, any comments or expressions of feeling could be interpreted as constructive information. By contrast, misinterpreting these comments could lead me (as the researcher) to be slanted in using their information. Hence I persistently asked participants to clarify information, to make sure I understood their words and meanings. All participants were able to withdraw their consent to having their comments used for this research before the completion of the thesis.

Participants requested that information about illegal business behind prostitution in New Zealand not be presented in connection with their names or personal information. Out of respect for the safety of participants, real names and any form of identification are not used in the thesis. My contact particulars were provided to all the interviewees, in case of changes made as a result of participants' request.³⁴¹ The information sought from the people in the Thai community was represented as confidential. Amendments made as a consequence of needs of participants were done before the completion of this thesis.

Some of the data from the interviews was not used because this could compromise privacy. Informed consent is in the form of written evidence; it has to be read and signed by interviewees.³⁴² This is to do away with any negative impact on the participants in the future.

All sex worker interviewees realised that the cassette tape recorder was being used to record the interviews. Informants other than sex worker participants spoke

³³⁹ Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) 'Breaking out again: Afterward', in L. Stanley & S. Wise (Eds) *Breaking out again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*, Routledge, USA, pp.186-233

³⁴⁰ Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) *Ibid*, p. 203

³⁴¹ Please see appendix three, *The Ethical Statement (with the signed approved from VUW Ethic Committee)*

informally about their thoughts by questions given, so this is not recorded. I informed them that the tapes would be locked in a cabinet at my house; and after the thesis is completed, all tapes are to be destroyed. An outline of any information relating to them for proposed enclosure in the study was dispatched to each interviewee if requested at the interviews. I have given all interviewees my contact details including phone number, email, New Zealand contact details and other options such as my brother's contact phone number. The disposal of confidential materials will occur at the acceptance of this thesis.³⁴³

The preparation of interviews

First, interviews with thirteen former mail-order brides and six prostitutes in New Zealand were arranged during May 1999. It took around 17 months to organise two trips back to Thailand from New Zealand for the home-located research, in September-October 1999 and December 1999-January 2000. The financial assistance for this thesis was granted from the New Zealand Official Development Assistance (NZODA) scholarship, along with assistance from the Asia 2000 foundation and a faculty research grant from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS).

Compensations to participants

All the interviews in Thailand included compensation per hour (approximately \$NZD 28 per hour). Participants received payment for the interviews, free transport, food and/or cigarettes. Surprisingly, women who had trafficked themselves to New Zealand as mail-order brides and who also are/were sex workers required less compensation than interviewees in Thailand. For example, in New Zealand some participants wanted only a lunch meal and cigarettes, but no reward money for the interview hour, or any transport costs.

³⁴² Please see appendix three, *The Ethical Statement (with the signed approved from VUW Ethic Committee)*

³⁴³ Please see appendix three, *The Ethical Statement (with the signed approved from VUW Ethic Committee)*

Interview ambience

The interviews with twelve Thai former and current women mail-order brides or sex workers in New Zealand all happened at ordinary cafes in Auckland and in Wellington, New Zealand. The range of interview venues in New Zealand was therefore not as extensive as in Thailand. Most interviewees had only a lunch platter, a few cups of coffee or a couple of drinks. All the interviews were conducted in an informal, unstructured way.

In Thailand, all eighteen interviews took place in the afternoon at a café or fast food restaurant in Bangkok or in Pattaya. All the interviewees advised that they would rather not talk about their lives in personal places, such as at home or in a workplace. These interviewees all agreed that they felt more comfortable when the meetings took place in restaurants or cafes. So I agreed to meet them in bustling locations. The venues chosen by participants for the interviews were all in business areas and/or shopping areas which were teeming with people. Commonly chosen fast food cafes included McDonalds, Chester's Grill, Pizza Hut, Black Canyon (a famous Thai cafe), Japanese restaurants, a MK Sukiyaki restaurant, a S&P restaurant, food courts, a Pizzeria café and a noodle café. All were sited inside large department stores in Bangkok and Pattaya and considered contemporary and hip among young Thai people.

The meetings took place in the afternoon because participants were not adjusted to be awake in the morning. For some interviews, I turned up late, which is immensely habitual in Thai culture.³⁴⁴ Most interviewees also arrived approximately 20-45 minutes later than the appointment time.

To my surprise, I was dressed in more casual clothes than all the interviewees, who were in conservative dressy outfits. Some appeared looking like business people. They were characteristically different from the image of prostitutes in most movies or film documentaries.³⁴⁵ In turn, they were astonished that I was a smoker and wore casual clothes such as jeans, a summer top, shorts and colourful sandals, without facial make-up. Most interviewees greeted the wrong individuals, as I did not give the

³⁴⁴ Towes, B. and McGregor, R. (1998) *Culture Shock, Success Secrets to Maximize Business in Thailand*, Times Books International, Singapore, Malaysia 1st edition, 1998, p.56

impression of being an academic person. In contrast, participants in New Zealand were casually dressed, as I was, and guessed that I was the researcher, because I look Thai and was conspicuous among others in the café.

Each interview started with a food/drink dialogue. Then I briefly introduced the actual goal of this study and the interview method. I then informed participants about the consent form details, explaining the research process. In Thailand, some interviewees asked me to read the letter and informed consent in English to them. This helped them to believe I was really a researcher. They signed the consent on the Thai version of the form straightforwardly at the beginning.

Themes of conversations³⁴⁶

The interview process was used to acquire qualitative data for the research. The flashback method of recollection was used for every interview. I asked specific questions when interviewees expressed memories that would inform focal points of this thesis.

The procedure of open-ended questions for this study was drawn upon to avoid getting misleading information. The interview process allows opportunities for explanation which are functional for receiving genuinely unbiased data. Regarding the advantages of interviewing, Sedgwick states that open-ended interview research explores people's views of authenticity and allows researchers to generate theory.³⁴⁷ On the other hand, survey-style research naturally does not have this benefit. According to Stanley and Wise,

'Feminist ...epistemology positions the emotions as a legitimate source of knowledge.'³⁴⁸

From this point, I ensured that the interviews covered various aspects of participants' lives, including family upbringing, education and career. To instigate the questions about their origin, background and childhood, I asked about their years of sex

³⁴⁵ Foundation of Women, (1996) *The Crime Sex Trade*, Video Documentary, 28 minutes, Bangkok Thailand.

³⁴⁶ Please see also appendix five, Interview Checklists Questions.

³⁴⁷ Sedgwick, E.K. (1990) 'Epistemology of the closet, in the E.K. Sedgwick', *Epistemology of the closet*, University of California Press, USA, pp.83-90

work experience and their ages. I chiefly pressed for information about their maturity and their intentions when they entered the sex industry. Family relationships, marriage standing, education and economic situations before entering the sex trade were all discussed. Interviewees talked liberally about people who intimidated them into the sex industry.

In terms of sex work issues, the problems suffered by these interviewed prostitutes, such as bad working conditions, diminution of earnings and anxiety about health, were meticulously described. Questions about methods of preventing AIDS and STIs, contraception and drug use at their workplaces were explored. Details of payment were given, and I then compared these with information from secondary participants such as clients, mamasangs, cheermen, pimps and policemen.

The interviews highlighted the experiences of Thai girls and women prostitutes when they are trafficked to other countries. Most of these experiences involved problems between mail-order brides and foreign husbands or the families of foreign husbands/partners. Examples of sexual abuse and racism in overseas countries were given.

At the end of the conversation, I asked about their future and thoughts about sex work, for instance, their assessments of women's rights in Thailand and New Zealand, their hopes of what they would achieve from the sex businesses, their vital yearnings in their lives regarding their families and children. The participants were asked to give their views on the specifications of society toward prostitution.

The interview method was conceived to be the most useful form of research for this thesis, because it provides fuller information. Commenting on the most effective use of interviewing, Cotterill declares that, 'the participatory model has been adopted [sic] by feminists in various ways, although it seems that the best way to find out about women's lives is to make interviewing an interactive experience.'³⁴⁹ In brief, each interview fulfilled the objectives of this research, particularly to find out the needs of these sex workers.

³⁴⁸ Stanley, L. and Wise, S. (1993) Ibid, pp.186-233

³⁴⁹ Cotterill, P., 'Interviewing women: Issues of friendship, vulnerability, and power', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1992, Vol.15, pp.593-606

At the conclusion of the interview, each participant was thanked and compensated. Some interviewees told me that their trauma was now released because they had spoken to someone about their sorrowful lives. I assured them that there was nothing to be ashamed of. Some were grateful for having me listen to their stories. Most interviewees left without asking for free transport, even though I offered this to them. Afterward I contacted participants to confirm the transcription and use of their words in this thesis. All of them agreed not to request a copy of their information used in this thesis.³⁵⁰ They also did not want any feedback, because I informed them that I had to write this thesis in English. Most interviewees decided not to have a copy because they considered that only New Zealand people would read my thesis.

Analysis of the interviews

In this thesis, the prime rationale of interviewing was to empower these sex workers and to illuminate their wishes and needs. The synthesis of findings from the interviews, such as their reasons for entering prostitution and the tribulations distressing the lives of these sex workers, endorses the assumed predicament of these subjects.

Interview is a method which is predominantly concerned with the interaction between both interviewer and interviewee. Oakley begins by saying that an interview is a formal way of people finding out about people; it is a 'pseudo conversation'.³⁵¹ In contrast, Etter-Lewis goes on to say that in reality there are interviewer/interviewee relationships which are more casual than the formal 'fake conversation' and bear no resemblance to the aggressive model.³⁵² I agree with Etter-Lewis that in this case, there should be no tension between my intentions and participants' beliefs. From the interviews, I had more successful discussions with participants when I attempted to talk more casually, and with a bit of formulated 'lady chitchat', than when I tried to conduct a ceremonious, formal interview.

³⁵⁰ Please see also appendix five, *Interview Checklist Questions*

³⁵¹ Oakley, A. (1981) 'Interviewing Women: a contradiction in Terms', in H.Roberts (ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*, Routledge, USA, pp.30-61

³⁵² Etter-Lewis, G. (1993) *My Soul is My Own: Oral Narrative of African American Women in the Profession*, Routledge, USA, p.139

In terms of analysing the interviews, I took a cautious approach to my role as researcher. McMahan interprets the informers as the most significant stimulus in how the oral testimony received through their intervention.³⁵³ Etter-Lewis excerpts that,

'word phrases and even silences contain multiple layers of meaning beneath the literal surface, and particular combinations expose social realities otherwise concealed from view.'³⁵⁴

When it came to offensive or painful experiences, these sex workers were very restrained in their emotions. This could be a consequence of organising interviews in places where many people were gathered. Most interviewees barely cried, but seemed saddened and speechless when they recalled terrible memories. I noticed that it was slightly complicated to ask about the agonising psychological experiences of domestic abuse and sexual harassment. Although I was seeking 'facts' to corroborate my hypothesis, the interviews engendered strong emotions for interviewees. This made me realised how intertwined 'facts' and 'emotions' are. Oakley defines interviewees as people with substantial potential to sabotage the attempt to research them.³⁵⁵

I could have considered the emotions as a disruption, but instead I considered them to be part of the evidence. Oakley also concluded that a feminist methodology of social science research requires that not only the 'rational' should be described and discussed.³⁵⁶ I perceive personal involvement to be equally as hazardous as prejudices; I, as interviewer, should agree to allow the research objectives depend on what the interviewees say, no matter what that is.

These interviewees might not have a great deal of feminist theory or feminism but they believe in equality in the society. When I interviewed them I explained my ideas of feminism to them. It was encouraging to see how feminism in general and my research in particular could present a positive aspect to these Thai women prostitutes. In conclusion, I did not find any indications of antagonism during interviews being triggered by our different social positions.

³⁵³ McMahan, Eva M. (1989) *Elite Oral History Discourse: A Study of Cooperation and Coherence*, University of Alabama Press, USA, p.98

³⁵⁴ Etter-Lewis, (1993) *Ibid*, p. 202

³⁵⁵ Oakley, A. (1981) *Ibid*, p.58

³⁵⁶ Oakley, A. (1981) *loc cit*.

I had no personal feelings of animosity against these interviewees. The fact that the point of this study is to empower women was exceedingly helpful, as interviews were not rigidly carried out, as may happen in other social science research projects. On the contrary, I abided by feminist methodology, so as to make the subject (the prostitute) powerful. Although I have no sex work skills myself, I unreservedly related to their thoughts. The reality is that these women are aware of their status and anxious about their future direction, echoing my own personal concerns about my future. They are worried about their families and their own economic circumstances. Most interviewees decided that their own perspectives about equal rights had become wider, as I confirmed that they were decent people.

From the interviews, these sex workers were grateful for being accepted as able to provide for their families, children or loved ones through their work. Every so often I could personally connect with their sensitivity to experiences of racism and sexism in Thailand and in overseas countries. Talking about the coping mechanisms used to deal with lack of secure financial independence was a commonly stressed theme, both for them and for me.

In conclusion, it was an advantage to be able to communicate in the Thai language. Being able to share my thoughts with these women and to identify with and understand their Thai culture was another advantage. Psychologically, I feel that as a Thai woman, I have now developed a conclusive interpretation about other Thai people's lives. In terms of my own ideas, these interactions have expanded my consciousness, as I have learned how to benefit from their unrelated experiences. In spite of this, I cannot predict what will happen to these women in the future.

A qualitative study

The details from interviews are equally validated and employed in the struggle against women's exploitation and oppression. This research is in many instances triangulated. Qualitative data and methods were of assistance in order to meet the aims of this study. Shulamit affirms that feminist methods are not fixed and that feminists combine their

methods for social transformation with their research.³⁵⁷ Stanley says that feminism grows upon 'anti-realist, anti-essentialist foundations'.³⁵⁸

From this philosophical standpoint, I affirm that the better the quality of the research that feminists do, the more likely it is that feminist research will influence others and ultimately assist in achieving feminist goals. Thai feminist research draws on multiple methods as manifold disciplines for a particular project.³⁵⁹ In this thesis, the method I selected as appropriate is to interview, analyse the synthesis of findings and summarise these in a substantiated report.

As Thai feminist research, this project aims to construct non-hierarchical and non-manipulative discourse, in order to overcome the existing divisions in Thai society. If my arguments are valid, they can become a highly valuable tool in revealing the effects and consequences of patriarchy in Thai society. Reinharz (1992) asserts that multiple innovations in qualitative studies can arise from conventional methods.³⁶⁰ She holds that it is proper to use combined analysis of both the individual story and the larger social system to challenge the societal reaction to its subject/subjects.³⁶¹ Specifically, I conclude that any feminist or Thai feminist study should preferably use methods that seek to bring about an improvement in approaches to the people and topic being studied, and promote the issue of gender equality.

Recording of information: individual narratives

The interview is essentially a one-way process of communicating facts, emotions and opinions. However, Iles concludes that the distinguishing feature of oral sources, compared with all other survey data sources, is the critical role of researchers in the 'creating of evidence'.³⁶² In this thesis, a synthesis of findings is arranged as facts that are then re-analysed. Iles claims that the life story of any woman, if it is written

³⁵⁷ Reinharz, S. (1992) 'Feminist Survey Research and Other Statistical Research Formats', in S. Reinharz, *Feminist methods in social research*, Oxford University Press, USA, pp.18-45

³⁵⁸ Stanley, L. (1990) 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes', in L. Stanley (Ed.) *Feminist Praxis, Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology*, Routledge, USA, p.67

³⁵⁹ Mies, M. (1991) 'Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice', in Martyn Hammersley (Ed.) *Feminist Social Research*, (pp.64-82), Sage Publication, England, p.66

³⁶⁰ Reinharz, S. (1992) *Ibid*, p.76

³⁶¹ Reinharz, S. (1992) *Ibid*, p.78

³⁶² Iles, T. (1992) *Ibid*, p.29

honestly and well founded, is bound to be a feminist account.³⁶³ I proposed to use a Thai feminist perspective to interpret the lives of these Thai prostitutes. However, I have striven to achieve accuracy by separating the various kinds of information. This ensures that there is no bias in the elucidation of the findings.

Although the case studies of this thesis are narrated as logical narratives of information, they are likely to amalgamate the separate stories of each interviewee. If we draw attention to the nuance of background of each interviewee, we can understand and unravel the narratives as well. Iles says that women's stories are notable for introducing a women's perspective, rather than factual ideas only.³⁶⁴ Other feminist writers, such as Barbre, affirm that women's personal narratives do reveal the frameworks of wisdom, through which individuals locate themselves in the world and make sense of their lives.³⁶⁵ Similarly, most stories from the interviews are written and presented as real life events, similar to what can be found in a person's daily life.

A major obstacle I had in writing this thesis is that I had to work out a compromise on how to deal with the differing ways in which interviewees wanted to be portrayed. In the writing stage, all findings had to be divided into sections. Any information used had to be checked for correctness. This made the process of writing exceedingly time consuming. In addition, confidentiality had to be ensured. Donaldson states that there is no life lived without contradiction, but it is often a problem for the writer to resolve the discrepancies which appear in people's understanding of their past experiences.³⁶⁶

From the interviews, it is not easy to decode the meanings and the different versions of each person's life. Because writing can be consciously edited, it is manipulated in a manner that often distorts the realities of a speaker's speech. Stanley

³⁶³ Iles, T. (1992) 'All sides of the subject: women and biography', *The Athena Series*, Teachers' College Press, USA, p.37

³⁶⁴ Iles, T. (1992) *Ibid*, p.27

³⁶⁵ Barbre, Joy W. (1989) *Interpreting Women's Live: Feminist Theory and Personal Narrative*, Indiana University Press, USA, p.44

³⁶⁶ Donaldson, I., et al (1992) *Shaping Lives: Reflection on Biography*, Australian National University, Australia, p.239

explains that the form in which the terms are expressed affects the self, in this case the participant, who is constructed through these different means of communication.³⁶⁷

Furthermore, a particular aspect of analysis arose in deciphering distressing incidents in participants' lives, such as when parents sold them into prostitution, or when they were raped. It is awkward to deliver their stories in a way that is receptive of what they are saying, yet does not reflect my own perceptions and feelings. I put a great deal of thought into what would constitute effective evidence and I aimed to unfetter each interviewee by entering their narratives as part of three collections of interviews. Each story is individually described in a chronological, unvarying technique.

Hutching suggests that reliance on written evidence means reliance on accounts which may be biased, because of contemporary viewpoints, or as a result of the writer's own prejudices and beliefs.³⁶⁸ Ultimately, I solved this predicament by writing each case study individually. The narrative accounts are presented and analysed later from factual interpretation of each particular participant's account.

Conclusion

The subject chosen for this thesis concerns the lives of Thai girls and women in the global sex industries. The objective of the interview method used in this study is to empower the subject and scrutinise the evidence for my hypothesis. I have postulated that poor and working class Thai girls and women enter the sex industry because of having no choice to survive economically other than through prostitution. Consequently, evidence of this would be able to be located through the interview process.

Although the process of recruiting interviewees in this investigation was analogous to that of a commercial researcher, this process was successful. For example, offering payment was a technique to attract prospective interviewees' attention. The interview venues chosen, predominantly fast food restaurants, were part of the reward strategies.

³⁶⁷ Stanley, L. (1992) *The Auto/Biographical I: the theory and practice of feminist auto/ biography*, Manchester University Press, England, p.39

³⁶⁸ Jansen, A. (1990) *I have in my arms both ways stories by ten immigrant women*, Port Nicholson Press, New Zealand, p.45

Interviews were conducted resourcefully, a common practice in feminist research. Thus, the conversations generated affluent interactions. The participants released their initial anxiety by explicitly revealing their life stories, as well as gaining food and/or cigarettes. We can see that the interview method, as a narrative conversation of life experiences, is viewed as memorable, but not as exactly comparable to other documentary modes of inquiry. Interviews for this thesis extensively supplied constructive information. As for ethical matters, apart from the formal requirements for informed consent, etc. The principal ethical obligation was to present the information given by the interviewees as accurately as possible.

In conclusion, feminists abide by their connection with their own framework and the structure of their theses about gender and society. As a Thai feminist, I am obliged to follow this thesis convention. I have achieved everything I aimed to achieve in terms of the interviews, as they provided ample evidence for my research premise, telling their stories in their own words. I have illuminated the value of their narrative accounts and highlighted the extensive and intensive data they contain. The remainder of this thesis respects participants by giving their interview responses in an appropriate way.

Part V: Findings related to Thai women
living and working in Thailand
and New Zealand

CHAPTER SEVEN

CASE STUDIES OF FORMER CHILD PROSTITUTES

IN THAILAND

Introduction

This chapter gives the results from interviews with four former and five current women prostitutes who first engaged in the sex industry when they were 15 years or younger. The youngest age for entering prostitution among these interviewees was 13 years. (Nid)

No prostitutes currently aged 15 years or under were interviewed.³⁶⁹ All of those interviewed were Thai women who originally came from different parts of Thailand. These nine former child prostitutes were inclusively selected from Thai women prostitutes aged from 19-28. All of the nine were persuaded to sell their virginity for a short period of time.

General results from the interviews

These participants decided later to become adult sex workers after being sold for the first time. All participants worked as child prostitutes for a brief period of time in hidden illegal brothels in Thailand. They were only there to sell their virginity for money; usually they engaged in sex there less than twenty times, for between two weeks and one month.

Some prostitutes continued to engage in sex work, some continually, but most working 'on and off', for financial reasons. Some were not content with the conditions of sex work in Thailand. They soon decided to do sex work in other countries, such as Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan and Germany. Other interviewees were planning to start

³⁶⁹ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Former Child Prostitutes Interviewees*.

their own businesses with assistance from their partner, who was usually a former client. One interviewee was herself a sex trafficker, exporting women from their place of origin to do sex work overseas. (Panna)

These participants have been in sex work from between 1 and 11 years; most have worked only sporadically in the sex industry. Conclusively, the years of sex work have not improved the health of their finances, but have actually somewhat weakened their economic status, such as Jieb, Hope and Nid.

Findings

Though female poverty appears to be the main factor persuading these women to enter prostitution when they were 15 years of age or younger. But some of these interviewees were sold, tortured or otherwise persuaded to do sex work for the first time by their own parents and relatives. Family background and educational circumstances were also considered. Two of these interviewees were partially illiterate, as they had not gone to school. They learned how to read and write by themselves, such as Tong and Nid. The highest qualification among this group of interviewees was a teacher college's level. (Ann, Dalat)

The relationship between these women and their families is very intense, because several women have parents, spouses and/or relatives to support financially. These interviewees are required by their family as a traditional and social expectation to devote economic assistance. They do not live with their families, but may get money from their partners to support their families, as interviewees, Panna or Nida do. In their matrimonial circumstances, they tend to rely financially and emotionally on their partners. Some were living with boyfriends; some were engaged or married. Some were mistresses; one was single and another was divorced. All of these interviewees said they wished to start a family and have a healthier lifestyle than when they were children.

Nonetheless, most of these women had experienced gender inequity from people in Thailand and in foreign societies. Most of them suffered from having wages deducted through the unfair conduct of Thai people, and from injustice from Thai men. For example, Buay was not awarded a scholarship because the school principal thought

that a boy student ought to have it. In Nid's case, her male clients usually do not use a condom and she has had to accept this condition to avoid violence. The belief that Thai men deserve to be treated as superior is deep-rooted in the surroundings of the interviewed sex workers.

The narratives of Thai women prostitutes who were under 15 years of age when they entered the sex industry³⁷⁰

What follows are nine discrete narratives of participants in the research. The accounts were transcribed from a conversation in Thai and translated into English. The interviewees have read and signed the consent form to participate in this research.³⁷¹ The names of participants and other people in all the stories are pseudonyms.³⁷²

Buay's story

Buay came from an abusive family in a slum in Bangkok. The environment in the slum where she lived was very poor. Buay has never known her real father. Her mother remarried; the man was abusive and alcoholic. He worked as a building worker and her mother worked on her own selling food on the street. Her mother supported her, as Buay obtained an education through grade 9.³⁷³ Buay did very well at school; she was nearly awarded a scholarship from the government to further her studies at high school level. Unfortunately, the award was cancelled and forwarded to a boy student in her school. There was only one award per school in that area, and the school principal decided that the boy student deserved more opportunity to study than Buay, a girl student.

Buay was then forced to leave school to get work to help her family's household expenses, when she was 15 years old. She helped her mother by selling food on the street and cleaning toilets in a hotel. Buay wanted to experience a better way of life, so she decided to look for a more skilled job. Buay was unemployed for one year looking

³⁷⁰ Please see Bibliography, Section A, Primary Sources, Interviewees' list of dates and places of interviews, Thailand.

³⁷¹ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

³⁷² Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

³⁷³ The education level ranged from grade 1-12, 1-6 in primary school, 7-9 in secondary and 10-12 in high school level.

for skilled employment, because she was too young. Later on, a friend persuaded her to go and work as a receptionist in a massage parlour because of better payment. They lied to the owner of the massage parlour, saying she was over 15 years old. Buay worked for 3 months before being fired. The owner wanted to sleep with her and attempted to sexually assault her. He fired her for defending herself. Buay did not receive any work compensation and could not go to the police to make a complaint, as she thought she was not as powerful as that massage parlour proprietor.

This way of life seemed a struggle. She had no money, so she went back to her mother in the slum. This time, her stepfather tried to rape her while drunk. Buay defended herself and accidentally stabbed her stepfather (he did not die). She then ran away from the slum to live with a friend who worked in a massage parlour in Bangkok. Her friend was ill and persuaded her to work in a massage parlour for a living, so as to help with the household expenses. Buay was devastated, but decided to work in the massage parlour; she was still only 15 years old. She was paid quite highly for her first client, \$THB 12,000 (\$NZD 600), even though the agent took half of the money from her.

After that, she worked for 5 years in the same massage parlour. Buay had many coworkers and clients who really liked her. Buay said that her boss would take everyone, including her, to hospital to have a medical check each month. Her clients all had to use a condom, however, there were sometimes problems with violent clients, who refused to use condoms. Buay was not aware of AIDS and STIs until she lost the friend who persuaded her to work to AIDS. Buay is now most concerned about her health and finances.

Buay rents an apartment and has purchased a car. She has met a client who is a Japanese businessman; he helped her pay for luxuries and a few trips to Japan. She has just quit her job at the massage parlour and plans to go to Japan with her boyfriend. Buay went back to visit her mother but she could not find where her mother was living. She heard that her mother had already gone back to her original province. Her stepfather had been sent to jail after he murdered a person for money in the slum. Buay wanted to go to see her mother before she went to Japan. 'I am not sure about money if I still work in Thailand', she said. Buay also wanted to marry her Japanese boyfriend and settle down, so she can quit prostitution permanently.

Hope's story

Hope came from Chaing Rai, a province in the North. She went to school up to grade 4. She is the youngest one out of four older brothers and sisters. Her family is very poor and could not support her to go to school beyond grade 4. Her parents sold her for her virginity at \$THB 9,000 (\$NZD 450) to a brothel in a province in the central part of Thailand.

Hope was only 14 years old when she was sold as a sex worker. Her mother sold her with her sister, because her parents were addicted to marijuana, and they did not have enough money to support their children. Hope said she was upset that her parents sold her. However, she realised how poor her family was.

After she had been to Bangkok for the first time, Hope planned to work in the brothel where she sold her virginity. The brothel owner suggested that she work in a new brothel in another province in a central part of Thailand. She was very young and did not know what to do, so she went there with her sister. She was desperate and wanted to leave home permanently.

She had been working in a brothel for five years. She said she had a medical check every two weeks. 'I like to use a woman condom while servicing customers because there is always bad customers to refuse using a condom,' she said. She earned enough to send some money home, as the owner of the brothel was taking care of her as well as if she was his own daughter or sister. He sometimes brought some policemen to the brothel and let them sleep with the girls for free. Hope had to please the owner because he would have treated her badly if she misbehaved.

The conditions of work in that brothel were above average. Hope said that she benefited from working and could have a day off to go out to a movie or for shopping. She sent money home at \$NZD 200 per month.

Hope moved to work in Pat Pong, in Bangkok, as the provincial brothel she first worked at targeted customers who were fond of child prostitutes. She said she became too old and was not getting chosen by customers. She disliked the work condition in Pat Pong because of the deductions from her salary and the higher costs of living. She then

decided to go to Japan for the purpose of doing sex work, but the custom agents stopped her and sent her back to Thailand. She said she seemed too young to be travelling alone. She wanted to go back to Japan or another country to do sex work, and then later come back to work in Pattaya. She did not believe the stories in the media about Thai prostitutes who were killed and abused in Japan. She said that she wanted to earn more money as she wasted time in the brothel with her disgraceful profit from doing sex work.

Jieb's story

Jieb came from the Northeast of Thailand. She went to school to the end of grade 2. Her mother was ill with kidney disease and her father left when she was little. Her mother worked very hard to take care of the children. As the oldest child, Jieb knew that her mother needed medical support. 'I thought that I was old enough to work but I did not expect to do sex work', Jieb recalled.

Jieb became a sex worker when she was 15 years old. A friend of her family in the village persuaded her to take a 'waitress' job in Bangkok. Jieb did not know it, but this was really sex work. Jieb had no alternative except to sell her virginity for \$THB 8,000 (\$NZD 400) to pay for her mother's medical costs and her siblings' living expenses. Afterward, she continued working in a massage parlour by an arrangement in Bangkok and lived there for 5 years.

After the economic crisis in Thailand in 1998, Jieb was unemployed, as the massage parlour went broke. To pay for her mother's medical bills and her siblings' allowance, Jieb decided to take a lower-paid job, in Pat Pong, as a stripper. She said it was actually considered good money and better working conditions. She had more control over her selection of customers and the owner of the a-go-go bar where she worked was very supportive.

Jieb went to see a doctor by herself every week, unlike at the massage parlour where a doctor would visit every month. She always used contraception and she is aware of the effect of AIDS and STIs. Jieb wanted to get married to a rich foreign man and leave prostitution, so she put her profile with a mail-order-bride agency. She said she has opened a small food cafe in her homeland and her brother looks after the business.

Jieb met Daniel, an Australian painter, through the mail-order-bride agency; the agent helped her with the English language. After three months of dating, Jieb was married and moved to Perth.

Jieb said that her husband was 15 years older than her. He wanted sex all the time. She did not want to get a divorce and go back to prostitution. She wanted to get Australian citizenship, so she accepted his behaviour. Jieb said that her husband's family expressed amusement at her when she could not communicate in English properly. They called her a prostitute from Thailand even though she is not a sex worker anymore. They said she was a dull woman because she came from a developing country like Thailand. Jieb said that her husband's family thinks that every woman from Thailand is poor and does sex work. Jieb moved back to Thailand after separating from her husband; she planned to do sex work again there.

Nid's story

Nid came from a poor and abusive family. Her parents were farmers and she had many brothers and sisters. She lived with her family in a small village in Mahasarakam, in the northeastern part of Thailand; she never went to school. She said that sometimes her parents hit her and verbally abused her when they were angry. Her parents sold Nid to a trafficker for \$THB 10,000. (\$NZD 500) She said that she was raped by a driver in a car while going to the brothel in the south of Thailand. There were other girls on that trip to the south of Thailand as well. Nid was only 13 years old at that time.

Nid was raped by pimps of the brothel and forced to do sex work to repay the money they gave to her parents. After two years, she was sold to Taiwan. She worked there for 5 years. Nid said she could not keep any money because they kept her like a prisoner and she was too scared to run away. All the time she worked there, a doctor would come to give her a medical check every month. She was required to use a condom by the brothel, however, she had no power to negotiate this with aggressive clients.

Nid met a client who fell in love with her and wanted to help her out. His name was Jeff, and he was a Singaporean businessman. He bought her from a brothel in Taiwan for \$THB 80,000 (\$NZD 4,000). Nid lived with that client as a mistress for two

years, but she ran away after his wife caught them sleeping together. Nid said she was angry and purposely attacked and injured the wife, then was arrested in Taiwan and sent back to Thailand. Nid escaped from the rehabilitation centre to help young women. She went to Pat Pong and was connected with a trafficker sending women to Japan. She paid the trafficking agent for her trip to Japan and worked there for 4 years. She worked there and hardly used condoms. She said she was not scared of contracting HIV or AIDS. Her work conditions were unpleasant as most Japanese clients are ferocious, and the payment was poor. She used drugs such as marijuana and heroin for a relief from sex work.

She had just come back to Thailand recently. She now has a Thai boyfriend who is 7 years younger than her; she supports him financially. 'I love him so much that I cannot live without him', Nid said. She went back to see her family and gave them some money.

Nid said she would never quit prostitution even though it was pitiable payment. She said she has supported her boyfriend financially and she loves him very much. Nid has not saved much money as she spent it on her boyfriend's education and luxury items such as his car, his clothes and household expenses for him. At the time of the interview, Nid was thinking about going overseas again as she had no education and no work to do. She planned to go back to Japan again.

Nida's story

Nida came from the North of Thailand. Her family was poor and lived in a small village. She went to school only until grade 2, as she had two brothers to take care of and her parents wanted the sons to be able to study. She was unemployed and had no education but wanted to help her family. Her family were lured by a relative with a payment of \$THB 8,000 (\$NZD 400) and a promise of a job for Nida in Bangkok. Unknown to Nida and her parents, the relative intended to sell her to a brothel in the province in the east of Thailand for her virginity. She worked there for 2 weeks. The owner of the brothel did not want her to continue working because she was too young; (14); so they sent her back to her homeland.

Nida decided to come to Bangkok again when she was 16 years old to work in a small dairy with another family member. She clarified her decision to go back to sex

work by saying, 'My neighbor who is a sex worker talked to me about her payment; I did not mind because I already lost my virginity.' Nida started working in the same massage parlour. She sent back home \$THB 3,000-4,000 (\$NZD 150-200) each month. She said it was better than nothing, and appreciated the economic independence from her family member who owned the dairy. She sees a doctor once a week, as she is concerned about her health. Nida said that she once contracted a STIs but this has been treated.

Five years later, Nida went to Germany to work in a famous bar, as she heard about superior payment in foreign currency. She went there on a fake passport and work permit, arranged by a job agency. She said she was a second-class sex worker while there, which meant deductions from her wages of up to 50%. So Nida quit and went back to Thailand. When she left Germany it was found she was using a fake passport, and Nida is now banned from going back to Germany.

Nida did not make much money from prostitution. Despite this, she had more money than the average person in her village. Nida met a Dutch boyfriend 2 months after she came back from Germany. He wanted to live with her and marry her. At the time of the interview, Nida planned to open a hair salon and a dairy in her own province. Nida hoped that her boyfriend would support her economically. However, she is still doing sex work.

Her brother has now graduated from University in the northeastern part of Thailand. Her family is living in a new house that Nida built for them.

Panna's story

Panna comes from Khon Kaen, a province in the Northeast of Thailand. She lived with her parents, three sisters and four brothers. She is the oldest child in the family. She went to school as far as grade 4 and then quit school because her family was very poor and could not sponsor her to study. She helped her parents by looking after her brothers and sisters. When Panna was 14 years old, she decided to come to work in Bangkok, as the daughter of the headman of the village promised her that there would be work in Bangkok. But Panna did not know it was sex work. Her parents were paid \$THB 30,000 (\$NZD 1,500), which was an excessive amount of payment (for her work). Panna was one of 7 girls on that trip who went to Bangkok.

She was sold by the daughter of village headman to an illegal brothel in the east of Thailand and was forced to do sex work for 2 months. She was scared of pimps and of the owner of the brothel. Luckily, the national police raided the brothel and caught everyone in it. In the rush and disorder, Panna ran away with a client who took her home to be his servant. He took her to another massage parlour to work when his wife caught him sleeping with Panna. Panna thinks this turn of events is fortunate, because this massage parlour was the one for high society men and rich businessmen in Bangkok. Panna did not want to go home and wanted to send money to her family; she was paid \$NZD 30 an hour. She became a star of the massage parlour because she was very young.

She had a medical check every week; a doctor came to the massage parlour once a week. However, she had to follow the working rules, which meant that 70% of her payments were deducted by the owners. She said that the massage parlour belonged to a powerful politician. He would come to visit the place with well-off businessmen. Panna said that her clients were police, politicians and businessmen, and were married men.

She worked on and off there for 5 years. Panna has lived with several boyfriends, and whenever she separated from one, she then went back to work in a massage parlour to support herself. Panna's current boyfriend is a Taiwanese businessman named Hatoru. She became engaged to him and quit sex work. Panna went back home and gave some money to her parents and her siblings. Hatoru invested his money and wanted to live in Thailand. Panna did not have knowledge of any work except sex work. She wanted to set up a go-go bar in Pattaya and went back to find some other girls in her village to come to work with her. Panna said she had no problem with the police, as she could pay them. She then opened a bar in Bangkok because she wishes to attract Asian tourists, from the boom in sex tourism. She said that without the support of Hatoru, she would not have had the opportunity to start a business.

Panna is now a woman who trades girls and women from her village to work in Pattaya, but in a deliberate, completely open way, so that they know what they are being expected to do. Surprisingly, she is now only 20 years old. She says confidently, 'I believe that many poor girls and women from my homeland need my help so they can become economically independent and able to support their families.' She does this

by helping them to enter the sex industry. She plans to marry Hatoru and be a housewife and quit prostitution after saving enough money.

Pueng's story

Pueng came from the North of Thailand, from a province called Mae Hong Son. Her family members are numerous, as she has 11 brothers and sisters; she is the oldest. Pueng went to school and finished grade 4. She could read and write only a little. She liked the life there and wishes to go back to live one day in her home province. Her family was very poor and she had to do all the housework and the farm work.

Her family wanted her to work in the brothel where she was sold after they discussed it with a family friend whose daughter was a sex worker in Bangkok. Hence Pueng was sold for her virginity by her parents at the price of \$THB 15,000 (\$NZD 750). Her mother's friend took her to work in a brothel for 1 month. She was only paid \$NZD 1 a day to buy food and cleaning soap. They told Pueng that she must sell her virginity at least twenty times in order to leave the brothel. After one month, she was charged by the owners for food, housing and clothes and received only 5 percent of the money she had earned. Pueng had to work without getting paid and then went back home for 2 years.

While Pueng was working in the brothel, she had a medical doctor come to see her once a week. However, she had no negotiating power with clients for using a condom. She had contracted a sexually transmitted disease, but was cured.

When she came home, she realised that her parents had sold her sisters to a brothel as well. Pueng then thought about looking for work at a brothel, as she had already lost her virginity. She wanted to go back to prostitution and make as much money as she could. She then went to see the daughter (Nop) of the family friend, the one who is a sex worker in Bangkok.

Nop is a trafficker of women, and persuaded Pueng to go to work in Hong Kong and Japan. Pueng had plastic surgery, changed her name and traveled to Hong Kong with a fake passport. She said, 'I could not speak Chinese language so it is difficult to negotiate with clients.' She had to look after her health by seeing a medical doctor monthly on her own. Pueng came back from Hong Kong as she said it would not be

profitable to continue to work there. In spite of everything, she wanted to reunite with her sisters and met them in Pattaya.

Rung's story

Rung came from Chanthaburi, a province in the East of Thailand. She said that sometimes she had nothing to eat, as her parents had spent most of their money on gambling and drugs. She only went to school for 2 years. Rung said that she stole some food from other houses when her parents went away for days. She and her brothers had to look after themselves. She often did cleaning toilets or waiting on tables, to buy rice and water. Her parents had a huge gambling debt. Rung was sold by her mother for \$THB 4,000 (\$NZD 200) for her virginity when she was 14 years old. Her mother left her in a brothel to repay the money. She was forced to do sex work, was abused, hit, and sexually assaulted. The first customer, who was a fisherman, raped Rung. She almost cried when she told me about this.

Rung worked there for 1 year and 4 months, paid only in food and water. Customers occasionally paid her extra money. She said a doctor would come to see her every month and give her a medical check. Some of her work friends had contracted AIDS and died later because they did not have the power to negotiate condom use with customers. Rung tried to run away once, but a policeman who was paid by that brothel caught her and sent her back. It was very violent and she prayed every day to get out of there. One night, the brothel was on fire. The police from Bangkok rescued Rung. The owner and pimps were arrested. Rung was sent to the rehabilitation centre for girls and women. She was trained to do only handcraft work but she was not gifted. There she met Wanna, a woman who was divorced by her abusive husband.

Rung went through trauma healing. Nevertheless, she wanted to go back to do sex work to at least make more money, which she felt she deserved. Wanna told Rung about her friend who was a sex worker in Pat Pong, and met a rich German man. The story inspired Rung to go to Pat Pong with Wanna. She said the work was well paid and she went to see a doctor for medical checks twice a month. She worked for 4 places in Pat Pong. She met an Australian man, David, after 4 years. David was 40 years older than her. 'We were engaged and then moved to England, he had to show all the finance documents to help me to get in,' Rung recalled. Rung quit her work in Pat Pong and

then relied financially on her husband. Rung told me that she would get \$THB 4 millions (\$NZD 200,000) if her husband passes away. She came back to Thailand for a month to visit friends at her familiar workplace but postponed her vacation to three months. She wanted to open a beer bar or karaoke restaurant in Rayong or Pattaya. Her husband wanted to migrate to live in Thailand permanently.

Tong's story

Tong came from a small village in the North of Thailand. She has been struggling for her life since she was young. She has never gone to school. Her mother died when she was very young and no one knew who her father was. She lived with her grandparents, who had poor health and were supported by her aunt.

There was a belief in her village that a girl who became a sex worker to support her family would be as cherished as a soldier who went to the war. When she was 15 years old, she decided to go to Bangkok to live with her aunt, who was a prostitute. She started by working as a waitress in a bar. She was persuaded by her aunt to sell her virginity for \$THB 10,000 (\$NZD 500). Her first client was a Chinese tourist. He was a middle-aged married businessman. Tong said that her aunt took all the money.

Afterward, Tong lived with her aunt and intermittently slept with her aunt's customers for money for 1 year. Her aunt knew many massage parlour owners, so Tong worked in 5 massage parlours for 7 years in Thailand. She found it problematic working for massage parlours in Thailand. Tong said it was hard to keep money, as she spent it on her aunt's expenses. Tong was persuaded and assisted by her friend to go to work in Japan. Later she went to Japan for 4 years. She went there on a tourist visa and worked in a bar. Then she returned to Thailand.

Tong said, 'I believe that every Thai woman who goes to work in Japan works as a prostitute.' The sad thing is that some women did not know this, but were forced and tortured to serve Japanese customers. Tong said the work conditions in Japan were very poor and they did not provide free medical checks as in Thailand. Sometimes she had a bad customer who would not use a condom and she could not disagree. She said that she never had trouble with her colleagues or with the mamasang in Japan. However, she was not very content with her life in Japan as she worked very hard and had no one to talk to. When she came back from Japan, Tong went back to her place of

origin for a grandparent's funeral. She said people in her village thought that she was rich and regarded her respectfully.

Tong thinks that money is troublesome in the sex businesses. She rents an apartment and has worked for her aunt's bar and her friend's bar in Pattaya and Phuket, consecutively.³⁷⁴ She worked as a manager in a bar and supervised women prostitutes who worked there. She has just met a boyfriend who is from New Zealand. She is uncertain about her future in sex work and does not want to go to live overseas because of her past experience in Japan.

Conclusion

Most interviewees were women prostitutes who had been doing this work for a long period of time. But they still have not improved their own economic circumstances. In addition, girl prostitutes who decided to carry on doing sex work in illegal, hidden brothels were regarded as 'expired' sex merchandise by brothel proprietors. These women sex workers later went to work in the red-light areas of Pat Pong or Pattaya.

Girl prostitutes who worked in a massage parlour seemed to have better control over their economic circumstances. In spite of this, they were not satisfied with their living conditions in Thailand, because of low wages and long-term anxiety. They desired to go overseas, especially to first world countries, after being inspired by friends and/or trafficking agents and relatives to earn superior luxuries. However, living conditions overseas were not that magnificent either.

The financial circumstances of these sex workers had improved modestly, compared to what they were before they entered the sex industry. These women sex workers did not want to continue to do sex work, but they thought they had no other options because they were stigmatised for doing sex work. They all wish to become financially independent, but only a few have achieved economic stability within the sex trade.

These individual accounts are analysed in detail in part VI, Analysis, and synthesised with the accounts from the next two chapters. I also provide the synthesis

³⁷⁴ Please see appendix twelve, *Map of Thailand*.

of aspects of the findings from the interviews and expand more on interviewees' quotes and comments.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CASE STUDIES OF THAI FORMER AND CURRENT WOMEN PROSTITUTES IN THAILAND WHO WERE TRAFFICKED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, EXCLUDING NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

This chapter gives the narrative accounts of nine Thai women prostitutes. All of them were trafficked to other countries (excluding New Zealand), typically to first world regions and countries such as Australia, Japan, England, Singapore, the Netherlands and Germany, for the purpose of sex work. The findings from these interviewees will be analytical compared with case studies of former and current Thai women sex workers living and working in New Zealand. In this chapter I summarise the interviews with these former and current prostitutes, who first engaged in the sex industry when they were over 15 years of age. The youngest age for entering prostitution among these interviewees was still only 16 years old, such as Dara.

These nine participants were aged from 21 to 33 years old, and originally came from different parts of Thailand.³⁷⁵ All of these interviewees were influenced to work as prostitutes in countries other than Thailand and New Zealand, for periods of time varying from 2 months to 2 years.

General results from the interviews

Most of these interviewees were persuaded to do sex work initially by their own parents, relatives, lovers or friends. Nevertheless, some prostitutes continued their sex work in other places for financial reasons. Most are self-supporting, and yet have experienced sexism from Thai and foreign men. Other forms of discrimination included

³⁷⁵ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *General characteristic groups of the participants*.

wage deductions by mamasangs, corrupt police, cheermen and sex traffickers in Thailand and elsewhere. Some were not content with the conditions of sex work in one country, and they soon decided to go somewhere else to do sex work. For example, they moved from Hong Kong to Japan, or from Japan to Germany.

Therefore, some interviewees ended up traveling back to Thailand, where they had more control. Some of them decided later to go to other countries usually because they expected better payment. Surprisingly, most participants worked as *illegal* prostitutes in *legalised and licensed* massage parlours or escort agencies in first world countries. Some were there only to do sex work for money, or to pay off their debt to the agents who had arranged and paid for their travel to those countries.³⁷⁶

Findings

The interviews revealed that the poverty in their background and the difficulty of supporting their child/children and their families pressured these women to do sex work. Their educational background and economic circumstances were similar, in that all were inadequate. Two of these interviewees are partially illiterate, as they never went to school. Remarkably, they learned how to read and write themselves. One of the interviewees turned up as a student studying teaching at a college level. Ann's case study shows that she can read and write English fairly well.

They had been in sex work for 1-5 years; most worked at irregular intervals, others did so continually. Conclusively, the years of sex work did not improve their ability to survive in economic terms. In fact, sex work gradually destabilised their financial position. Since these Thai women sex workers had support from people they met in the sex business, usually a client.

Another interesting finding is that they tend to believe that foreign men are generally better customers. Foreign male clients usually do use a condom; most Asian men do not. Some interviewees have had to accept this situation to fend off clients' hostility and avoid being arrested because of their illegal work status.

³⁷⁶ Please see more details in chapter two, *Literature Review and Hypothesis*, section *Summing up Thailand sex Industry in the Thai economy*.

In their matrimonial circumstances, interviewees tended to rely financially and emotionally on their partners. Interviewees, Tooy, Puke, Fanny, Orn and Juri who were married to older men when they were as young as 14, then later divorced. This trend, seen in most interviewees' marriages, has resulted in a greater level of economic hardship for these women, compared with women prostitutes who were not married when they were young. The relationships between interviewees and their families are intense. Several interviewees have parents and child/children to support financially. They tend to travel and send money back home, such as in Orn's case.

The narratives of Thai women prostitutes who were over 15 years of age when they entered the sex industry³⁷⁷

These accounts were transcribed from 30-45 minute conversations in Thai and translated into English. The interviewees have read and signed the consent form to participate in this research.³⁷⁸ The selection process has been outlined previously. As for the first group, all the names of participants and other people in the stories are pseudonyms.³⁷⁹

Ann's story

Ann came from an average working class family in the East of Thailand. Her family had a small dairy in her homeland. Ann was working for her family and also had a cleaning job at her school. She was sent to school till grade 9 and was studying at teacher's college at the time of the interview.

Ann came to Bangkok to study at teacher's college 4 years ago. She did like to hang out with those friends who came from an average family in Bangkok, who would be considered richer than her family. When Ann was studying, her family could support her only for tuition fees, allowances and accommodation's costs. She had to wear the same clothes all the time. In contrast, Ann's friends drove to school with nice cars and they had expensive clothes and accessories. Ann worked part-time as a waitress to get extra money for luxury items. After a while, the owner of the restaurant tried to

³⁷⁷ Please see Bibliography, Section A, Primary Sources, Interviewees' list of dates and places of interviews, Thailand.

³⁷⁸ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

³⁷⁹ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

sexually assault her. Ann went to see the police but they did not help her. The policemen tried to embarrass her by calling journalists so they could sell her story.

Ann was thinking that she had no job and no extra money to buy these items she wanted. She talked to a friend of her group, and found out later that some of her friends were doing sex work as call girls to make extra income. She joined them and her income improved. She sometimes sent expensive items to her family. Ann mentioned that not many friends knew she was a sex worker and her boyfriend did not know she was a sex worker. Ann became a prostitute and began to work as a call girl because she wanted to be able to have access to luxury items such as a car, expensive jewelry and brand name clothes and handbags.

Ann planned to go overseas to study and quit prostitution. She said that she had slept with many businessmen and politicians. These clients had no morality and honesty to their wives and children. Ann sometimes earned around \$THB 5,000 a call, which is considered a lot of money for her. She was living with her current boyfriend, who was working for a computer company. They shared all expenses but Ann did not let him know that she was a sex worker. Ann said wearily, 'I have been through many violent relationships because I told them I did sex work.'

Ann said that most of her customers used a condom but sometimes when they were drunk, she had to use other contraception. Ann always goes to see a doctor as she always thinks her health is very important. Ann said she would quit doing sex work when she finished her degree. 'I am not certain if I would make more money when I become a teacher, I went to Japan once with my client and heard that there is good pay especially for sex work', she said.

Ann did not know much about feminism and she wanted to find a proper job once she finished her degree. Nevertheless, she believed that women and men should be treated equally. She also thought that prostitution is not degrading to women, but is simply another choice of job. 'People in Thailand should face the truth and become more alert about what is really happening in the society, that Thai women are not offered the same opportunity as men', said Ann.

Dara's story

Dara came from the North of Thailand, where women from her village were sold as a commodity as early as 12 years old. Dara's father was an alcoholic and always beat up her mother when he was drunk. 'I saw he hit my mother all the time', said Dara angrily.

Dara went to school till grade 6 and left home a few years later to work in Bangkok, doing low-paid, tough jobs such as cleaning and waitressing. She was paid very low wages but it did not matter as she lived with her sister. Dara thought her sister was working in a bar as a waitress. 'We were still very budgeted and we did not do well', Dara said. Her sister met Jom, a client of a bar, and began dating him. Dara moved into her sister's boyfriend's house with her sister. Jom was a womaniser; he had many girlfriends in the same house sleeping with him for free rent. All worked as sex workers. Dara hated him very much but she wanted to stay with her sister. Dara said that only later did she realised that her sister worked as a sex worker in the other bar.

Overwhelmed, Dara wanted to go home but had no money. She also knew she needed to support her mother. Dara decided to sell her virginity by sleeping with a customer from Germany for \$USD200. A sex worker who lived in Jom's house arranged it for her and took 40% of the money. Dara went home for a while and came back; she was told that her sister had committed suicide because of a drug problem.

Dara wanted to know why her sister had become addicted to drugs. She applied for a job in the bar her sister used to work in because she thought it was relevant to the death of her sister. She was desperate to go to the police, but she knew that the police had a good relationship with the bar owner. She doubted that her sister committed suicide. No one believed her. Jom tried to ask her out as a customer but she tried to avoid him. One day, after Dara had gone out with a client from Singapore, Jom followed her and raped Dara in her home.

Dara was scared to make a report to the police because Jom was a very well known businessman. 'I was a sex worker, I don't think the police will believe me that I was raped', said Dara. Jom threatened Dara by saying she would lose her life if she went to the police. Dara moved into his house, and then learned that Jom had killed her sister. Jom forced Dara's sister to sell drugs to customers in the bar she worked for. Her sister had kept the money and planned to run away from Jom, so he killed her. The

owner of the bar was a relative of Jom. The owner protected Jom by paying money to the police. Dara was scared so she asked for a gun from her friend at work to protect herself. She shot Jom to death one night after he tried to kill her. Dara was frightened to go to the police as Jom was a very deferential for police and considered herself a prostitute, she ran away with his money.

Luckily, the police could not find her; Dara changed her name and her appearance. She went to Pattaya to work as a sex worker; there she met Rob, a New Zealander who owned one famous bar in the town. Dara wanted to work with Rob because she would get several tips and a high rate per hour.

With his help, she went to work in a massage parlour in Australia and Singapore for one year. She felt the payment was fair as she worked in escort agencies and had 30% deducted from her wages. 'We traveled from one country to the other', she explained. Here she had to go to see a doctor and have a medical check twice a month and use the contraception provided at work. Dara had then come back to Thailand; she planned to go to Germany with her friend to see the man she met from the mail-order-bride business managed by Rob's friend.

Dara still wanted to make more money and go to live overseas. She said she might go to Germany and would not come back. Dara is still afraid of the police but has no worry about family, because her mother just passed away.

Fanny's Story

Fanny came from a very poor family in the North of Thailand. Her parents arranged for her to marry a Thai soldier when she was 15 years old. Her parents took the dowry. Fanny experienced abusive domestic violence when she was living with her Thai husband. He was very possessive and he always became paranoid and feared that she would try to have an affair. He beat her up whenever he was drunk. After 4 years of marriage, Fanny was divorced and became financially broke after her ex-husband left her alone with her daughter. Fanny said that his friend tried to assault her. She was a housewife and financially dependent on her ex-husband. Fanny had no idea where to find a job as she went to school only till grade 2.

With support from her parents and her sister, and pressure to be able to take care of her own daughter economically, she went to Bangkok to find a job. She worked as a waitress in a karaoke bar for 3 months. She was promoted to receptionist after 4 months. Her boss was attracted to her and Fanny finally became his mistress and stopped working. After a while, he was bored with her and wanted her to leave. She wanted to have more money so she could support her child's education, but could not go back to work at the karaoke bar.

She then decided to work in a massage parlour run by her boss's friend, as a receptionist. Fanny was not working there long before deciding to go out with customers. Fanny worked there for about 3 months and then quit because the massage parlour she worked for deducted 70% from her wages. She said her friend suggested that she go to work in Pat Pong because of better pay and more work options. She went to work in a go-go bar and did stripping for extra money. She sent lots of money to her parents and her daughter. She worked there for almost 4 years.

Fanny is aware of STIs and AIDS and she always uses a female condom. Sometimes when clients were drunk and declined to use a condom, she had to accept this. She likes the idea of a condom designed for women, which has recently been released in Thailand. Fanny said that she went to see a doctor once a week. She wanted to go back to live with her daughter, so her health is one of the most important things in her life.

Fanny went to Germany with her foreign customer. She said that she only did stripping, which offered less money than in Thailand, so she came back after five months. It was a stressful job and she sometimes took drugs to calm her down. Back in Thailand, she joined a mail-order-bride business and has been planning to go to Europe to live with her German boyfriend of 2 months. She met him through a mail-order-bride agency and he flew over to see her in Bangkok. She said that she would go to Germany and would like to take her daughter with her. Her boyfriend was 56 years old. Fanny wanted her daughter to study to the highest level she could support. She wanted her daughter to have more opportunity and a better life. Her daughter is now 7 years old.

Joi's story

Joi came from a poor family background. Her father left her mother before she was born. She was left by her mother to live with an abusive aunt and uncle-in-law in a province in the East of Thailand. They treated her terribly. Her mother paid for Joi's schooling and allowance till she finished Grade 4 by sending money to her aunt. No one ever talked about her mother in the village, but there was a rumour that Joi's mother was working as a prostitute in Pattaya. When she turned 15 years old, her uncle-in-law tried to sexually assault her. Joi then ran away with her boyfriend.

Joi began working in a factory in Bangkok with her boyfriend's friend. Then her boyfriend broke up with her after 2 years, as he left her for another woman. Joi said unhappily, 'I want to find someone who will really love me and will not leave me alone like my own parents'.

Joi decided to leave the job in the factory, as the conditions were very poor. She followed her friend, who worked in a massage parlour, and ended up working there for 1 year. 'I wanted to stand on my own feet and it was an easy choice for me', said Joi. Here, she had a medical check once a week. Joi said the boss at the massage parlour was very unfair, but she had known clients who took her out and paid good tips. Unfortunately, the boss kept 65-70% of the money and sometimes Joi had to sleep with a cheerman to get more clients.

Joi was thinking about going to Japan, but she said that she needed money to pay for commission fees and travel costs. She went to Germany to do sex work instead, since her friend was working there. However, she said that she only worked for 2 months before coming back, because she could not speak German. She also found it very difficult to save money, as she worked for an escort agency.

Joi said she would quit sex work if she finds a good husband. Joi hopes to be fortunate in finding a good husband from the mail-order-bride business, which she joined 3 months ago. She believes that good things will come to her and she will not leave her own children like her parents did.

Juri's story

Juri came from a poor family in the Northeast of Thailand, in a province called Ubonratchatani. Her family is so poor that they could not provide education for Juri, so she has never been to school. She had lots of siblings and helped her parents working on a farm. Juri was married when she was 14 years old to a man who was 25 years older than her. Her parents arranged it to get the dowry from him. She was married for 7 years before her husband became ill and passed away. Juri inherited some money from him, but the law did not protect her as she was not married legally (she had only a traditional wedding). The relatives of her husband took all the money.

Juri was depressed and devastated, so she went to Bangkok with friends from her homeland to find a job. She was a waitress in a restaurant and an office cleaner, and could not save much money. Her friends decided to take a job in Pat Pong and they asked if she was interested. She did not want to do it in the first place, but the need of money made her agree to do so. She was paid \$NZD 200 for her first time with a customer. She had a medical check 2-3 times a month and had her blood checked once every three months. She always used a condom and other contraception. Sometimes a taxi driver whom she knew would bring customers who were tourists straight to Pat Pong for her and her friends. She had to pay the taxi driver \$THB 200 (\$NZD 10) per customer as a commission if she could not find any.

Juri decided to go to Japan when she heard about the money from friends. She was bored with the job and with her boss in Pat Pong. They were also selfish men clients and they had taken advantage of her. Juri went to Japan for one year.

In Japan, Juri was tormented by clients and taunted by the boss. She said that working in Japan was hellish. She had to work every day and had no holidays. However, she sent money back home for her parents and paid for her apartment in Bangkok. She was paid around \$Yen75,000-100,000 monthly. (\$NZD 1,500-2,000).

Juri said that her friend was murdered by a man from a Yakusa gang, a powerful Japanese mafia gangster. The Japanese and Thai police then worked together against the trafficking of Thai women to Japan, and they rescued her a year after she arrived. 'I had to lie that I was lured by an offer of a job as a full-time babysitter and then was forced to do sex work', Juri said.

Juri is 34 years old now. She went back to her homeland with some money from prostitution. Even though losing a friend made her feel much stronger about wanting to quit sex work, this was still not permanent.

Orn's story

Orn went to school till grade 2. She came from the East of Thailand; her family is very poor. Orn has a daughter from her marriage when she was 14 years old. Her mother, who is at present very sick, married Orn to a man to pay off debt. He stayed with her for 3 years and left without paying child support. Orn said, 'My ex-husband was a very mean person and I hate him as he never supports us.' (Herself, her daughter and mother)

Orn met a friend who talked about working in a massage parlour until Orn agreed to do so. She has sent money to her daughter and her mother. Orn worked in two massage parlours in Bangkok for 3 years, till she met Ping, who told her how well paid sex work is in the Netherlands. So, Orn decided to go to the Netherlands to work. She had facial surgery and dyed her hair before she went to the Netherlands. Orn said that the agent arranged the trip for her and charged her around \$THB 30,000 (\$NZD 1,500) for a fake passport and airfares.

Work conditions in the Netherlands are strenuous. When Orn was working there she was earning lots of money, but she was depressed most of the time and did not want to live there. 'I miss my daughter so much and I think of her most of the time,' recalled Orn sadly. She said that every time she wrote a letter to her mother and her daughter she lied to them, writing that she was fine and happy. Work conditions in the Netherlands were much lower than she expected, as she was responsible for her own health check-ups, since customers always used a condom. Orn said that the owner of the bar treated her unjustly. She was paid at 30% of total income per day. However, when Orn came back from the Netherlands, she bought a new house and has saved some money for her child's education.

Orn plans to go to overseas to do sex work again, so that she does not have to work as a sex worker anymore. She wants to spend time with her daughter. Orn thinks Australia or New Zealand would be a good choice, and she believes that white men

treat women better than Asian men. Orn knows she wants more financial security from sex work, so she has to save money well.

Puke's story

Puke's family is very poor. The family could only send her to school through grade 6.

Ratana's story

Ratana lived in the Northeast of Thailand and her family was very poor. Her father was an alcoholic and liked gambling. Her mother also did a lot of gambling and sold meat in the market. Ratana has no brothers but has two older and younger sisters who are sex workers. Ratana went to school till grade 6. She wanted to study, but because she was a girl and did not show an excellent performance on her examination, she was failed on her application for a scholarship.

Hope for a better life and to earn more money, plus the persuasion from her sisters about working in a beer bar in Pattaya, made her decide to go to Pattaya. Her first customer paid her \$THB 10,000 (\$NZD 500) for a month. Her sister arranged it for her; this first customer was a foreigner who came to Thailand because of a sex tourism campaign. She sent half of the money to her mother.

Ratana always went to see a doctor once a week. She was concerned about the prevention of AIDS and STIs, as she had lost some friends to them. A sex worker does not have much power to demand that the customer wear a condom. Ratana said that it was normal that sometimes the police would come to the workplace and ask sex workers to go to the police station and stay there for 2 nights. Then they would let her and her friends out. She said that her old boss had owned many bars and the police did not like him much. However, the boss always paid the police once a month. She was uncertain about how much money the police were paid.

While she was working in Pattaya with her sister, clients offered to get her work in England. Ratana went to England to work for 5 months. She said it was hard to get in, but she went with an English man who said they were going to marry. Ratana said it was hard to avoid having problems with bad customers as she cannot communicate well in English, so she had to put up with the problems - for example, when customers did not want to use a condom. She had come back to Thailand because her visa is expired, and wanted to help her sister, who had opened a beer bar in Pattaya with her husband. Her elder sister is married to a businessman from Hong Kong. She only earned money from selling the drinks and sometimes tips from customers to keep her business going.

Ratana is now a mistress of a powerful British businessman in Bangkok, who was once her client. He helped her financially with the bar. He would come to see her

twice a month and sometimes take her to England with him; however, she had to stay in a hotel the whole time she was in England. Ratana wanted to marry him and settle down with him.

Ratana worked in the sex industry for 5 years on and off. She said, 'I like farang customers (Europeans) more than Thai customers because of the currencies.' She is not sure about her future in sex work but wanted to help her elder sister with the bar. Ratana does not want her younger sisters to become sex workers; she sent money to them, and one of them is now a lecturer at the University in the Northeast.

Tooy's story

Tooy came from a small village in Chaing Rai province from the North of Thailand. Her family is very poor. She was not close to her family. She left school when she was 11 to help her parents work on a farm. There, she met her husband and married when she was 17. Two years later, her husband was obliged to go to Saudi Arabia to do a labouring job. After he left, she found out that he had built up a huge debt from gambling, because people came after her to force her to pay his debt. Her friend then encouraged her to escape and find employment in Pattaya. The place she worked as a waitress had very poor work conditions, and she had an unjust salary - around \$THB 30 (\$NZD 1.50) per day, which is lower than the minimum wage per day in Thailand. Consequently, Tooy started to do sex work; she commented, 'I don't care because I already lost my virginity and it is the quickest way to make money.'

Two years later, she decided to go to Japan with her friend. The wages were relatively good and the manager of the bar that she worked for was fair. But the living conditions were extremely poor. A Japanese Mafia gang (Yakusa) abused her, and the clients did not treat her well. They did not use contraceptives nor were medical checks provided for her. Tooy also heard that a Japanese client had tortured her friend in different ways. Luckily, with help from the bar manager, Tooy obtained some money and was able to go home. She said that her passport was with her all the time and the bar manager did not deduct money from her wages, as she had already paid a commission to go to work in Japan. However, she later heard that the bar manager was murdered by a gang of Yakusa soon after she left.

Tooy went back to Thailand after 2 years in Japan, and joined the mail-order-bride business. She did not want to go back to Japan, but she is thinking about going somewhere else. 'It is a high risk business to go to work overseas, because if you are lucky you earn heaps but if not, you might be in big trouble', Tooy says. Tooy believes that it is her fate to go and experience this way of life. She hopes to be fortunate in finding a good husband who will take good care of her. She wants to have children and look after them and give them the highest education she can, so they can have a better life than her.

Conclusion

These interviewees were women prostitutes who travelled to first world countries for sex work. They attempted to improve their economic situation by trafficking to developed countries such as Japan, Germany, England, Singapore, the Netherlands and Australia. Ironically, the findings show that these Thai women sex workers, who decided to escape from work in Thailand, were despised abroad as low-level sex workers when compared to Thai women interviewees from New Zealand. Some women interviewees did sex work again in Thailand after they came back.

Some women prostitutes have little control over their economic and work conditions. Stress arises from their living conditions in Thai culture, being a single mother, and having little education. They found that their living conditions were undermined overseas, because of their difficult position as sex workers.

The bad experiences of these sex workers after they entered the sex industry depressed them and lowered their confidence. These women did not want to continue to do sex work, because of the difficulties they had experienced, but for almost all of them no other option was possible. They were unhappy, but they hoped for a miracle that would make them financially independent, though some had reluctantly settled for continuing in the sex business. The low wages of other kinds of work pressurised them to have persistent anxiety about quitting prostitution in Thailand.

These individual accounts are analysed in detail in part VI, Analysis, and synthesised with the accounts from the previous and next chapters. I also provide the

synthesis of aspects of the findings from the interviews and expand more on interviewees' quote and comments.

CHAPTER NINE

CASE STUDIES OF FORMER AND CURRENT THAI WOMEN

PROSTITUTES WORKING AND/OR LIVING

IN NEW ZEALAND

Introduction

This chapter contains twelve accounts of Thai women prostitutes, of whom eight came to New Zealand as mail-order brides; two are working illegally as sex workers in New Zealand, and two were married when they arrived New Zealand on a tourist visa. Seven of these women are former sex workers, and five are currently doing sex work. Some of them were trafficked to other countries before arriving in New Zealand, typically to first world regions and countries such as Australia, Japan, Singapore and Hong Kong, for the purpose of sex work. None of them work in the New Zealand sex industry as their primary workplace.

These twelve participants were aged 22-31, and all came originally from Thailand.³⁸⁰ They all first engaged in sex work when they were over 15 years old; the youngest age for starting to do sex work was 18 years. All of the interviewees were first compelled to do sex work for many reasons, such as to support their family or to survive economically.

General results from the interviews

Most interviewees joined mail-order bride agencies because they hoped for a better economic position in overseas countries. They did not expect to come to New Zealand, as the clients of mail-order bride agencies come from a wide range of countries. Agents of mail-order brides customarily arranged the trips for the mail-order brides; most charged the foreign male customers for this.

³⁸⁰ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *General characteristic groups of participants*.

These women had given up their sex work in order to be full-time housewives. Most were depressed about their marriage conditions, as they were used as a sex-reliever and/or servant. Often, they decided to do sex work without telling their husbands.

Among this group of interviewees, some had found that their financial status was more negatively affected by the relationship with husbands met through mail-order bride agencies than by their years of sex work. These participants had engaged in sex work for between 1 and 8 years. However, the years of sex work affected their living standards. Since most sex industry workers who were addicted to gambling showed longer years of sex work experience.

Findings

The interviews confirmed that poor economic status and fleeing from poverty was the major reason for starting to do sex work. Some of these interviewees were sold, tortured or otherwise persuaded to do sex work for the first time initially by their own parents, relatives, lovers or friends. However, the insufficiency of economic and educational opportunity is the base of the explanation. Most of these interviewees were partially illiterate in Thai and English, as they never learnt proper English. They learned how to understand and speak some English from Thai friends and workmates. The highest education obtained by any interviewee was a polytechnic diploma in English, obtained by Dalat. However, she demonstrated that she could not read and write English very proficiently, even though she had a polytechnic diploma.

The interviews confirmed that poor economic status and fleeing from poverty was the major reason for starting to do sex work. Some of these interviewees were sold, tortured or otherwise persuaded to do sex work for the first time initially by their own parents, relatives, lovers or friends. All interviewees had encountered racial discrimination from clients in New Zealand. They put up with racism from foreign men, including their own husband.³⁸¹ In most cases, the allowances they received from their husbands did not enable them to be financially self-reliant. They improved their income only after they returned to sex work in New Zealand. For example, Aim got

divorced and worked on her own in New Zealand as a sex worker; that was when her financial status improved.

It seems that when these interviewees interact with foreign male clients in New Zealand, condoms are always used. Paradoxically, all of these interviewees had negligible ability to negotiate condom use in Thailand. In addition, these women tended to trust foreign men as superior clients, and perceived Thai men to be malicious clients.

In their mail-order bride status, these women participants relied financially and emotionally on their partners. Their husbands were from 8 to 40 years older than the wives. There was a disturbing tendency for most interviewees' marriages to reveal abusive behaviours by their husbands, such as physical and emotional abuse, excessive demands for sexual activities, insufficient economic support and/or infidelity. Some of these women decided to get divorced. Ultimately, these Thai women sex workers who came as mail-order brides to New Zealand returned to do sex work because of grief in their marriage. Along with the reasons of inadequate potential skill to apply for other profession and/or weak financial resources to start a business, which usually in the sex industry, they determined to do sex work once more.

The economic standard of living of this group of women prostitutes is the highest of all interviewees. Some still have to support families back in Thailand. Most interviewees are inclined to relieve their personal stress by spending their money on gambling and alcohol. Several interviewees have serious difficulty controlling their money, using it for gambling and alcohol.

The narratives of former and current Thai women prostitutes living in New Zealand³⁸²

These accounts were transcribed from 30-45 minute conversations in Thai and translated into English. The interviewees have read and signed the consent form to participate in research.³⁸³ I personally contacted these interviewees through information

³⁸¹ Please see more details in chapter ten, *The Analysis of The Quandary of Thai Women Prostitute Participants*.

³⁸² Please see Bibliography, Section A, Primary Sources, Interviewees' list of dates and places of interviews, Thailand.

³⁸³ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

given from a sex worker I know.³⁸⁴ I then decided who would be appropriate participants for this research.³⁸⁵ The names of all participants and other people in the stories are pseudonyms.³⁸⁶

Aim's story

Aim came from the northeastern part of Thailand where she lived in a province called Surin. She finished grade 2 and can read and write slightly. Her family was very poor, working on a farm they did not own. Aim lived with her grandparents, as her parents worked in Bangkok. Aim ran away to Bangkok with her first boyfriend when she was 16 years old. Young and hopeful of a better life, she thought that he loved her.

Unfortunately, her first boyfriend turned out to be a pimp. Aim was forced by him to work in a massage parlour. Her sex work supported him financially. Losing wages to her boss, who cheated on her wages, Aim decided to try and collect enough money to travel overseas, to escape her boyfriend.

After a year and a half, Aim heard of other Thai women working in Japan, and rumoured to be making good money in the sex business there. Aim travelled to Japan with two friends through the arrangement of agents and without telling her pimp boyfriend. At her arrival, Aim's passport was taken away, much to her surprise. The owner of the brothel where she worked told Aim that money would be deducted from her wages to pay off her debt, a debt supposedly incurred from the arrangement for her to enter the country. At this stage, Aim realised the trafficker had deceived her and her friends.

When Aim worked in Pat Pong, she had always used a condom, even though some customers were drunk and tried to refuse. She saw a doctor every two weeks. In Japan, no customers would use a condom and most treated her very badly. Aim could not go out to the city, as she worked long hours each day. After 6 months in Japan, a customer told her he was fond of her and persuaded her to be his mistress.

³⁸⁴ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Recruiting Procedure in New Zealand*.

³⁸⁵ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Recruiting Procedure in Thailand*.

³⁸⁶ Please see more details in chapter six, *Research Methods*, section *Ethical Issues*.

Aim said that after a year had passed, her boyfriend was bored and stopped supporting her. Depressed, Aim tried to work again, but soon learned that the brothel owner had been killed by her two friends. The Japanese police caught the women at the airport and put them in jail. The high court sentenced them to life.

Aim has suffered emotionally from these events. She has been taking drugs to calm her and has developed alcoholism. 'It was tough to forget about what happened in my love life,' she lamented. Aim went back to Thailand when her grandparents became very ill. Unfortunately, the trip drained her resources, so Aim went to Pattaya to work in a beer bar to pay her expenses. Finding the work difficult, she joined the mail-order-bride business and met her current New Zealand husband.

Aim said that her New Zealand husband did not treat her very well. He always wanted to have sex but still went to strip bars. Aim did all the housework but was barely supported financially by her husband. After a year, she asked for a separation because he had brought another Thai woman to live in the same house. Aim said that she is now divorced, and works in a massage parlour. She has continued to drink alcohol and has started gambling.

Aim has just met a client who is very fond of her. He wants her to stop working and drinking alcohol, and marry him. 'I don't know if I could trust him though he is nice and it is difficult to trust someone, especially a man', Aim said.

Dalat's story

Dalat comes from Bangkok. She lived in an apartment, which she called a 'mouse hole', that she rented with her brothers. 'It is like a slum construction', she said. Her mother worked in Japan. Her father remarried and did not support Dalat and her brothers. She has had to look after her twin brothers who are seven years younger than her.

Dalat was sent by her mother to the polytechnic, where she majored in English. After her course, Dalat was unemployed and could not find work. However, she liked to have money to spend on clothes and expensive accessories without asking her mother. Dalat tried working as a call girl in Thailand but found she could not save much. Frustrated, Dalat looked for a permanent job but was not successful. Her qualifications

were not high enough, and she was disadvantaged by a lack of work experience. Dalat took a job working in a clothes shop as a sales assistant, but the money was not enough to support her financially, unlike her call girl job, so she quit and returned to work as a call girl, but did not tell her mother and brothers. She said that this time she saved enough money to go to overseas.

Dalat went to visit a good friend who had married a New Zealander and was living in Auckland. This friend knew many Thai sex workers. After this visit, Dalat decided to work as a call girl in New Zealand, as she could communicate satisfactorily in English. Dalat still has to support her two younger brothers as they are studying at University in Thailand. She has been working for one year in an agency as a call girl. She only works when she wants money to pay rent. Dalat earns about \$NZD 15 an hour. She is working illegally on her tourist visa, but plans to marry her current New Zealand boyfriend. 'I met him through friends. He does not know I am doing sex work and I do not want to tell him', said Dalat.

Dalat plans to move to Wellington because she has friends there and she also wants to save some money because in Auckland she spends so much on gambling at the casino. Dalat sometimes arranges to give sexual service by Internet. She sees a doctor once a month, as it is free here at the NZPC. However, Dalat does not like her life in New Zealand much because she feels like as a second class citizen. This view is exacerbated by the fact that her boyfriend's family does not really like her much. Dalat says that she really loves her boyfriend. Having been through many relationships in Thailand, she feels ready to have a family and bring up her own children. She hopes to marry and to go to England with her boyfriend.

Dang's story

Dang came from a Roied province in the Northeast of Thailand. Her parents were farmers and were very poor. She went to school and finished at grade 4. Dang said that she used to eat frog meat when she could not find any food to eat. The weather in her homeland is very hot and changeable, which made the soil too dry to grow crops. Her family built up a mortgage with a bank to spend on their farm but it did not help much. So, Dang decided to go to Bangkok to find a job to be able to support her family financially. When she was only 16 years old, she found a job as a servant in the home

of a wealthy family in Bangkok. The work conditions were poor and she was paid very little. Dang could only send home about \$NZD 50 monthly.

Dang saw that rich people have good food to eat and good homes to live in. 'I wanted to be like them [silence] ... that's why I had to go through a lot', Dang said desolately. When she was 22, Dang quit the housemaid job and went home. Two friends from her village had worked in a factory in Bangkok. There, she learned that friends who worked in Pattaya earned more than five times what she earned as a housemaid. One friend, Nok, told Dang that going overseas and marrying a rich foreigner was also a good opportunity, and it was free to join the mail-order bride agency. So Dang decided to work in a beer bar, going out with customers. She was paid better and enjoyed learning to communicate in English with foreign customers. She said, 'I was very dark and most people called me 'E-Dam' (dull), but in Pattaya, farangs (European foreigners) love me'.

Dang met Brian, who is a New Zealander, through a mail-order-bride agency. He paid the mail-order-bride agency \$NZD 4,000 for an arranged meeting with Dang, including airfare and accommodation in Thailand. Dang said, 'He told me that he liked me at first sight but I was not sure if I liked him.' She thought he was a bit older than she expected, as he was fifty-three. Brian asked Dang to marry him two months later. Dang decided to, as she wanted to go overseas to find work. Dang also thought that if she could have New Zealand citizenship, it would benefit her in the long run.

Dang came to New Zealand and lived in Auckland with her husband. She said that her husband wanted to have sex most of the time. She had to do all the housework without any help from her husband and sometimes she was not allowed to go anywhere without him. Dang said that this life was terrible and that Brian did not give her that much money. His excuse was that it was enough to pay her parents for the dowry of \$NZD 3,000.

Dang missed her life in Pattaya since she did not have any control over her finances in New Zealand. She said it was very difficult for her to communicate in English. Her husband's family treated her quite badly, laughing sarcastically when she spoke English, and telling her to go back to Thailand. They told her 'all Thai women are prostitutes and New Zealanders do not want them to live in this country.'

After two years of marriage, Dang asked for a divorce, helped by Thai friends in Auckland. She did not have many friends, but a friend of her husband was helping her with legal advice. Dang could have had half of Brian's property but Dang did not want to fight him for this. Brian gave her a car and told her that he would not give her anything else if she asked and he would make sure she would be asked to leave the country. Dang wanted to get her New Zealand citizenship so badly, that she agreed to her husband's offer. He is now married again to a lady from the Philippines, whom he met through a mail-order-bride agency.

Dang has been working in a massage parlour for about 2 years. She said that she worked more hours and was paid more than in Thailand. Dang goes to see a doctor once a month at NZPC. She always uses condoms with clients. Dang has met another New Zealander and they have talked about going back to Thailand to get married. Dang is not sure about a second marriage. She said that her boyfriend wanted to open a massage parlour and start trafficking Thai girls and women to New Zealand.

Intira's story

Intira came from a poor family in the Northeast of Thailand. They had a small farm with a dairy and she had lots of siblings. Her father managed the budget of the house. He always used all the money and never planned for Intira's education. Intira believed that because she was a girl, she did not get attention from her father.

When Intira was 16, her parents arranged for her to marry a rich man in her village. Her parents took most of the money from her dowry. Her husband was 20 years older than her. Intira said she was only a housewife, and could argue with her husband. After 4 years of marriage, he left for another town and left nothing for her except her two children, a boy and a girl.

Intira said she was depressed when he left. She went to see a friend who was a prostitute in a massage parlour in Bangkok. Intira worked there for 1 year because she needed money. She used contraceptives and had a medical check every month. However, living in Bangkok was too expensive and Intira could not save much money living there.

'My children are my biggest concern', Intira said seriously. Her friend told her that it was better money working overseas. Intira wanted to go, so she traveled on her work visa to work as a housekeeper in Singapore. She instead worked as a sex worker. She worked there for 2 years, and she said the owner and clients treated her badly. She had no power to negotiate with clients to use a condom and had to pay for her own medical checks, unlike at the massage parlour in Thailand (and in New Zealand). In addition, she had low self-esteem while she was living there.

Intira went to Australia and then trafficked to New Zealand on her tourist visa. as a third place to do sex work. Later Intira married a New Zealander, as she said he helped her to stay legally in New Zealand. She worked as a sex worker in the massage parlour for 1 year on and off and traveled to Christchurch and Wellington to work as well. Intira said that her husband took 45% of her wages when he married her. She requested to be separated from him later. She said he spent most of the money on gambling.

Intira has thought about bringing her children to New Zealand. She has saved some money for her children to be educated. However, she was not certain about her plan. She said that she might go back to live with her children, since she was paying for their education and they lived with her sister. Her sister now owns a salon in which Intira has a 50% share.

Jang's story

Jang came from a province in the central part of Thailand. Her family was poor. Jang left school when she was at grade 7 and later worked in her homeland as a salesperson in a shoe shop. She was married to a driver in a four-star hotel of the county when she was 16 years old. They had one daughter after a year. Because her husband was a womaniser, he never stayed at home. He did not support Jang financially. Jang was depressed, as she did not want to get divorced, but thought of leaving him. She then discussed with her friend the possibility of a work offer in a five-star massage parlour as a receptionist.

As a receptionist, Jang was not paid enough to support her child. Her daughter had been living with her parents since she came to Bangkok. She therefore started thinking of becoming a sex worker. Jang assumed that most prostitutes earned lots of

money and believed it was ethical since she was married. (not a virgin) For her first trip she was paid \$NZD 200. Jang said at that time she always used contraception and condoms to protect her from STIs, AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. She said that people often came from health organisations in Thailand to educate her and her colleagues about safe sex.

Jang met a Taiwanese client a year later. He told her about how gainful the Taiwan sex industry was for prostitutes and asked if she was interested in doing sex work there. Jang decided to go there on that client's arrangement, with a few friends from work. Jang said that the conditions of work there were of lower standard. She met a Japanese client and later became his mistress; this put her off going to work in Japan or Korea. Jang did not want to go back to prostitution and felt it was better to sleep only with one man, so that he could support her financially. Jang said that he travelled all the time and sometimes he visited her and left a sum of money.

A year later, her Japanese boyfriend wanted her to send Thai girls and women over to Taiwan for sex work. Jang did not want to do it. She did not want people in the village to know that she was a prostitute. She said he lost contact after she declined to do so. Jang needed money but could not find any other work, so she went to see her friends who were sex workers in Bangkok. She then took a job in a beer bar in Pattaya to do sex work. She joined a mail-order bride agency to meet her current husband. He was a 52-year-old New Zealander. She quit prostitution and moved to Auckland.

Jang said that she could not speak English very well because she has never studied another language. She said, 'Firstly, I was excited about coming to New Zealand as I never lived in a white people country before.' However, after living in New Zealand for 3 months, she found her husband was very strict with her allowances. She wanted to bring her child here as her mother had just passed away, but he did not want her to. She said she would inherit when her husband passes away and that she cannot wait for that day.

Juum's story

Juum comes from a province in the Northeast of Thailand. Her mother separated from her father when she was very young. Her mother remarried again to a building worker. Later her stepfather left for work in Bangkok and died in a car accident. Her mother

therefore had to take care of the expenses of her five children from two marriages. Even though her mother sold noodle food on the street in town, her family was still poor. Juum quit primary school after finishing grade 6.

She then helped her mother selling noodle for a while. When she turned 18, Juum went to Bangkok to find a job to help her mother. She followed her friends from the village to work as a servant for a rich family in Bangkok. The pressure of sending money back home to help her family made her rethink her work situation. After 6 months, she quit the job and got a job as a waitress through another friend from her village. At this place, she met Kusuma who suggested that she take a waitressing job in a beer bar in Pattaya with higher rewards. A few months later, she went to Pattaya with Kusuma.

In Pattaya, she met an owner of a beer bar who once was a prostitute. Juum said the salary was not as high as she expected. Thus, hoping for the better wages promised by the owner and her friend, Juum decided to do sex work. Her first client was a US navy soldier and she went with him for one month. The price for her virginity on that trip was \$THB 10,000 (\$NZD 500). Juum continued to work in that beer bar for 2 years, and sent a lot of money back to her family. Juum said that she strictly used contraception and had a medical check twice a month. She did not have any problems with her boss. Sometimes Thai clients verbally and physically abused her. She said she preferred foreign clients as they treated her better, more like an escort than a prostitute for a short time for Thai clients and for a longer period of time for European customers.

After 2 years in Pattaya, she got tired of the job and thought about going to work overseas for more money. She joined a mail-order bride business. There she met Tim, a New Zealander who was a businessman. They married and moved to Australia. He was 46 years old.

Juum lived in Auckland with her husband for one year. She has quit sex work provisionally. She still has to send money to help her mother and support her brother's tuition fees. Her husband still goes to a massage parlour in Auckland, but she felt she could reprimand him. She said sometimes he went to sleep with other Thai women sex workers as well. Juum wanted to get her New Zealand citizenship so she could go to Australia to do sex work. 'I want to get divorced but still I do not know anyone to go to

except Thai friends. They told me to put up with it but I cannot guarantee for how long,' Juum said sadly.

Nok's story

Nok came from a poor family in a province in the Northeastern part of Thailand. She is the oldest of eight children. Her mother suffered from health problems and passed away when Nok was in grade 4; her father then remarried. Nok then decided to leave school to look after her brothers and sisters. She helped her father work on the rice farm until she met her boyfriend at age 18. He was a son of the dairy owner in the village. His mother did not like Nok, so they ran away to Bangkok, hoping to start a family and find employment. She was a worker in a shoe factory and did not earn enough money for her father to pay for her brothers' tuition fees.

Nok said the cost of living was extremely high in Bangkok. Her first husband was an alcoholic and he spent all the money on gambling. Nok said she avoided having disagreements; this would lead to her being beaten up by him and badly injured. One year after marrying, he took off to Saudi Arabia for work. Nok did not hear from him for a year. She said she cried every day after this happened.

Nok decided to go back home and found out that one of her sisters had gone to Pattaya to work. Nok met up with her sister and got a job as a waitress in the bar where her sister worked as a bar girl (sex worker) for 6 months. Nok then decided to go out with customers. She earned \$THB 10,500 monthly (approx. \$NZD 520). In this way, Nok helped her family to be able to have a better life. She purchased a truck for her brother to use on the farm and paid for her youngest brother's tuition fees.

She then met Steven, an Australian sex trafficker, who brought her overseas. Steven met her in Pattaya through an advertisement for a sex tourism campaign. She traveled to and worked in a massage parlour in New Zealand for 2 months, and then left for Australia again to work for a further 6 months. Nok then came back to work for 3 months in New Zealand. She said she has to travel on her tourist visa.

Nok said she did not like New Zealand, as Steven's friend (the owner of the massage parlour) treated her badly and expected to sleep with her for free. Nok said that

the two months' experience in New Zealand was not so impressive, and a little disappointing for her. She said that clients hardly ever paid tips and abused her verbally and physically. She told me that she did not have a free medical check here, unlike in the bars in Thailand. However, she said that all her clients used condoms, in contrast to her former clients in Thailand. Nok also said that sex work in New Zealand is better paid and that the work conditions are more decent than in Thailand.

Nok is now married to an Australian and is a citizen living in Auckland. She met her husband through clients. She has changed her name. Nok plans to go to Thailand to visit her family and see whether there were any girls in her homeland who are interested in working for Steven in Australia and New Zealand. Steven is now living in Auckland, so she often visits him, and sometimes does sex work without telling her husband in Auckland.

Nok said, 'My husband is very strict with the money. I love to spend on gambling, especially slot machines.' Nok has been thinking about opening a Thai restaurant and also sending girls from her homeland to work in Australia. She thinks that this would help those girls and their poor families to have a better life, just like her.

Nuna's story

Nuna comes from a very poor but affectionate family. She has four brothers and three sisters to support. As she is the oldest, she had to help her parents by looking after her younger sisters. She went to school till grade 9 in Bangkok. Originally, she came from Buriram, a province in the Northeast of Thailand. She worked in a dairy in Thailand and as a cashier in a supermarket in Bangkok, until she met Ong.

Ong was a friend who had come back from Australia. Ong told Nuna that working as a cashier in a supermarket in Australia, she could earn three to four times what she was earning in Thailand. Nuna had been through many abusive relationships, and wanted to leave Thailand. So, when Ong proposed the offer, Nuna went to Sydney. There, she worked in a Thai restaurant to pay the debt from Ong's arrangement for her trip. Ong suggested that Nuna do sex work to pay off the debt more quickly, but at first Nuna declined. Ong was doing sex work in Australia as well as in Auckland, New Zealand. Concerned about supporting her family, Nuna changed her mind. 'I was not a

virgin and wanted money to send to my sisters and brothers, so who cares what people think,' she said. She went to Auckland with Ong on a tourist visa and worked for a massage parlour owned by a Chinese man to pay off the debt. She arranged to meet with customers who were tourists. She found that she does not like Asian customers. She has been working there for one year.

Nuna met her current boyfriend through friends who gamble at the casino in Christchurch. She said that she wants to marry her boyfriend in order to gain permanent residency, so she can live in New Zealand legally. He did not want to marry with her yet, saying he was not ready. 'I want my brothers and sisters to come to New Zealand to study so when they go back to Thailand, they can find a good job', she said.

Nuna spent money on alcohol, gambling, clothes and cosmetics. Sending money back home to Thailand is not easy for her. Her salary is about \$NZD 18 an hour and the owner of the massage parlour deducts around 70%. She is not quite satisfied with this, but as she is waiting for her application for a permanent residency, she has accepted the condition.

Her clients are mostly Asian businessmen with a mattering of European male clients. Nuna always uses a condom with clients but she does not use contraception with her boyfriend because she wants to become pregnant. Nuna dreams of having her family with her in New Zealand.

Oom's story

Oom came from a small village in the North of Thailand. She left school when she was 13 years old (grade 7). She is the only child. Her father went to work in Kuwait as a labourer and disappeared. Her mother sells vegetables in the market. Oom had to work hard and do anything for general services in the village where she lived. She went to Bangkok when she was 17 years old to find a better job and a better life with other people from her village. She was lured with a job offer as a waitress from her friend.

Oom said she was forced to entertain the clients who expected sexual services. She refused, but the boss and her 'friend' laced her drink. The client raped her; the

friend took all the money. Pimps in the brothel threatened Oom's life, so she gave the money to her (so-called) friend, then escaped from the brothel after 4 months.

Oom thought about getting help from the authorities. But as she was poor and uneducated, she felt powerless. Oom decided to work in a massage parlour to survive economically. She went to work in Pattaya for 5 years. She said the work conditions there were average, and she had a sexual health check twice a month. Oom said customers paid tips at 10-25 per cent a trip. [A trip is a period of time for which a sex worker goes out with a customer.] The mamasangs arranged the payment and Oom sometimes did a strip dance. Oom said that foreign customers paid better tips, but that business was poor in Pattaya in the last 5 years.

In Pattaya, she joined a mail-order bride agency and met Mark, a New Zealander who has changed her life. Mark is a traveller and also worked for one of the biggest mail-order bride companies. He put her photo and story on the cover of a mail-order brides advertisement on the Internet. Three months later, she met her New Zealand husband. Oom said her husband was 71 years old when they were married. Oom said that she has to do all the housework and cannot refuse to have sex. Oom went back to Thailand to get her mother to come to live with her, but her mother was satisfied with her life in the small village. She goes back to visit her mother twice a year. She said, 'Every time I go back to my homeland to visit mum, I felt really good because people treated me like a special person because I have been overseas.'

Oom left prostitution after she married. She still has no control over her budget, as her husband does not want her to work. She said that he knew that she was a sex worker and he does not want her to work as a sex worker anymore. Oom said she likes to spend money in the casino, but does not tell her husband about her gambling habit. She wishes to go back to live in Thailand when her husband passes away. She said she would inherit plenty of money when he died.

Tiaa's story

Tiaa lived with lots of siblings and her relatives in the poor area near a market in Nakhonsawan province. This district is located in the central part of Thailand. Tiaa finished school after grade 2, as her family could not financially support her education.

They barely had enough food to eat. Her father died when she was a baby. After her father's death, she took care of her siblings.

When Tiaa was 16, she married a soldier in the Thai army. Tiaa expected he would be able to support her and her family financially. After a few years, her husband died while on duty on the borders of Thailand. After the funeral, she met her friend, Jing, who was rumoured to have been to Bangkok to work as a waitress and to have earned a great deal of money. Pressure to support her family, especially younger siblings, made Tiaa decide to go to Bangkok and get a job as a waitress in a bar. At this place, she found out that Jing was working as an escort in the bar, not as a waitress. Because Jing kept telling her about how good the money was in the sex business, Tiaa decided to go out with a customer.

She said she still could not save enough money. She used her money to buy all the luxury items, which her siblings have wasted. 'At that time, I was always worried about my young sisters and brothers who were studying in College and University', she said. Although Tiaa worked in the sex industry both in Thailand and overseas for over 10 years, she could not put together much money.

Tiaa protected herself from AIDS and STIs by always using contraception. She saw a doctor every two months. Tiaa worked in the first bar for almost 4 years but could not save much money. Her boss told her to join the mail-order brides. She met her New Zealander husband through mail-order brides; they went out for two months and were married.

When Tiaa was living in Wellington, she was only working as a maid at home. Her husband was not as rich as she thought. He gave her little money to send back to her family. Then he started abusing her verbally and physically. After 2 years, he took her to a massage parlour and forced her to work as a sex worker for 4 months without her being paid. Tiaa ran to the police and was threatened by her husband with being sent back to Bangkok. At that time, she could not speak English very well, so the police believed her husband, who said that the two were only having an argument. Tiaa said she felt that the policemen looked down on her.

Fortunately, Tiaa met a Chinese sex worker, Ming, in the massage parlour where she worked. She was assisted in getting a separation and then went to work with Ming's relatives in Auckland. Tiaa worked in Auckland for 1 year but was not content with her life. She said that almost all her clients used condoms, but a few Asian clients did not. After the divorce, Tiaa became an alcoholic and was unable to do sex work properly.

Eight months ago, Tiaa went back to live in her homeland, as she hoped that her siblings would help her. Her brother had not finished his degree and was addicted to drugs. However, her sister supported her; she is a voluntary teacher in the village. Her sister and her mother helped Tiaa to stop drinking. Six months later, Tiaa recovered from her alcoholism. She said she went to a temple and started practicing meditation. She was an expert adviser for a project in her homeland to stop women going overseas as sex workers.

Tiaa then came back to visit friends in New Zealand and is currently working in a Thai restaurant. She said she had just got engaged to a Chinese New Zealander, whom her friend from a massage parlour introduced to her.

Tien's story

Tien comes from a poor family in the Northeast of Thailand. Her parents are farmers. Where she lived was very drought-prone, and the land was not developed. She has never been to school; like a number of other girls in the village, she is illiterate. She did anything just to get money and helped her parents work on a farm.

When she was 16 years old, Tien went to Bangkok with her sister. They thought about good food, fashion clothes and all the luxury items that they wished they could have. Her sister applied to work in a salon and had a cleaning job. Tien worked in a cafe as a waitress. Tien knew that singers in that cafe were working as sex workers as well, but also that they could choose their own clients. Soon Tien slept with the boss so she could become a cafe singer.

When she was 18 years old, Tien became a cafe singer and started sleeping with customers who came to the café. She said she had to remember the lyrics of songs by listening to them. She started going out with a customer and worked for that cafe for

two years intermittently. Because of their beautiful appearance, both she and her sister attracted many customers. Tien did sleep with customers for money and only chose people who were rich. She said she did not use contraception but that she saw a doctor twice a month. She sent some money back home and built a new house and bought motorcycles for her parents.

After the economic crisis 5 years ago, people did not go out and the cafe had to close. Tien went to Pattaya with her sister, who worked in a salon, but was doing sex work as well. For about 2-3 months, they worked in a karaoke bar as a singer and an escort for tourists. She also joined a mail-order bride business, as she did not want to be trafficked to do sex work. Soon, her sister met John, a German man, through a mail-order-bride advertisement in Pattaya. They were married and went to Germany. Not long after, Tien met her current husband through a mail-order-bride advertisement as well. He is a half Australian, half New Zealand business man who travelled in Thailand. She married him when he was 56 years old.

Tien has been living in Auckland for a year. She is not happy with her life there. Her husband has treated her as a servant. She says she is tired and feels as if everyone looks down at her. She has quit prostitution, but will return to sex work if she gets divorced. She said it is difficult to adjust to New Zealand culture even though most people are friendly and treat her equally. But her husband's family called her a 'Thai whore'. They knew that she was a sex worker. Tien said she wants to study in an English course at a high school. She plans to attend the course next year. However, she spent most of her money in a casino, as she said 'One thing I like about New Zealand is legal gambling.'

Tuui's story

Tuui comes from Yasothorn, a province in the Northeast of Thailand. Tuui's family has an abusive stepfather and stepsisters. She has had no education, and does not want to go back to Thailand. Tuui's mother married the stepfather when Tuui was very young. She has no memory of her birth father. When Tuui was 14, she and her mother moved to Bangkok to escape the abusive stepfather. Tuui and her mother stayed with a friend in a bar and she did cleaning work.

When Tuui turned 17, her mother, a sex worker, persuaded Tuui to work as a bar-girl. Tuui's job was to talk with customers and to sell drinks. However, she decided to work as a prostitute and worked on and off in Bangkok massage parlours for 6 years. A client from Hong Kong invited Tuui to become his mistress for a year. She became pregnant to him when she was 20 years old. Sadly, he was bankrupt and had to return to Hong Kong. He left some money for Tuui to have an abortion, but she decided to keep the child.

After giving birth to her daughter, Tuui decided to look for a way to make more money. Hoping for a better life, she married a New Zealander through a mail-order bride advertisement. The marriage was not successful, as the family of her husband did not like her and he did not give her enough money to pay for her child support. After two years, a Thai friend persuaded her to work in a massage parlour in Auckland. Tuui used to work both in a restaurant, which Thai people owned, and in a massage parlour, owned by Chinese New Zealanders.

Tuui spent a lot of money on cigarettes, food, gambling and phone bills, in addition to money sent back home to Thailand to support her daughter. Sometimes Tuui earned as much as \$NZD 20 an hour, but her wages were reduced 50-60% by the owner and manager of the massage parlour. She said 'I quit that job because they cheated on my money [wages].' Most of her clients were Asian men, Chinese and Japanese businessmen who traveled to New Zealand. Some of her clients suggested that she go and work for an escort agency. Following their advice, Tuui learned that there were many escort agencies which she could work for in New Zealand.

Tuui can speak only a little English. She has some problems getting demanding and drunk customers to use condoms. However, she said that most New Zealand male clients are aware of HIV and AIDS, and generally cooperate, unlike businessmen from Asian countries such as Japan. She has been now working with an escort agency for a year. They deduct only a maximum of 15% from what she earns, and she feels quite pleased about that. But she said, 'it is so hard to save money in New Zealand.'

She said that her boyfriend knew that she works for an escort agency in New Zealand and he did not care. Her current boyfriend is Belgian. She plans to go overseas next year and quit sex work, she wants to go to Belgium with him and take her daughter

there. Tuui said repeatedly, 'I miss my daughter so much, I hope she is okay with my mother.'

Conclusion

Most interviewees were Thai women prostitutes who worked on and off in the sex industry in Thailand and in some cases in other countries, apart from New Zealand. Some came to New Zealand as mail-order brides. A few came to work in New Zealand as sex workers. The effort to improve their economic conditions led to the choice of joining mail-order bride agencies to be legally brought to New Zealand. However, the result is quite the reverse, as the majority of Thai mail-order brides were discontented and had less financial support from their husbands. Some of these interviewees decided later to work in New Zealand as sex workers.

The other aspect clearly emerging from interviews is that in terms of control over their status and living standards, they are positioned differently within New Zealand culture, because it is a different environment. The lack of equal treatment in their marriages drove them to do sex work here in order to earn more money. They usually found more equal treatment in their working conditions, and this was due to their legal status in New Zealand. When compared to the first two groups, which are the former child prostitutes and sex workers trafficked to other countries excluding New Zealand, the lives of interviewees in New Zealand is nearly finer. Sex work in New Zealand has not pressured them to have long-term anxiety over their economic situation, but culture and language differences cause stress. In addition, they still carry the burden of supporting their families back in Thailand, so this causes anxiety over their finances.

These Thai women sex workers did not intend to get a divorce from their New Zealand husband in order to do sex work. They went back to sex work because there is no other occupational option for them in New Zealand. They are only a minority in the New Zealand sex industry and are reluctant to enter New Zealand sex businesses. Most were influenced by the lure of money, as generally they had an 'easy come easy go' attitude and tended to live for the day, not plan for the future. A high proportion spent masses of money on gambling to cope with their stress.

The combination of the basic information with relation to all thirty interviewed sex workers is illustrated next in Table three; the summaries of the situation of the interviewees. Subsequently, the stories of all three groups of interviewees are discussed and analysed in explicit detailed in part VI where I also review all aspects found from the interviews and describe in more detail quotes and comments from these stories.

TABLE 3: SUMMARIES OF THE SITUATIONS OF INTERVIEWEES

Name	Aged Of Started Sex Work	Origin	Highest Education	Employment Before Starting Sex Work	Family Status and Circumstance	Current Marital Status	Giving Reasons For Entering The Sex Industry	People Who Moved Them Toward Sex Work	Year (s) Of Sex Work	Current Situation And Future Direction
Aim	17	North East	Grade 2	None	Poor family; She lived with grandparents.	Her first boyfriend was a pimp; She just met a client who fell in love with her.	She was forced to do sex work.	A pimp boyfriend	3	She went to Japan and now came to New Zealand.
Ann	19	East	Teacher College's Degree	Waitress (Part time Job)	Poor family; She left home when she was young.	She has lived with a boyfriend who does not know she is a sex worker.	She wanted to have enough money to buy clothes and luxuries.	A friend from her college	3	She wanted to quit sex work but money is still attractive and could not decide whether to go to Japan or to continue sex work in Thailand.
Buay	15	A slum in Bangkok	Grade 9	Unemployed before taken a reception job at a massage parlor.	Poor Environment; She used to live with an abusive stepfather.	She has been with a Japanese boyfriend who once was her client.	Sexual abuse experiences; Jobless condition.	A friend who is a sex worker.	5	She prepared to go to Japan to do sex work.
Dalat	19	Bangkok	Polytechnic's degree	Clothes Shop's Assistant	Her mother worked in Japan as a sex worker and sent money to her. (Poor family)	She wanted to marry her current New Zealand boyfriend who does not know she is a sex worker.	She on and off worked as a call girl in New Zealand to support herself and her two brothers back in Thailand.	In Thailand, she was also a call girl.	3	She only worked when she wanted to. She has lived in New Zealand on her expired visa.
Dang	22	North east	Grade 4	Servant	Poor family	Divorced With her New Zealander Husband.	Easy money; She expected richness from sex work.	Two friends from her village who were a sex worker in Pattaya.	5	She now worked for a massage parlour in New Zealand.

Dara	16	North	Grade 6	Low-paid Cleaner; Waitress	Poor family; She was living with an abusive father.	Single	To earn enough money to live on her own.	A sex worker sister, a friend who is a sex worker.	4	She went to Singapore and Australia with help from a New Zealander sex trafficker.
Fanny	21	North	Grade 2	Housewife and then Waitress (In a karaoke bar)	She was married to an abusive husband for 4 years, when she was 15 years old.	Separated From a Thai husband; She just engaged to a German who met her through mail-order bride.	Hope for a better economic living and to be financially independent.	Support by her parents and sister; Obligation to take care of her only daughter.	4	She has a German boyfriend.
Hope	14	North	Grade 4	Out of work	Living Under the Poverty Line.	Single	Poor conditions of life.	Sold by parents for her virginity.	6	She wanted to go to Japan.
Intira	20	North east	None	Housewife	Poor family; She has suffered by her father's preference of sons.	Married	Pressure in supporting her children.	A friend who worked in a massage parlour.	7	She went to New Zealand and might stay or go back to Thailand. She wanted to open a bar.
Jang	18	The Central Part of Thailand	Grade 7	Reception Job (Massage Parlour)	Poor family	She was divorced with her Thai husband and was married to a New Zealander.	The obligation to support her own daughter; Freedom in economic.	As a single mother, she was pressured to take an offer of sex work by a friend who is a prostitute.	5	Her husband found her through mail-order-bride; She liked his money.
Jieb	15	North east	Grade 2	Jobless	Poor family with a sick mother to take care of.	Separated with an Australian Husband.	To give money to her mother for a medical cost.	A friend in the village lured her with a job offer.	7	She went back to do more sex work in Thailand after been to Australia.
Joi	18	East	Grade 4 Primary	A factory worker	Very poor family; Her parents left her when she was a child with the grand Parents.	Single	Poor condition of work and living.	A friend who is a sex worker.	1	She went to Germany and now joined mail-order-bride business.
Juri	22	North east	None	Waitress; Low paid Cleaner.	Poor family	Juri was married when she was 14.	Hope for a better economic.	Money and job need.	6	She went to Japan to do sex work.

Juum	19	North east	Grade 6 Primary	Servant; Waitress (in a beer bar)	Very poor family	She was married to a New Zealander, and now wanted a divorce.	To support her mother; Hope of a better living.	A beer bar's owner in Pattaya and her friend persuaded her to go out with a client for a night.	3	She wanted to get a divorce and go back to Australia to do sex work.
Nid	13	North east	None	Unemployed	Very Poor; Abusive family.	Living with a younger boyfriend.	Pressured by jobless condition; abusive sexual experiences.	Sold by her own parents.	11	She re-entered sex work and just went to Taiwan to work as a sex worker.
Nida	14	North	Grade 2	Out of Work	Poor family in a small village.	Living with a Dutch boyfriend.	She was sold and forced to sleep with customers for two weeks.	A friend of her family sold her for her virginity.	6	She opened a hair salon and a dairy in her homeland.
Nok	20	North east	Grade 4 Primary	A factory worker; Bar waitress.	Poor family; Her father was sick.	She was married later to an Australian-New Zealander.	Economic Reason	Her sister who is a sex worker.	2-3	She used to work in New Zealand for 5 months. She would like to come back to work in New Zealand.
Nuna	21	Bangkok	Grade 9	A cashier in a super-market (full-time)	Poor family	She has been through many abusive relationships in the past. She just met a New Zealander boyfriend.	She wanted to live in overseas so as to pay the debt.	Her friend who is a sex worker lured her with job offer and then forced her to pay the debt.	1	She is still living on a tourist visa in New Zealand.
Oom	17	North	Grade 4 Primary	Service Job such as cleaning; laundry; kitchenhand.	Poor family	She was married to a 71-years old New Zealander.	Firstly, she was forced to do sex work but later on she decided to do sex work willingly.	She was lured by the offer of job from her friend with waitress job.	6	Oom met her husband through mail-order brides. She wanted to go back to Thailand once her husband pass away.

Orn	18	East	Grade 2	Housewife	Poor family; Living with her sick mother.	Divorced; She was married when she was 14.	She has to take care of her own daughter from her first husband.	A friend convinced about easy money from a job in a massage parlour.	6	She planned to go to Australia to do sex work and open a Thai restaurant.
Panna	14	North east	Grade 4	Jobless	Eldest child in a poor family.	She was married to a Japanese man who was her client.	She was forced to sell her virginity.	A daughter of a headman in her village sold her.	5	She became a sex trafficker to sell girls and women from her village to do sex work in Bangkok and overseas.
Pueng	15	North	Grade 4	Help her family with housework and farmwork.	Large family with poor condition of living.	Single	She was abused and did sex work for one month with no payment.	Her mother's friend sold her for a virginity.	4	She went back to see her sister in Pattaya.
Puke	19	North east	None	Work in a hair salon which was a hidden brothel.	Eldest child in a poor family.	Her husband left her for another woman and pay no child support. She has two sons to support.	To have money enough to take a good care of her family.	A relative who is a sex worker.	4	She went to Germany and joined a mail-order-bride on the internet which arranged by a trafficked agent.
Ratana	22	North east	Grade 6	Farmwork	Very poor family; Parents addicted to gambling	A mistress of her once a British client.	Hope for a better living and earn more money.	Worked in a bar beer where her elder sister was a sex worker.	5	She has helped her sister opened a beer bar in Pattaya.
Rung	14	East	Grade 2	A Toilet Cleaner	Poor Family	She was engaged with an English man.	She wanted to go back to do sex work in Pat Pong.	A mother sold her for her virginity and left her in a brothel.	5	Quit works and Moved to England.
Tiaa	19	The Central part of Thailand	Grade 2 Primary School	Waitress (Bar)	Very Poor	Divorced With her New Zealand husband.	Want to have a better life and opportunity to travel overseas.	Influenced by family and friends; who wanted a house, car and materials from her.	4	She planned to work in Auckland.

Tien	18	North east	None	Waitress (Café)	Poor family	Married to a New Zealander.	To be able to survive financially.	She wanted to be a singer in a café.	8	She came to Australia as a mail-order-bride and now living in New Zealand.
Tong	15	North	None	Unemployed	Very poor family; Living with sick grandparents.	She went out a New Zealander boyfriend.	Wanted to help her aunt pay the household expense.	Her aunt persuaded her to sell her virginity and took all the money.	11	She worked as a manager in a bar which her aunt was a business partner, she wanted to live in Bangkok.
Tooy	20	North	Grade 4	Housewife; Waitress	Poor family; Her parents are a farmer.	She was married to her first husband when she was 17 years old and was divorced.	Her husband left her with a huge debt to pay off. She was also jobless.	She was threatened by the debt collectors.	4	Tooy went to Japan and joined mail-order-bride business.
Tuui	18	North east	None	A Bar Cleaner	Poor family; The abuse of her stepfather made her mother and her came to Bangkok.	Divorced; She planned to married her boyfriend again.	Firstly, she was persuaded by her mother, and the pressure to support her daughter.	Her mother was working in a bar as a sex worker.	8	She worked in a massage parlour. She wanted to bring her daughter along after a new marriage and left prostituion permanently.

Part VI: Analysis

CHAPTER TEN

THE QUANDARY OF THAI WOMEN PROSTITUTE

PARTICIPANTS

Introduction

This chapter will provide detailed findings for all interviewees, including their health issues, monetary circumstances, migration, profit from sex work, effect of marriage and their mental state after doing sex work.

There are several similarities and differences in the characteristics and experiences of these sex workers. Female subordination and patriarchal context in Thai society alleviate the input of Thai women with low economic opportunity into sex industrial work. Findings demonstrate that sex exploitation is advantaged by men/women in their work included of cheermen, mamasang, sex traffickers and workplace's owners.

Most participants had poor or working class background, many were children of impoverished families, as well as most had little or no education. A small number of interviewed sex workers gained advantages from sex work though many were hardly carrying through their vocation in Thailand sex industry. Nearly all interviewees experienced changes in their economic situation when poor finances in Thailand caused them to seek jobs overseas. Secondly, family importance is the strong aspect in their life to continue sex work or attempt to carry out sex works in overseas.

Findings also illustrated that the matrimony with European foreigners changed the lives of interviewed Thai sex workers. Only a few interviewee sex workers achieved in leaving prostitution permanently after the marriage. However, other participants unfortunately had returned to do sex work.

At the end of the previous part which consisted of the findings related to Thai women living and working in Thailand and New Zealand, I have synthesised the

information of findings with reference to all thirty interviewed sex workers. (Table three)³⁸⁷ In this chapter, I will discuss particular dilemmas in the lives of these interviewees before and after entered prostitution in this chapter. Consequently, I have divided the topics into different detailed categories for more circumstantial analysis. The basis is:

- 1) Motivation to become a prostitute;
- 2) Demands of the dependent/family;
- 3) Female poverty of Thai women prostitutes;
- 4) Working Conditions;
- 5) The effect of sex work;
- 6) Calamity in life and sex work;
- 7) Marriage to a foreigner: a pause of sex work;
- 8) How Thai women came to New Zealand.

At the time of the interview, seventeen participants were currently working in the sex industry; the others refrained from sex work. More than a few participants had no desire to work in Thailand. For those prostitutes who went to live and work abroad, particularly in first world countries such as New Zealand, their lives were not improved. For these women, heading for another country to work as sex workers was caused by the wish for more freedom and more money than in Thailand. Those who were trafficked to overseas countries illegally (such as Japan or Germany) experienced ghastly living conditions. Most former child prostitutes went back to sex work after they had attended a rehabilitation centre.

Most interviewees ceased sex work immediately after getting married. Twenty-three participants only performed sex work intermittently; most counted on marriage to support them. However, some planned to return or had returned to sex work, after getting divorced or separated. I compare and discuss the situations of interviewees who quit sex work temporarily, for marriage as a mail-order bride.

In conclusion, I give reasons for why so few participants became financially independent from doing sex work. Only a few participants gave up sex work because they were with heterosexual partners who provided sufficient financial support. One or

³⁸⁷ Please see table three, *Summaries of Findings*, at the end of chapter 9 for details.

two participants became sex traffickers themselves. Sex work brought more problems and/or trouble for various participants than they expected. The disadvantages of doing sex work and of being marked out by their profession have barred participants from experiencing more financial and emotional security.

Similar circumstances of these participants

Most interviewees have their origins in poor areas or slum communities in the North (9) and the northeastern (13) part of Thailand. A few women came from the center (2) or the east (4), or from Bangkok (2).³⁸⁸ Their origins indicate that poverty is a major factor in whether a woman does sex work. These women came from similar class backgrounds; most are from poor farming families. A few, particularly those whose origin is Bangkok, came from slum or tenement communities.

The age of going into the sex industry among participants ranged from as young as 13 to as old as 22. The differing ages at which participants became sex workers illustrate dissimilar grounds of core constraints on their lives. Prostitutes who entered the sex trade when they were aged 13-16 were obliged to do sex work involuntarily, because of their lesser capability and relative lack of power to negotiate their life circumstances. The case with most of the former child prostitute interviewees is that they were sold by their own family or friends, and were not paid. For the remainder of the interviewees, more were in control of their primary payment for sex work, though not completely.

In general, their economic situations before prostitution were impoverished. All participants but one come from a poor and/or working class family background. The only partial exception is Ann. Her family managed to meet the expense of her tuition fee and living allowance at teacher's college, but only just. Ann chose to do sex work because she sought after expensive trinkets, clothing and jewelry, to match her friends at college.

³⁸⁸ Please see appendix twelve, *Map of Thailand*.

Motivation to become a prostitute

First of all, there is a pattern of becoming a child prostitute and then going back to the sex trade, becoming a sex worker, and later joining a mail-order-bride business. This helps explain the driving force behind female prostitution in Thailand. Some women are forced or converted to do sex work by economic catastrophe. These women are inclined to believe sex work is their only option for making enough money to live on and to support their families. The interviews show that nearly every participant was enthused or swayed into sex work with the promise of financial reward and hope of better living. Once participants entered the sex industry, very few made the effort to leave prostitution permanently.

Globally, sex industries are able to keep the wages of young and single women low, owing to the widely held assumption that women are either dependants or not self-supporting, rather than the family providers they often are.³⁸⁹ Prostitutes who entered the sex industry at the earlier ages of 13-15 were either forced or persuaded to do so by their parents, siblings, friends of parents and examples of successful sex workers from their neighbourhood. Often, they were verbally and physically abused and taken advantage of by men who were police, agents, or brothel/massage parlour owners or clients.

In many cases, financial problems also lead participants to be seduced or lured into prostitution. Soon after, these sex workers move to work abroad for the purpose of sex work. The high rate of female migration occurred among these interviewees in the context of marriage or being illegally trafficked. Case studies also indicate that sex workers who could not endure these hellish conditions were disposed of by firms and had to find jobs in other sex businesses, often in a foreign country. This is a result of Thailand's specific sex industry strategy, which creates a demand for Thai women sex workers abroad. The interviews demonstrate that it is quite common for women to fall into men's power and be taken advantage of by male authorities.

³⁸⁹ The Institutes of Social Studies, the Hague, *Prevention and Rehabilitation Schemes for Young Women in Prostitution and Related Occupations*, Netherlands Consultants, 17-21 June 1985, Bangkok, Thailand, p.98

Often participants turned to be sex workers because they were working in the sex trade as a receptionist in a massage parlour (Buay) or a waitress in a café (indirectly a sex business). This confirms the findings of other research, that the vast majority of urban migrants who join the urban waged or casual sex labour force do not start out as prostitutes.³⁹⁰ Wongchaisuwan admits that earnings decrease and economic crisis forced many Thai women into service employment such as jobs in the entertainment industry.³⁹¹ From interviews' results, sexual service vocation is characterised as a subsequent job once these women entered the entertainment businesses.

Educational background

The educational system in Thailand is grade 1-6 as primary school, grade 7-9 as secondary school and grade 10-12 as high school, followed by teaching college and university level; the polytechnic level is designed for particular vocational training such as secretarial, mechanical or handicraft, etc.³⁹² There was no public funding for school for these participants.

The decision to enter the sex trade correlated to their educational background. Most who were sold into the sex trade or forced into prostitution by economic pressure were either never educated at all (7 participants), or only completed grade 2 (7 participants) or grade 4 (8 participants). The rest of these women finished grade 6 or 7.

So most of these interviewees went to school only at the primary level, if that. Interestingly, two of them have a mother or a sister who is a sex worker. The seven women who never went to school at all are, luckily, able to read and write in the common Thai language. One interviewee who is partly illiterate became skilled as a cafe singer by listening to the sample tape (Tien). A few (Buay, Ann, Dalat, Nuna), who obtained a higher education than grade 9, up to a diploma or college level, entered the sex business of their own accord.

³⁹⁰ The Institutes of Social Studies, the Hague, Netherlands Consultants (1985) Ibid, p.55

³⁹¹ Wongchaisuwan, T. (1993) *The Political Economy of Thailand: The Thai Peripheral State, 1958-1988*, Ph.D. dissertation, School of Politics Studies, Institution, State University of New York at Binghamton, USA, pp.320-321

³⁹² Archarvanitkul, K. and Havanon, N. (1990) *Situation, Opportunities and Problems Encountered by Young Girls in Thai Society*, Research report funded by Terre des Hommes, Bangkok, p. 36

The inadequacy of their education acutely affected these interviewed prostitutes in their search for work. For example, Dalat, who obtained the highest education from all the participants, encountered troubles seeking a job because of her lack of work experience. Some of these women endured awful work conditions and poor payment before switching to sex work. For former child prostitutes or young women participants who were divorced, lack of education combined with few working skills means that these women had great difficulties finding viable work in other professions.

In such condition, the opportunity to further their education is barely offered. Scholarships are offered only for boy students and only for students with excellent grade results. For instance, Ratana applied for a scholarship, but she did not have any opportunity to further her study because she did not have high enough marks. Buay was not awarded a scholarship because the principal of the school felt strongly that a boy student deserved more education than her, despite Buay's superior school record. Since the male dominated discourse of education as declared on Thai cultural understanding, rather than on reality.³⁹³ Goolsby implemented in her study that the creation of educational equivalence for women in the North of Thailand is necessary.³⁹⁴ Positively, educational possibility must be granted to different groups of women in Thailand.

Having had to face lower opportunities to be educated in their own lives, some of these women sex workers believe that education is very important for their children's lives. In contrast, their parents disagreed with these values. For examples, Intira's father wanted her not to study but instead to marry a rich man in the village. Dara, who had an abusive father threaten her, as well as Tooy, who did not finish school and had to help by working on the farm for her poor family, were both disadvantaged by their families' inability to fund their education. Some women attended the school of English because of the lack of language skill and their foreign husband paid education fees. This has been a trend for other Thai women sex workers to join mail-order bride business.

³⁹³ Foundation For Women (1995) *Beyond Stereotypes: Asian Women in Development*, FFW, Bangkok, Thailand, pp.55-58

Economic situation

Most of these interviewees were doing underpaid work such as waitressing, cleaning and/or working in a factory before crossing the threshold to prostitution. A few interviewees were sent to Bangkok to work as a servant for a wealthy family (Dang, Jung). Though some interviewees engaged in sex work as their first job, this was true primarily for former child prostitutes. Most importantly, most interviewees worked in direct and indirect sex businesses, such as a hair salon, café, massage parlour and karaoke bar, or as a receptionist, waitress or cleaner, before starting to do sex work. The examples are stories of Buay, Puke, Fanny, Nok, Juum, Tiaa, Tien, Jang and Tuui.

Considering that the low paid work as a waitress or a cleaner in the entertainment businesses, is unlike money's gain from sex work. This is one explanation for why they developed into sex workers. The inclusion is that the negative impact of development has contributed to the migration of women from rural areas of Thailand, often into prostitution.³⁹⁵

Some participants did have to turn to sex work because of laws which required them to pay debts they did not generate. The case of Tooy illustrates the unfairness of society: because of the debt that her husband left for her, the debt collector required Tooy to pay. Some participants' economic circumstances were dismal even before they entered prostitution, since they had no savings from marriage and no support from the government, as there are no social welfare benefits in Thailand for single mothers.

As patriarchal ideologies, married women and mothers have overriding domestic obligations govern the insignificance of matriarchal role. Participants who were housewives suffered from unemployment and the need to ensure their child/children's support. Odzer asserts that as Thai women are inferior in Thailand and poor and working class Thai women is severely effected by Thai mores.³⁹⁶ Along with

³⁹⁴ Goolsby, R. L. (1994) *The impact of Waged labor and Access to education on women's lives and family roles in a provincial capital town in north-eastern Thailand*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California (LA), USA, p.88

³⁹⁵ Mensendiek, M., Women, migration and prostitutes in Thailand', *International Social Work*, 1997, Vol. 40, No.1, pp. 163-176

³⁹⁶ Odzer, C. (1990) *Pat Pong Prostitution: Its Relationship to, and effect on, the position of women in Thai society*, Ph.D. Dissertation. New School for Social Research, New York, pp.18-19

my findings, this social values has driven them selected sex work as an economic solution.

Single-mother status

The inferior position of Thai single mothers is disturbing. Among these participants, the obligation to support dependents such as parents and children is one reason pressing poor women and girls to sell their sexual services. In New Zealand, by contrast, though there is a social welfare department and was always very small, they have the Domestic Purposes Benefit for any parent who is bringing up a child alone, and who has no other source of income.

This is in direct contrast to the situation in Thailand. The Thai government does not have any policy of social welfare benefits, such as a child support program.³⁹⁷ This is the root that has generated huge financial trouble for many Thai mothers. These interviewees supposed that sex work would afford their children opportunities. Fanny's husband left her, so she had to take care of her own daughter by doing sex work. Puke was married to an old rich man in her homeland. After the divorce, he did not pay child support, so she had to do sex work to take care of her child. Thus these interviewees entered into prostitution as the quickest way to survive economically, usually after a failed marriage.

For the older women, the main motivation for going to other countries is to earn sufficient money in order to support their child, children and/or younger sisters. The responsibility for family means that these women weigh their own needs as less important. This stems partly from the neglect and partiality shown toward them in their family and social milieu.

'I always worry about my daughter and my mother...I am not really bothered about my future...I am not important.' (Orn)

'I will be angry with anyone who calls my (younger) sisters prostitutes...but I do not mind being called Kari [a jargon meant 'a prostitute' in Thai language] myself...I was actually anyway.' (Ratana)

³⁹⁷ Skrobaneck, S., et al (1997) *Trade in Women: Is it Thai mores?: Research report*, Thai translation, Foundation For Women (FFW), Bangkok, pp. 67-69

Unemployment seems to be the unimportant significant issue among these interviewed sex workers, compared with the demands of their family. Most interviewees were forced to leave school early, in order to support the family household. Thai girl and women interviewees from rural regions were recruited to work and then forced into sexual slavery to support the family economy.

Demands of the dependant/family

The interviews showed that girls and women from broken homes or abusive families were earlier engaged in prostitution than girls from 'normal' or loving families. One example is Buay, from an abusive family; her stepfather attempted to sexually assault her. She ran away from home to stay with a friend who was a sex worker, leading directly to Buay's young start in the sex industry.

Next, there is a group whose parents sold their daughters for their virginity or to work in a brothel. This demonstrates how family relations have turned into a commercialised relationship. This finding confirms work by Mirkinson, who wrote that family structure is involved in women becoming prostitutes.³⁹⁸ From the interview, sex workers who were systematically engaged in prostitution tend to originate from the North or the Northeastern part of Thailand, much more than from other regions. Their sex work enables them to fulfill the customary female family support roles.

Most interviewees who worked by choice to support their family were under similar pressure to those prostitutes who were initially deceived into doing sex work by people they knew and trusted. Former child prostitutes, who were sold by their parents and/or family for money, continue to return to their home regions. They said they continued to have contact with their families because they wanted to help their families. Hope admits that she knew her mother was selling her, but because Hope aspired to help her family, she did the sex work without complaint or blame. The social values of Thai woman who influenced by domestic responsibilities strengthened the patriarchal ideas defining women in a premise of the dutiful and inferior character.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁸ Mirkinson, J. (1997) 'The global sex trade in women', *Earth Island Journal*, 1997, Vol. 13, pp.30-32

³⁹⁹ Muecke, M. (1992) *Mother Sold Food, Daughter Sells Her Body: The Cultural Continuity of Prostitution*, Pergamon Press, USA, p.188

The unfairness of this is that while eight of the interviewees were sold by their parents or acquaintances, they themselves were paid only for food and/or a small amount of cash such as \$THB 15-20 (\$NZD 1) per day. Tong, Panna, Rung, Nid, Nida, and Pueng resembled similar experiences for paying their own wages without fair play. Hope's case study is unusual; she lost her virginity to the first client for payment of \$NZD 450 which was enough for her relatives to survive economically for a long period of time. Other research states that a family of a child prostitute could survive economically for about 3-6 months on the same amount of money in the rural areas of Thailand.⁴⁰⁰

In addition, a lack of self-respect was common among participants, along with the rationale that men in the family were more precious. Most participants believed that the loss of their virginity (often through arranged marriage, child prostitution, or some other form of coerced sex, but sometimes through going to live with a boyfriend) is an essential part of why they had to do and/or return to sex work. The conviction that they were no longer decent women turned these women to prostitution. KarnchanaAksorn supports that the double standard in Thai culture demands virginity issue as a value for all Thai women, but not for men.⁴⁰¹

Besides, patriarchal societies give overriding moral and legal rights to the parents, fathers or other males in the same kin group to control the lives of their daughters and sisters.⁴⁰² Intira's father managed the budget of the house and planned for his son's education while arranging marriage for Intira with a man who was 20 years older than her; this father then took control of the entire dowry paid for her, benefiting from his plans. From the interview, one reason that Juum left school earlier and became a sex worker, is because she had to support her brother's education fees.

⁴⁰⁰ Skrobaneck, S., et al (1997) *Trade in Women: Is it Thai mores?*, Research report, Thai translation, Foundation For Women (FFW), Bangkok, p.77

⁴⁰¹ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Women, Men and the social change in the Thai society*, from her Ph.D. thesis, Edison Press, Bangkok, Thailand, Published in Thai, p.216

⁴⁰² The institutes of social studies, the Hague, Netherlands Consultants, *Prevention and Rehabilitation Schemes for Young Women in Prostitution and Related Occupations*, 17-21 June 1985, Bangkok, Thailand, p.47

The domestic demand

Most prostitutes were driven into the sex industry by parents, siblings and/or relatives. Yet they do not blame their parents for selling them into prostitution. Parents sometimes sell their daughters to traffickers in order to support other children in the family.⁴⁰³ It is a responsibility for Thai daughters to disburse care to their parents, because daughters are less deserving of inheritance or love, compared with sons. There have been comparable circumstances in the author's own life. From the findings, a daughter is more responsible than a son, because of parents' disappointment at a daughter's inability to carry on the paternal name.⁴⁰⁴ For example, sickness of a family member, with high medical costs, caused some to enter into prostitution. In addition, some women try to pay the debts of their parents and relatives.

The contribution to their family is constantly the biggest concern of these interviewees, regardless of their past. They insist on supporting their family members, from blood relations to in-laws. For example, once Tong married to her husband, whether as a mail-order bride or not, their parents, child/children, brothers and sisters still relied financially on her. Other participants have had the similar experiences. These women sex workers supported men's roles in the family, for example supporting brothers. Yet participants were not rewarded or appreciated for their support.

Materialism

The tendency of sex workers to try to gain material possessions and physical comfort, rather than spiritual values, is clear from this research. For many in Thai society, the ideal is to be rich and to have luxury belongings. Ann desired to have access to a lavish lifestyle, so she chose to work as a call girl. Dang, who was a servant in a well-off family in Thailand, did sex work in Pattaya. Part of her reason for doing sex work is to have a housemaid of her own.

Materialism is reflected in the lives of these sex workers. In addition, property is vied for in Thai society as a confirmation of people's achievement.⁴⁰⁵ The materialism

⁴⁰³ Wijers, M. and Lap-Chew, L., *Trafficking in Women Forced Labour and Slavery-like Practices*, Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV), The Netherlands, pp.35-38

⁴⁰⁴ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Ibid*, p.34

⁴⁰⁵ KarnchanaAksorn, T. (1999) *Women, Men and the social change in the Thai society*, Edison Press, Bangkok, p.45

of the family members and relations coerced working class women into prostitution.⁴⁰⁶ For examples, Tiaa's family spent all her money on luxury items. Ratana's sisters earned a car and a Bachelor degree from Ratana's funds.

The interesting thing is that while money is first a means to pay basic living expenses for themselves and their family members, some sex workers spent money on luxuries such as cars, brand name clothing, and handbags such as Gucci or Chanel. (Ratana and Ann) Thus, the belief among these sex workers is that their profession, and living in overseas countries, can provide status. The more money they used to spend, the less likely they were to spend sensibly at a later date.

'I don't care about spending my money on these luxury items...I loved to do this...life is too short...so I should enjoy it.' (Ratana)

'I just wanted to be like other friends in school...they drove to school... [silence]... I didn't want to look different.' (Ann)

'Every one in my homeland respects me because they think I speak English and went overseas...I am kind of happy about it.' (Tong)

Female poverty of Thai women prostitutes

Within Thai conservative masculine ideology, it is assumed that poverty is the result of individual failure to compete successfully in the labor market.⁴⁰⁷ Therefore, these women would have received the message that as individuals, they might be able to rise out of poverty. There is a continuously high proportion of poor women in Thai society.⁴⁰⁸ However, it appears from the interviews that prostitution is not a good way to make money. But some participants believe it is possible to show a profit.

These women sex workers suffered from poverty. As children, some participants did any job they could to earn a little money, often only \$THB 20 (\$NZD 1) a day. Rung stole food from her neighbors to feed herself and her brother.

⁴⁰⁶ Muecke, M. (1992) *Mother Sold Food, Daughter Sells Her Body: The Cultural Continuity of Prostitution*, Pergamon Press, USA, p.147

⁴⁰⁷ Schaffer, D.M. (2000) *The feminization[sic] of poverty: Prospects for an international feminist agenda, women, power and policy*, Pergamon press, USA, p.69

⁴⁰⁸ Foundation For Women (1995) *Beyond Stereotypes: Asian Women in Development*, Bangkok, FFW, p.76

'It was really cold in winter and we had one torn tiny blanket...my two sisters and I had to share it... now I have a really beautiful blanket for myself even though I now live in Bangkok.' (Hope)⁴⁰⁹

Many interviewees could not go to school because their families could not or would not pay their education fees. Joi was sent to school till grade 4. After grade 4, Joi lived with her aunt, who did not support her schooling. Similarly, Perkins explains that most women entered prostitution because of the prior conditions of extreme poverty and poor alternative of employment.⁴¹⁰ From the interviews, it is proved that poor and working class Thai women sex workers turned into an informal sector of Thai labour before ultimately developed as the sex commodities for prostitution nationally and internationally, because of excessive poverty.

Significantly, male dominance in Thai society also had an impact on these interviewees' harsh situation. Dara, who came from an abusive family, was working for poor pay as a waitress in a restaurant. A male waiter there received higher pay, even though he did the same work. In addition, the sex industry is not only a mean of gaining improved wages for women who are exploited as a low wages woman.⁴¹¹ Theoretically, the establishment of prostitution is a product of male dominance by tempting and pursuing women who encountered poverty into the hidden economic trap of sex trade.

The poverty among prostitutes also coerced Thai women prostitutes to accept the poor condition. From the interviews, girls and women have been raped, coerced and sold outright into global prostitution. As Sanghera states, the international sex trade relies on a pernicious combination of Third World poverty.⁴¹² Thai women who had fled from the oppressive poverty in Thailand and were offered 'job promise' in overseas. Most participants went to overseas to do sex work in order to escape from poverty in the Thailand sex trade, found themselves trapped in the unpleasant practical situation in first world countries like Japan and Germany. Though the working circumstance in a country like New Zealand is more equal than in Thailand. However,

⁴⁰⁹ The coldest temperature in Chaing Rai where Hope came from is chilly as 5°C in Winter (December-January), while the lowest temperature in Bangkok could be as 19°C. (2001) www.thailandguide.com/temperature

⁴¹⁰ Perkins, R. (1991) *Working girls: prostitutes, their life and social control*, ACT, Australia, pp.45-48

⁴¹¹ Sanghera, J. (1998) *Poverty, Patriarchy and Prostitution: a study of the sexual labour of Nepali and Thai women in the sex industry in Asia*, Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, USA, p.104

⁴¹² Sanghera, J. (1998) *Ibid*, p.106

poor and working class Thai women sex workers still are not economically secured because poverty has ruined the financial confidence in their life situation, evidently and psychologically.

Working conditions

The sectors where interviewees worked are a significant factor in the quality of their work conditions. Prostitution in the red light areas of Thailand, such as Pat Pong, Pattaya and some massage parlours, shows that Thai and foreign men are both consumers and traders. Most interviewees indicated that their bosses were usually male and the clients were all men. They served male customers intensely, but received little compensation from male supervisors. These girls and women were being paid less – in some cases, much less - than what customers paid.

Interviews show that workplaces which are indirect sex businesses, such as cafés, restaurants or hair salons, have more Thai or local customers than foreigners. The hours of work and numbers of customers per day are similar to those in direct sex businesses. The normal customers are usually 10-26 people a week or more. Puke worked in a salon, which actually was a nighttime brothel.

Managers rules out of control at work. This contributed the servitude's need for not only customers but also manipulative owners of workplace. Most prostitutes are forced to sell drinks (if they work in a bar) if they have acquired no customers, in order to earn their wages. The hours of work are usually from early evening to late at night, such as 5pm-3am or 8pm-4am. Once prostitutes go out with a customer, payment is made, with the deduction, to the intermediaries. Tips and transport are a treat.

The work conditions of former child prostitutes and sex workers who are trafficked to first world countries, such as Japan and Germany, is of inferior quality when compared with those of adult prostitutes who work in Thailand. This is similar to typically brothels for child prostitutes, and bars or cocktail lounges for trafficked prostitutes. Since former child prostitutes, who were sold for money, may have to work in order to pay off the money, the owner of the brothel is paid for their services, not the

child. Some prostitutes who travel to foreign countries, such as Japan or Germany, are placed in a similar situation.

Mainly, work in a massage parlour usually includes a full body massage, showering and sexual service. Male customers paid only a fixed cost per hour for this service. Foreign male clients tend to go out with prostitutes for a longer time. Thai men tend to stay for a couple of hours. These women sex workers favored European or Japanese clients more than Thai clients. Some interviewees were seeking from these customers companionship, rather than sex.

'I like farangs, they took us to restaurant and department stores, but Thai men just want to sleep with us and leave with no tip.' (Nid)

Dealing with people in the sex businesses

The negotiation power of working class Thai sex workers is inferior to that of their clients, bosses or agents. Interviewees might have to sleep for free with cheermen to get more clients or sleep with corrupt policemen to help the owners avoid paying fines.

From the interviews, it is clear that pimps, trafficking agents, the owners of massage parlours and brothels - basically any men involved in the sex businesses - have all taken advantage of the women they employ. For example, of the money paid by clients, 50-85% goes to massage parlour owners, bar owners or escort agencies. The cheermen and policemen receive 5-10% of that sum. In some illegal brothels, owners and pimps usually take 90 per cent of the charge for having sex with child prostitutes. Some of this money is used to pay off the police - usually at around 25%.

Clients also took advantage of sex workers. For an instance, the customers paid for prostituting services, but expected far more than they had paid for. Most interviewees agreed that they faked sex, as the provision of sex work is not restricted to penetration and/or other sex practices; this was possible when clients were drunk. Some interviewees experienced rape, and others sex with more than one man. Intira said that a client in Singapore asked her to do a strip dance and recorded it in pictures without her consent. Almost no interviewees had ever serviced a female customer, though one worked in a-go-go bar and did a lesbian show.

The destruction is that as long as a woman is constrained by people at work, hence payment is not balanced established.⁴¹³ From the interview' result, Juri had to pay the taxi driver \$THB 200 (\$NZD) 10 per customer as a commission if she could not find any. By interviewing with taxi drivers, most of them said that clients sometimes pay them separately but they still required a fee from prostitutes. However, years of experience in the sex business made these interviewed sex workers become more powerful in price negotiation with clients. Condom negotiation is also skilled by years of sex work.

Health context and safe sex practices

Prostitutes usually do go to a doctor, but prefer having a doctor come to work for a free medical check. They are fearful of contracting HIV and other STIs; however; they have no negotiation power to bargain with a customer to use a condom. Most prostitutes favored having doctors or volunteers from health organizations come to educate them about safe sex practices at work (massage parlours or beer bars). Some prostitutes have to go to see doctors themselves but are able to claim this cost from their work.

A few women who work on their own for escort agencies are not supplied with this health check; hence they must budget for their checkup expenses. (Ann and Dalat) Furthermore, some women who trafficked overseas had to pay attention to their own health without any help from their workplace. Former child prostitutes were in worse circumstances, since they were bought in order to sell their virginity and then had to leave. Most of these interviewees are aware of AIDS/HIV and STIs, as friends or colleagues have passed away from these infections. When Buay's friend died because of AIDS, she became more aware of the need for condom use.

Most of these interviewees think about their health and seek medical advice regularly. Some interviewees who have child/children are more concerned about their health than single women without offspring.

⁴¹³ Collins, Patricia H. (1991) *Work, family and Black women's oppression in Black Feminist Thought*, Routledge, USA and England, pp.144-148

From the interviews, client resistance to using a condom is the major obstacle to maintaining safe sex practices. Perception of physical power and the authority to permit or withhold sexual service or profit were determining influences crucial in condom use negotiation.⁴¹⁴ Condoms were mostly men's business. In Asia, such double standard and patriarchy is often accepted that prostitution is the cause of AIDS and STIs, therefore safe sex practice is thoughtless by men.⁴¹⁵ There are irreconcilable costs if prostitutes insist clients use a condom.⁴¹⁶ From the interviews, however, Europeans clients saw condoms as a routine tool of commercial sexual service, more so than Asian male customers did.

To reduce some dangers which these women interviewees were exposed to, by increasing women's capacity to insist on safe sex practices, is not easy. Community education programs do address men's failure to accept responsibility for condom use when seeking the services of sex workers, and are some help to prostitutes.⁴¹⁷

Prostitutes should be able to choose to use a female condom. One interviewee wore a female condom to avoid confrontation with violent customers (Fanny). It is important to have education programs targeted at men in the community to persuade them to accept responsibility for condom use when they go to prostitutes.⁴¹⁸ The response was that condoms were men's business.⁴¹⁹ I add that if prostitutes require contraceptive materials, these must be socially provided free of cost.

Former child prostitutes declared that clients did not use condoms if they knew that a girl was a virgin. These women are at the highest risk of contracting STIs and AIDS. Mocks adds that Thai clients preferred girl prostitutes because of the freed diseases concern.⁴²⁰ The communicable of AIDS, HIV and STIs in Thailand is the

⁴¹⁴ Cusick, L., 'Non-Use of condoms by prostitute women', *AIDS Care*, Carfax Publishing, USA, 2000, Vol.10, No.2, pp. 133-146

⁴¹⁵ Panadam, H. R., An overview of the policies and management of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Thailand and Singapore (Immunie Deficiency), M.P.H., New York Medical College, USA, pp.136-139.

⁴¹⁶ In-depth interviews, discussion with staffs at ECPAT.

⁴¹⁷ Pyett, P.M. and Warr, D.J., 'Vulnerability on the streets: female sex workers and HIV risk', *AIDS Care*, Carfax Publishing, USA, 1999, Vol.9, No.1, pp. 539-547

⁴¹⁸ Pyett, P.M. and Warr, D.J. (1999) Ibid, p.544

⁴¹⁹ Cash, K., et al, 'Understanding the Psychosocial aspects of HIV/AIDS', *Prevention for Northern Thai Single adolescent migratory women workers*, Thailand, 1999, Vol.48, No.2, pp.125-137

⁴²⁰ Mock, E. (1998) *Child Prostitution in Thailand*, Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania, Honors Thesis in International Relations, USA, pp.25-29

condemnations toward clients not sex workers. It is concerned that empowering prostitutes through health context is another important task same as their rights.

Drug and alcohol uses

Prostitutes suffered from drug use; most were driven into the use of drugs by violence at work. Nid used drugs at work and at home. She was forced to take drugs such as marihuana to calm her down and also to make her more focused on work when she was a child prostitute. Tooy admitted that the Japanese Mafia gang, a Yakusa, used drug to turn women into slaves, working them for longer hours. Dara's sister was forced to sell drugs and then was murdered because she tried to run away.

The findings in this thesis and in other research indicate that the problems of AIDS and crime are both associated with drug use. Drugs are described as one of a range of financial pressures, which form the motivational and explanatory basis of undertaking sex work.⁴²¹ Clients want to take drugs, so prostitutes have to provide drugs as a part of their services.⁴²² For an instance, Nid used drugs with clients if she was requested to do so. Nevertheless, the results demonstrate that only a few interviewees used drugs such as marijuana, and then only casually. While western women are inclined to relieve their personal stress by using drugs.⁴²³ Alcohol seems to be the drug of choice for these women sex workers (for example, Aim). Tiaa was addicted to alcohol, and she could not work properly and was rude to clients. She went to a temple to get rid of her dependence on alcohol.

In New Zealand, safe drug use is knowledgeable and trained by sex workers.⁴²⁴ In Thailand safe drug use is overwhelmed as an immoral practice and the initiation of instruction has not been supported by any institution. This thesis's result ascertained that safe drug use should be implemented for Thai sex workers. Accordingly, empowerment of sex workers, similar to a program from NZPC's model, will lessen patriarchal thought to resist the advance of safe drug use.

⁴²¹ McKeganey, N. (1996) *Sex Work on the Streets: Prostitutes and their Clients*, Open University Press, France, p.85

⁴²² Interview with Informants other than participants, a few client and taxi drivers, Pattaya, 24/9/1999.

⁴²³ McKeganey, N. (1996) *Ibid*, pp.65-69

⁴²⁴ Plumridge, L. (2001) *Services and information utilised by female sex workers for sexual and physical safety*, New Zealand Prostitutes Collectives, Wellington, New Zealand.

The effect of sex work

Most participants do not benefit from sex work in the long term. This is true whether they live and work in Thailand, or overseas. Because of social branding, women who do sex work find life stressful, and have difficulty finding work in alternate professions.

Most interviewees indicate that the occupation of sex worker has had broad consequences in their life. The mental effect among these sex workers is one of the significant findings. However, as indicated by some interviewees, the financial resources available through prostitution is their biggest anxiety. In financial terms only, girls and women find prostitution an easy, but not a reliable, way of earning money.

Some women sex workers believe that money is the most important factor in their lives, so the uncomplicated choice is preferred. The simple way for them is to find ideal husbands or partners to support them. Tien was a singer at a café and then she became a mistress of her boss. After having left her boss, she slept with only rich customers for money, but did not think about continuing her singing career.

Because it is simple to rejoin prostitution, a few sex workers are likely to work as amateurs and with breaks. These women sex workers valued marriage as a more secure way to support them. Mail-order brides and/or others try to chance upon affluent partners, with the aim of being supported sufficiently. When marriage failed, some participants went back to prostitution. They indicated that prostitution is a simpler way to earn money, and better than living on a strict budget after separation. Some interviewees gave up sex work while married or engaged to their partners, getting paid only by their husbands. After the divorce, some later did sex work again because they had no other options to earn a living.

As for previous child prostitutes, these women returned to do sex work as the easiest way to flourish. Interviewees who were former child prostitutes revealed that their intention in returning to prostitution was to make enough to live on.

The opportunities in education and training for these poor women are considered a strong influence in their lives in terms of preventing them from being prostitutes. Unluckily, once entered into prostitution, these women sex workers never

have the chance to gain knowledge for skills to do anything other than sex work. Since the answer to their security in finance from sex work is not enough. According to Dalat's discourse,

'I want to show my resume to apply for a job in New Zealand...but it doesn't look good.' (Dalat)

Stamina of sex work

Fewer native Thai women are purposely doing sex work in Thailand, but somehow foreign and child prostitutes are taking their place.⁴²⁵ As revealed from the findings, prostitute interviewees wanted to go to overseas to work. They believed that they were not well-liked in Thailand. Child prostitution is likely to be experienced in brothels, whereas once the child has grown into a mature prostitute, she is more likely to work in establishments such as massage parlours and bars. So in terms of money security, sex work is not steady.

For whatever reason, whether economic or due to family problems, it was not easy for these women interviewees to adapt themselves to other kinds of employment conditions. Some of these interviewees have a reason for continuing in their sex profession, such as to have economic independence. Any unskilled work participants could find would be poorly paid, compared with what they could make as prostitutes. Their plans to leave prostitution often revolve around marriage. According to Dara,

'I knew that I cannot work in a bar all my life, so I joined a mail-order bride agency...I hope I will find a good husband who can look after me well [smile].'

Too many women were working in overseas and expected better payment because of the stronger currency of foreign money. Skrobanek asserts that the franchise of international trafficking and global sex apprenticeship; is the worldwide patriarchal cultural norms that assured male sexual privilege.⁴²⁶ In one case, before Jang came to New Zealand, she went to Taiwan. After one year of working in a massage parlour, she

⁴²⁵ Hanenberg, R. and Rojanapithayakorn, W., Changes in prostitution and the AIDS epidemic in Thailand, *AIDS Care*, 1999, Vol.10, pp. 69-79

⁴²⁶ Skrobanek, S. (1997) *Strategies Against Trafficking in Prostitution: The case of Thailand*, The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), Bangkok, p.96

left. Tooy had to suffer a lower standard of work conditions in Japan, but stayed there because she believed that she could not do sex work when she got older. She then planned to go to Germany to do sex work subsequently.

Earnings, saving and remittances

Most sex traders searched for young girls and women who appear vulnerable from poor villages, and urban streets.⁴²⁷ Girls and women tended to receive only 10% of the money paid when their parents, relatives or friends sold them to agents, who brought them to a brothel. Findings illustrated that most elder women prostitutes working in a massage parlour, they are inclined to obtain fair payment. Though the commission is still deducted by persons in charge such as a mamasang, a bar owner and/or a cheerman. Occasionally, clients sometimes took prostitutes out and paid \$THB 500-15,000 in maximum(\$NZD 25-1,000) for a short/long trip. If women or girls are popular, they can earn up to \$THB 15,000 (\$NZD 750) a week, paid only by clients.

The prices of the sexual services provided by girls and women prostitutes are set by agents and workplace owners. The working hours and the assortment and number of customers depend on the boss or the manager of the workplace. This custom relies on the negotiation of the price according to the buying capacity of the clients. Most women and girls who work in the red light districts get their own wages and commissions from bar owners. Juri said that her boss had a taxi driver who worked to get customers, and was paid by a commission deducted from the prostitutes' wages. The owner of the place Ratana worked for paid the police for reasons of security.

The findings show that most prostitutes had to support their family/relations. Nid spent most of her money on keeping her younger boyfriend. Some women interviewees put money into saving for their children (Orn). Not many prostitutes invested money into businesses, other than Tong, who opened a bar in Pattaya, and Nida, who opened a salon in her province with financial assistance from her Dutch boyfriend.

⁴²⁷ Shamin, I., *Trafficking in Women and Girls for Prostitution: Bangladesh Perspective*, paper presented at the parallel sessions, Child Sexual Exploitation – Trafficking Session – 1, 15 November 1996.

Participants spent their own money on their transport, alcohol and leisure (often this included gambling). The workplace proprietors and/or customers usually paid for food and belongings. The findings illustrate how foreign men, such as Japanese or Europeans, paid better money and provided the women with more luxuries than Thai men did.

Financial circumstances after entering the sex industry

Most interviewees agreed that prostitution only improved their financial circumstances erratically. This stemmed from exploitation by others in the sex industry. The places of work determined their level payment. Sex workers who worked in a massage parlour or a-go-go bar were paid differently from prostitutes who worked in indirect sex businesses. Prostitutes who worked in escort agencies were more likely to earn a regular income.

The longer a participant has worked in the sex trade, the more likely it is that she will be denied work in other kinds of professions. This leads to disinclination towards moving into other industries. In addition, a number of participants worried that other types of work would not be financially viable.

'I think I would be poorer than now if I didn't do sex work, however I am not sure what will happen in the future... [silence]... I might be poorer or richer'. (Tong)

'I don't have any other skilled work and it is too late to go back to study.' (Tien)

'I wish I would win big prizes from the casino or [NZ] Lotto [lotteries] which I buy every week, so I don't have to do sex work [laugh].' (Aim)

For women who have left the sex industry, their financial futures are uncertain. Ann was undecided about continuing her teaching career when she reflected on what she could earn from sex work in Japan. Most prostitutes who have returned from trafficking to developed countries do seek to go again. Orn went to the Netherlands for one year to do sex work, later planning to go to Australia or New Zealand to do more sex work. Interviewees who were former prostitutes may go back to sex work if they become divorced, as many are left with no resources after separating from husbands. These women sex workers are entrapped by the destruction of marriage through mail-order brides which is similar to prostitution. Since there is no guarantee of financial

support like money from sex work. According to Dang, she said 'I considered marriage from the mail-order brides is like buying a lottery; the chance was 50/50'.

Calamity in life and sex work

The label of a prostitute is seen as a social stigma by these sex workers. The years of sex work have somewhat affected the mental stability of these women. Tiaa has been working in the sex industry for 11 years; on and off; she became alcoholic and bankrupt.

Prostitution does not always generate profit for these women, as they had other people to support as well as having deductions made from their wages. Tiaa paid for luxury items such as cars and overseas trips for her brothers and sisters; her brothers did not finish their degrees and became addicted to drugs. Nid loved her teenage boyfriend and would do anything for him, including buying him anything he wanted. Nida went to Germany to work; there she had 50% deducted from her after tax wages.

Worries of sex workers

Worries of sex workers is different other than family's responsibility. For one consideration, most prostitutes suffered from the label of being a sex worker in their private life. Ann had broken up with former boyfriends because they found out that she was doing sex work. Dalat did not want her boyfriend's family in New Zealand to know that she was doing sex work, because he might not marry her. The visa status in overseas countries is also the major concern that driven them to seek marriage in order to obtain the legal residency.

Some participants had experiences of physical, mental or sexual assault by their stepfathers, employers and/or clients. Interviews with staff of the Children Right's Protection Foundation show how important money is for these sex workers. Children who lost their virginity at a very early age through sex with older male clients tended to have low self-esteem and were easily lured into prostitution once they grew up. The women interviewed told extraordinary but true stories of being sold into the sex trade by their own parents and close relatives.

In addition, these women do not voluntarily choose to torture with this situation but they are coerced, or concluded completely into the sex trade by the double standard in Thailand. Rung was paid for by her first client, who raped her. She could not go to the police because her parents needs the money.

Abuse experiences

Previous sexual violence did not turn these participants to sex work; but most were abused after entering sex work. Most prostitutes were raped by their first clients. Nid was raped in a car by a driver who had taken her and the other girls to do sex work in a brothel. Oom was raped by her first client.

There is significant agreement that child prostitutes who entered the sex industry at an early age were generally forced to do so.⁴²⁸ The extent of other violence in the lives of these women, coupled with the effects of sexual assaults, is part of the reason for psychological damage to these interviewees. Psychological factors, such as the Thai cultural belief in the significance of virginity, and guilt over being sexually abused and assaulted, with no payment, are somehow involved in causing participants to move into and stay in the sex trade.

These women considered unwanted free sex with terrible clients or their partner to be offensive. Aim said:

'I have had too many abusive relationships...my first boyfriend was a pimp and my ex husband is a rapist...he forced me to have sex with him even when I was sick and had my period.'

Many interviewees were raped by their first clients or even by their own husbands. In Thailand, they were also abused sexually by clients but were unable to seek justice because they were prostitutes. Buay was assaulted by her stepfather. She defended herself and went to stay with a friend who was a sex worker. Buay then decided to work in a massage parlour. Joi was mistreated by her uncle-in-law, because he said she was the daughter of a sex worker. Ann was working as a waitress in a restaurant and the owner attempted to sexually abuse her because he thought she was

⁴²⁸ Narvesen, O. (1989) *The sexual exploitation of children in developing countries*, Redd Barna, Norway, p.46

not a virgin. No one went to the police to get the complaint since they are aware that they are powerless. I implement that feminist service for rape crisis centers, must be designed to respond to women's needs in ways patriarchal institutions would. The women see sex work in New Zealand as more decent because of more equal treatment from clients.

Arrest and the law

As I have explained, some types of commercial sex enterprises in Thailand are legal and licensed, such as massage parlours. However, soliciting is unlawful. Some of these women sex workers paid corrupt policemen as a protection. Tong paid policemen who came to her bar, in order to keep trouble-free at her work.

Some interviewees were rescued while they were child prostitutes in a brothel, but later went back to do sex work. Arrest by police gave the false impression of detention to save face. The attentive following of these women's lives after arrest is not yet known. Rung was once raped and forced to do sex work when she was under age. She was rescued by the police and was sent to rehabilitation. Rung later went to work for a bar in Pat Pong to earn money because only handicraft training was provided at the rehabilitation centre. She was not good at handicraft, so she returned to sex work.

Sex workers usually changed their identity because of unwanted recognition by people and illegal activities. Dara killed her sister's boyfriend after he raped her and killed her sister. She planned to go to Germany on her faked passport. The girls are told they must work to pay back their plane fare, food, and lodging. If they are caught trying to escape, they are tortured and killed. Thai prostitutes, trying to escape, killed three of their overseers.⁴²⁹ Police corruption in the area makes these practices more possible. Since they are not sympathised with the prostitutes for a fair treatment. From the interview, Aim's friends killed the mamasang as a self-defense, however they were sentenced to life in prison. Another case is that Hope knew about the incident of prostituted being killed in Japan but she still wanted to go to do sex work in Japan.

⁴²⁹ Shamin, I. (1996) *Ibid*, pp.25-29

Suicide

What the participants had to say about suicide is disturbing, as **all** of them admit that they have thought about committing suicide and **some** have tried to do this. The reasons are partly from economic causes, but are mostly concerned with their relationships and with being looked down on as prostitutes.

'I did try to cut my arm so many times but I did not die....since I have been going to the temple more often these days...I'm aware that it was a sin (in Buddhism).' (Tiaa)

Some women sex workers continuously thought about suicide, but worry about their support to their family or loved ones stopped them killing themselves.

'Sometimes I have a really bad day...and I think that what have I done in my last life...that makes me think about leaving this world... [silence]... but I don't want to leave my daughter alone.' (Tuui)

Marriage to a foreigner: a long break from prostitution

In Thailand, most participants married their first husbands when they were young through the arrangement of their parents. All were later divorced, widowed or abandoned. After the divorce, participants were not supported financially, and suffered emotionally as well. All of these interviewees are heterosexual. Some were married as young as 14 years old to men who were between 10-30 years older than themselves.

The women who were separated or divorced have not received alimony or other resources. In some cases, they had to pay off the debt their husbands built. Most participants believed that losing their virginity meant they were not worth as much as ordinary women.

Some women ran away from their home in Thailand to live with a boyfriend in Bangkok, because customary beliefs did not allow for a couple to cohabit before marriage. These interviewees decided to do sex work, reasoning that they had already lost their virginity, so it did not matter as much if they did sex work. Others were already going through abusive relationships in which they were not getting paid for sex.

In New Zealand, eight women interviewees in New Zealand are either divorced or plan to separate from their New Zealand/foreign husband, and afterward have entered or intend to enter the New Zealand sex trade. Most of these interviewees met their husbands as mail-order brides. The oldest age among these husbands is 71. These women are completely dependent while married to their New Zealand husbands.

Some participants are living with their Thai or foreign boyfriend, and some are engaged. The belief among these participants is that a 'farang' boyfriend (a European) treats them better than a Thai boyfriend/husband. Some interviewees have a relationship with someone who was once a client. Most boyfriends are foreigners who support these interviewees financially; some partners later became business partners too. Nearly all interviewees who are living in a de facto relationship (living together but not married) did not tell their boyfriend that they are/were prostitutes. (Ann)

Most of these women are or had at some time been mistresses of rich businessmen, and providentially, some had improved their finances through being a mistress. This is why they remained faithful to their partner, preferring to have only one man to support them economically, at least for a period of time. Ratana planned to marry her partner; even so, she is a mistress since the marriage would be ineffective if found out:

'I wanted to marry Michael⁴³⁰ ...but that woman [his wife] did not want him to leave her...and he said she was very sick...I think if I marry him in Thailand...she will not know [smile]...it should be okay...to do that.' (Ratana)

Most later married to older men because of the lure of inheritance's promise. However, unfortunately the sex exploitation in marriage is additional contingency from foreign men. The vicious cycle is that violence and exploitation in marriage became the chief factor; influence⁴³¹nced any women under patriarchal effects to be explicated inside social subclass. For example, after two years of marriage, Dang asked for a divorce, but she cancelled to fight for half of her husband's property

⁴³⁰ A pseudonym name.

⁴³¹ Bell, L. (1987) *Good girls/bad girls: feminists and sex trade workers face to face*, Seal Press, USA, pp.15-19

because of a New Zealand citizenship. Later, he married with a Philippines woman from a mail-order-bride agency.

Counterfeit mail-order brides: for love or money?

As we can see from the current situation and future direction of these women, mail-order brides came to New Zealand with the hope of better living. The sex workers interviewed in Thailand were usually trafficked or exported to first world countries as prostitutes before joining a mail-order bride agency. A certain degree of correlation between this trend and the international out-migration of poor women has become a significant global problem.⁴³²

For most sex workers, the overseas trip meant a lot to them. They loved to travel and the overseas work trip implied better money because of a stronger currency. To become more acceptable in Thai society, they would learn to speak foreign languages (especially English). The attractiveness of money over affection is connected with their decisions about marriage. Jang, who married a 52-year-old New Zealander, said that she could not wait to get her matrimonial inheritance. Puke believed that Thai men are worse than foreign men are, so she joined the mail-order brides. After Rung married a 56-year-old New Zealander, she specified (at the interview) that she wanted him to pass away so she could get half of the money he owns.

Most interviewees stated that they suffered in their marriage. Five of the interviewees, Tiaa, Intira, Aim, Tuui, Dang, who were mail-order brides in New Zealand are now divorced and have not been given support after the separation. Jang and Oom are not content with their married life as their finances are controlled by their husbands. Other mail-order brides who were married to foreigners other than New Zealanders (such as Jieb) experienced similar circumstances.

Juum and Tien were planning to separate from their husbands. Both of them suffered from their husbands' behavior toward them, such as little or no income support.

⁴³² Skrobanek, S. (1997) *Strategies Against Trafficking in Prostitution: The case of Thailand*, The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), Bangkok, p.98

'My husband wanted sex all the time every day...even though he still goes to a massage parlour.' (Juum)

'I did not know the word "whore"...until I asked my friend, so I know that they [her husband's family] called me Kari [whore] in English.' (Tien)

Those who split with their partners later went back to doing sex work in New Zealand.

How Thai women sex workers came to New Zealand

Women interviewees usually trafficked to New Zealand as their second or third travel destination. Nok and Nuna were illegally trafficked to work in a massage parlour in New Zealand. Nok later married an Australian man and gained permanent residency. Nuna was working illegally (at the time of the interview). Dalat came to visit her friend and overstayed her visa. The lives of these three women are different from mail-order brides in New Zealand. They thought provision of sex work was better in New Zealand than in Thailand, but they were expected to be compliant with their earnings.

The lack of confidence for Dalat and Nuna was much higher than it was for mail-order brides who obtained a permanent residency or citizenship in New Zealand. They are worried about their immigration status and living here illegally. Nuna wanted to marry her boyfriend so she can live lawfully in New Zealand, but Dalat loved her boyfriend and wished to be with him for that reason.

The interview findings indicate that prostitutes who are trafficked to overseas are liable to stay less than 1-2 years because of those countries' migration rules. As a result, becoming a mail-order bride seems to be the best substitute for trafficking. However, most Thai mail-order bride participants declared that they did not marry their foreign husbands with the aim of doing sex work afterward.

Life abroad: did it bring security?

The money they could earn in the sex trade abroad was not always high. The living standard is better than the life in Thailand though most were alcoholic and addicted to gambling. Since these women's experience of trafficking abroad to do sex work revealed that some women were trafficked to other countries excluding New Zealand to

do sex work for less than 2 years. Such Orn hardly spent anything she earned in the Netherlands so that her daughter could receive her money monthly.

The deductions made from the wages of women sex workers by their overseas managers are large. Most of these people are men, including both bisexual and homosexual men. The maximum percentage taken from earnings was 70% such as Panna, Nuna, Fanny' cases by managers or owners of massage parlour. The minimum was 50% such as Nid's stories in Germany and Ann in an escort agency.

When sex traffickers arrange for sex workers to go overseas, the debt has to be paid off (unless these women paid for their own trip). At this point, these women sex workers have to pay for the arrangement through deductions from their income (between 15 and 40%, which is regarded as considerate by traffickers). Not many Thai women sex traffickers or owners of sex businesses are alone in this industry, as they have partners who usually are foreigners. In Panna's case, she developed herself into a sex trafficker with her Taiwanese boyfriend.

Most sex workers joined mail-order-bride businesses in order to travel overseas and find a good foreign husband, as they had been disappointed by Thai men in the past. However, the results indicate that their vision of getting an idyllic husband as a mail-order bride was not usually fulfilled. Some interviewees were not supported by their well-off partners, and they later got divorced. On the other hand, a few prostitutes themselves became traffickers, exporting women from their neighborhoods to overseas, or else beginning their own business in the sex industry. (Panna, Tong, Nida, Ratana)

Lifestyle in New Zealand

When analysed most participants in New Zealand, they experienced language and cultural barriers to communication more than the poor condition of sex work. They are obsessed with the casino and gambling as a stress relief. Therefore, most interviewees have Thai friends, who are also sex workers who are gambling addicted. Most of these sex workers spent less in New Zealand on clothes or food, but more on gambling or alcohol. Intira said that she wanted to spend money in Thailand so she tried to save money in New Zealand; but it was hard because she loved gambling.

Most of the interviewees have stumbled upon racism in New Zealand and in other countries as well, mostly from a husband's family. Nok moved to Australia because she did not like New Zealand; she experienced racism in hearing from her husband's parents that only people who speak English deserve to live in New Zealand. Juum said that New Zealand men love Asian women because of their submissive and obedient personality. Dang bitterly stated that her husband's family told her that every Thai woman is poor and all are prostitutes. Jieb married an Australian man and experienced racism in Australia. Puke, who went to work in Germany, said that she felt unwelcome.

The results from the interviews point toward the plan of these Thai women sex workers to rebuild themselves again in prostitution. Most women who were single joined the mail-order brides business or would try to travel again to do sex work in different countries.

'I am not sure what to do next...I will join a mail-order bride agency...I want to have a rich husband.' (Pueng)

'I'm worried about my daughter...I am not certain how much I will make next time I go overseas to work again.' (Orn)

'If I divorce, I will go back to do sex work...I don't care anymore.' (Tien)

'If I go to Japan, I will earn more than teaching in Thailand...but I don't know for how long.' (Ann)

The life in New Zealand illustrated that the strength of health and human's right context made these women sex workers simply desire to live and work in New Zealand. Few sex workers wanted to live in Thailand, but women sex workers in New Zealand hope they can go back to live in Thailand when they are older. Especially, those who have child/children are concerned with financial security and having the strength to support their family.

'I want to go back home to Thailand but I want to make money in New Zealand first...I would hate to go back to work as a cashier in a supermarket in Thailand.' (Nuna)

The economic trap of Thai women sex workers

The significant finding explains that most interviewees habitually work on and off in prostitution, which prevents them from permanently leaving prostitution. In most cases,

women prostitutes in New Zealand revealed that they entered prostitution again after their marriage failed, on account of the inequitable behavior of their husbands/partners.

These participants did not become mail-order brides with the intention of doing sex work afterward. They had to do sex work because they believed that it was too difficult for them to get money after the separation through the justice system. Their feelings about their former lives as prostitutes meant that they were too frightened to dispute their unjust divorce settlements.

The interviews show that the majority of prostitutes have suffered emotionally from doing sex work. They try to alleviate their mental and emotional problems though spending money on gambling. Some exhausted their funds by as much as \$NZD 1,000 a night in the casino. All revealed that sex work has not brought them economic security, but has been emotionally shocking for them. They believe that they have virtually no chance of getting out of prostitution through improving their knowledge and skills to undertake another career. All interviewees agreed that what they need is one affluent partner. Those who were divorced and had gone back to prostitution are/were disillusioned and disappointed about their position.

Furthermore, Thai women sex workers reflected on the financial strain and traps of sex exploitation of patriarchal power before and after prostitution. Jeffreys indicates that the drawback of women with economic, political and sexual incapacity constructed the sex exploitation of prostitution.⁴³³ In the Thai economic context, female subordination in patriarchal Thai society has coerced poor and working class Thai women sex workers with one career discretionary of sex work.⁴³⁴ I agreed that 'women rights' are able to influence situation in global circulation, to accept an understanding of Thai, Asian and western prostitution in line with the standard strengthening equality over global prostitution.

Conclusion

This chapter elaborates on the findings and expands more on the details given by participants in interviews. The next step in the lives of these sex workers is challenging

⁴³³ Jeffreys, S. (1997) *The idea of prostitution*, Spinifex Press, Australia, pp.71-74

⁴³⁴ Brock, R. N., *Casting stones: prostitution and liberation in Asia*, Norton, USA, 1995, pp.22-28

to foresee. The results illuminate the impasses in the lives of participants, demonstrating that the effects of prostitution were more often negative than positive.

Some of these interviewees retain permanent New Zealand residency; consequently, they have more choices than prostitutes in Thailand. To get this advantage, a few interviewees have stayed with their foul husbands to fulfil their desire to reside in New Zealand. Bearing out their perceptions, it is clear that the rights of the prostitutes whom I interviewed in New Zealand are to a great extent better than those of the sex workers I interviewed in Thailand.

The sex workers interviewed in Thailand endure much worse conditions, both in their sex work and in their ability to earn a living wage. Most former child prostitutes returned to sex work but did not succeed. Thus a good number of participants in Thailand sought to leave and do sex work overseas, for example in Japan and Germany, with dreams of enhancing their living standards - though regrettably, this did not ensue.

This thesis is based on interviews with individual prostitutes. It appears that all has faced with various kinds of abuse. Their strategies for getting out of poverty have not been effective. The findings indicate that catastrophic experiences in sex work did not stop participants from doing sex work; conversely, it caused them to relocate, to leave Thailand to do sex work abroad or to marry, not to leave sex work. Improving the civil liberties of Thai women prostitutes is not seen as useful, as they suppose that this would never come to pass in the bigoted Thai society. The thoughts of these interviewees about society and policy on prostitution and its effect are prolonged that these sex workers have not thought much about it since they got no hope that one day they will be treated equally by men.

Part VII: Overall Conclusion

CHAPTER ELEVEN

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

In order to increase the establishment and protection of the rights of poor and working class Thai women sex workers, it is desired that this thesis provides insight into situations causing Thai women to enter prostitution, enabling other researchers to further the theme of improving Thai women sex workers' lives. In this final chapter, I make recommendations about what urgently needs to be done to improve the situation of Thai women prostitutes and make suggestions for future investigation or research.

The findings

The interviews with a total of thirty women, who are former and in most cases also current prostitutes in New Zealand and Thailand. These Thai women prostitutes are mainly from poor and working class backgrounds. The findings indicate that poverty is the major factor behind their entry into prostitution. The thesis conclusions demonstrate that Thai women sex workers encounter tremendous difficulties from engaging sex work. However, most interviewees have not obtained an improved financial situation from doing sex work. Most suffered by greediness of people involved in the sex industry. This is a corrupt succession within male prejudice as the pattern of economic trap of prostitution. As Jeffreys implies that patriarchal values reinforced the virtue of the life of a woman to keep the respect of the men in the society while men condemned women for being social and economic susceptible.⁴³⁵

Many men in the sex business have more control over their payment. These include bosses (mamasangs or owners of sex establishments), trafficking agents and relatives. The fallaciousness of improving their economic resources through prostitution in Thailand caused these women to relocate themselves, typically to first world countries. Becoming a mail-order bride is recognised as an alternative way to leave

prostitution and live overseas. However, most mail-order bride interviewees had experienced unsuccessful marriage and economic dependence on their New Zealand partners; they therefore returned to doing sex work. Nevertheless, the financial situation of interviewees in New Zealand has become slightly better, when compared with participants in Thailand.

A number of interviewees had been or intend to be trafficked to other countries apart from New Zealand, but usually for a short time only, of no more than two years. Some interviewees liberated themselves intermittently from sex work, but only when they had partners to assist their financial situation.

Validation

Female poverty induced these women prostitutes doubtlessly to be targeted for indecent condition of sex work. Poverty is also the main reason that made these participants accept their regretful circumstances. The dependency relationship with the corrupted authorities should be addressed first in steps to alleviate the problems which sex workers face in Thailand. It is unusual for Thai women prostitutes to work by themselves. Methods of entry to the sex industry revealed by interviewees vary, but supporting friends or families is the major motivation, and sometimes women are also literally forced to do sex work.

Before and after engaged in the sex industry, these poor and working class Thai women were put up with unpleasant work and living conditions in Thailand connected to sex exploitation and female subordination. Patriarchy is ubiquitously combined within ideological context in Thai society.⁴³⁵ Though prostitution is not only the easy and only option but also is the economic entrapment as occupation provided by most men. The major pressure on them is the prevalent fear of not being able to earn enough to cover the cost of their own, their children's and their families' needs, rather than any assessment of their own torment as sex workers.

⁴³⁵ Jeffreys, S. (1997) *The idea of prostitution*, Spinifex Press, Australia, pp.26-48

⁴³⁶ Lewis, N. (1999) *Thai-ed up, un-Thai-ed: Toward a genealogy of Thai-western relations*, Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, Canada, pp.89-95

Though most sex worker participants considered giving up sex work in Thailand, either by becoming a mail-order bride or by being trafficked illegally to another country. Their choices of continuing sex work are determined by the demands to support their families. In spite of this, the financial security of the majority of women prostitute interviewed is extremely precarious. Materialism plays a significant role in the sex workers' family since the money in prostitution is considered as easy come for the family.

Predictably, the ambitions of participants were similar, centering on their wish of marriage to a wealthy husband, sustaining the economy of their families and child/children or founding businesses. The vast demands on them to support their families are the cause that coerces these sex workers to continue their sex work. Their materialist beliefs are based on the ongoing pressures of these domestic forces. As daughters, the pressure to earn an increasing amount of money from sex work is the broad basic reason explaining the distressing consequences in the lives of these participants. A small number of participants themselves became sex traffickers selling other women for money and opened a bar in Pattaya, classically with support from their male partners or spouses.

Positive gains

When I interviewed these Thai women sex workers, I perceived that the alternative of prostitution is not an alluring one. The debasing nature of being a sex worker, for most Thai working class women, is the effect of their inferior economic security. Another consequence to emerge from the interviews is the difficulty caused by the fact that both the men in their lives and their loved ones, such as family members, have intimidated them.

Although most participants' stories stated that they were originally forced to do sex work, later they decided to do sex work for financial reasons. They blamed themselves for being abused, because of their label, 'Thai sex workers'. Thai women prostitutes are not comparable to some Thai women in other occupations, who calculatingly set out to gain money, because the belief that prostitution is degrading is imposed on Thai women prostitutes as a form of guilt. Hence they feel they must accept being seen as degraded, because they chose to continue in or return to prostitution.

It seems that all participants recognise the reality of Thailand's system of social order. Because this thesis is pragmatic, the interview process allowed interviewees to be frank about their circumstances. The disgrace of sex work is the uncommon aspect of the dilemma in the lives of these interviewees.

As a Thai feminist, I see Thai culture in a pragmatic way. Prostitution is the form of humiliation in Thai society that Thai women are directly affected by. The occupation of sex worker offers negative gains in a positive way for men.

Though there is still no perfect solution to deal with the sexual exploitation issue of these poor and working class Thai women sex workers. But the three feminist waves in New Zealand are one of the examples of the Western world's history of women rights.⁴³⁷ In my experience of living in New Zealand for several years, equal rights in that country are of average standard. In terms of education, this provides a positive basis for analysing and advancing ideas about Thai women and their women's rights.

Doing this can be very complicated in a society based on a rigid belief in the inferiority of women and the superiority of men. Thai mores require the involvement of males and the attribute of maleness at every level of power.⁴³⁸ This study presents a convincing case for the concept that Thai society shares the culpability for prostitution, while simultaneously reproaching prostitutes as indecent. Nothing has yet altered this situation. Most poor and working class Thai women also suffered by double standard in society before and after entered sex work. Yet the empowerment of women is the chief requirement for the unique social project of gender equality that all Thais must maintain if this situation is to change. Despondently, I cannot see any possibility of change under traditional Thai mores.

The rights of women in New Zealand can be regarded as privileged when compared with their status in Thailand. Nevertheless, most participants have very poor abilities in language communication and they have no acquaintance with or sources of

⁴³⁷ Dunstall, E. (1997) *I am a feminist, but the meaning and relevance of feminism to young women in the 1990s*, M.A. applied for Social Work, Victoria University of Wellington, pp.78-81

⁴³⁸ Goolsby, R. (1994) *The impact of Waged labor and Access to education on women's lives and family roles in a provincial capital town in north-eastern Thailand*, Ph.D. Dissertation, UCLA, USA, pp.96-98

support in New Zealand culture. They prefer to stay with their abusive partners or exhaust their savings on gambling and alcohol.

Most prostitutes are left with few choices and many of them re-enter the sex profession again. Sending income to families is obligatory. The New Zealand Prostitutes Collective is the organisation that most Thai prostitutes view as containing people in New Zealand who care about them, but it does not protect them from customers. However, in New Zealand, unlike in Thailand, most sex workers are not ranked in a hierarchy of prostitutes.

Another concern in Thailand's sex industry is health education. Thai women prostitutes initially are not well enough informed about the danger of customers refusing to use condoms. Although a free condom supply for sex businesses has been established in Thailand, the unequal relations of gender make it particularly difficult for most Thai women prostitutes to initiate or negotiate safer sex practices. The negative effects of this situation, which clients cause, can be explained by the double standard in Thailand.

Violence against prostitutes is viewed as normal in Thailand, where abstract ideas about sex and women's sexual rights have been reduced to the issues of consent or force. Most sex workers are unfairly treated through social discrimination, and are normally abused. They carry a negative meaning, as part of maintaining the boundaries between 'good' and 'bad' women. One of the best ways to prevent crime against these Thai women prostitutes is to contribute to the development of economic independence and introduce the assistance of the feminist movement to advantage them. So, as well as dealing with the position of women in politics, economics, and culture, society should offer assistance which will meet the needs of these Thai women sex workers to be treated equally.

The most interesting point from the interview results is the indication that it is unnecessary to discipline prostitutes. There is clearly a need for a better balance between clients and prostitutes. Consequently, Thai women sex workers require equal power to negotiate their sex transactions.

Comprehensive evaluation

The first four parts of this report focus on generation of goals, assessment of prior research papers, thesis assumptions, the constraints of the study, and the means and methodology.

The preliminary goal is to empower poor and working class Thai prostitutes, who are the topic of this thesis, and to let them speak for themselves. Other research was summarised to show the uniqueness of this study. Feminist theories and methodologies were also summarised, since they are the mainstays of the thesis. The methodology was outlined to illuminate the development of my own understanding. Thai feminist methodology was then outlined in terms of how it was to be applied to the analysis of the subject studied.

The following sections cover the implications of this thesis. I hope that the clarification of my ideas will demonstrate their innovatory aspects. The answers to my research questions go well beyond the causes and effects of female poverty in Thailand. The combination of results from other studies and my own feminist viewpoint has led me to study the inferior social and financial position of a group of real women, providing new insights. The way in which the process and outcomes were conceived led to the conclusion that it was crucial to empower the subjects under discussion.

The results of this study have borne out the assumptions outlined in earlier chapters. The difficulties that these interviewed sex workers have faced and continue to face demonstrate the low level of mental and economic security and stability of poor and working class Thai girls and women prostitutes. The interpretation of the findings shows the common consequences of their sex work, and the context in which it is done, in the lives of individual prostitutes.

In New Zealand, as the interviews show, the human rights of these women are more respected than in Thailand. Nevertheless, most men in their lives have behaved badly and unjustly toward them. The dilemma is that the longing to advance their economic situation by doing sex work has, sooner or later, left them financially vulnerable and uniquely exposed to market forces. Throughout this study, the *origin of their predicament* is the imperative force that has degraded the lives of these Thai

women prostitutes, rather than any sense of degradation stemming from sex work itself. I believe that the lack of empowerment of all Thai women, including Thai prostitutes, has always been the central problem, given that Thai culture is so discriminatory.

Implications for future research

Here I give suggestions for future research. It is my hope that this thesis provides insights into the situations causing some Thai women to enter, remain in and/or return to prostitution, which I hope will enabling future researchers to further the theme of improving Thai women sex workers' lives. The thesis findings demonstrate that Thai women sex workers face tremendous difficulties from engaging in sex work. I hope that further investigation will help to increase the assurance of the rights of these women.

I also advocate doing research on the position of other Asian prostitutes in New Zealand. It would be interesting to learn if there are similarities in the lives of other Asian women sex workers who pass through New Zealand. This outcome could be compared with the findings of this study, to give a more complete picture of the economic struggles of Asian women sex workers.

Another interesting study could be an analysis of Thai middle-class and student women prostitutes who go abroad on legal travel permits, such as student or work permits. The results from this study could provide insight into some reasons why Thai middle-class women and female students travel to developed countries. But the differences in economic status are bound to reveal alternate reasons for entering the sex industry.

Positively, research on the contribution of Thai women business owners in the sex industry would give more insight into women's ability to earn from dealing in sexual services in this way, as bosses themselves. What the consequences are of a shift in the financial control of sex workers from men to women would be extremely interesting to investigate. The substitution of other professions for poor and working class girls and women in Thailand after sex work would also be well worth researching, with the potential power to confirm that there are other ways for these women to prosper, and encourage the growth of such options. One way or another, these areas of research would contribute to the objective of women's empowerment as individuals.

The efficiency of women's liberation in Thailand

Any attempt to revolutionise Thai society, in terms of its mores and the traditional beliefs of the Thai people, is a complex and difficult matter for Thai women to negotiate openly. The unfeasibility of any transformation leading to women's liberation in Thai culture is obvious. Another issue is that of the significance of virginity. Most Thai men and women are opposed to the 'free sex' concept now widely current in western society. The majority of Thai women from any social rank are therefore satisfied with their secondary status.

In an ideal Thailand, equal rights would be recognised. Studies in the future should confer equal rights on their prostitute subjects in order to empower them. Sex work should be researched as an occupation in ways which correspond to Thai feminist research. Feminist methodology is not rigid, and researchers should avoid blindness towards 'other' women.⁴³⁹ It is important to be careful about comparing Thai women with those from other countries. Studies of the results of the various 'waves' of feminism feature aspects affecting women such as maternal leave, help for breastfeeding, support for single mothers, student allowances and loans, the position of de facto wives, the position of homosexuals, and free health provision for prostitutes.⁴⁴⁰ The ways in which feminism has achieved such advances are helpful to apply to studies of Thai women subjects and their issues.

The issue of male-dominated culture in Thailand

Thai women's opposition to feminism is supposed to be as much of an impediment as that of Thai men. Therefore, studies of male and female views on the prostitution issue are suggested. Hopefully, future research will show whether and why Thai women are hostile to Thai prostitutes and to improvements on their situation.

Consequently, it is suggested that feminist researchers should involve the issue of desires and plans for change in women's situation in any research dealing with gender issues in Thailand. It is to be hoped that it will prove possible to discuss how

⁴³⁹ Harding, S. (1987) Introduction: Is there a feminist method, in S.Harding (Ed.) *Feminism and Methodology*, Social Science Issues, pp.4-12

feminist movements can make headway, not only in Thailand's current reality, but also in academic circles.

another intriguing area for feminist research. While such prostitutes are a small minority, their contribution to society could be significant.

The trafficking of these middle class and student prostitutes is also complex, requiring researchers to delve into their motivations for being trafficked and the patterns they follow. The lives of these largely invisible prostitutes can provide useful enlightenment on the economic situation of Thai women generally. It is possible that these women do not have a much better standard of living than working class prostitutes, because of the gender injustice do in Thai society.

The participation of Thai women proprietors in the sex businesses

Feminist research into this issue would provide very interesting insights into the causes and consequences of ownership and control of sex businesses by women. This study's findings support the conclusion that selling the sexual services of Thai girls and women, both in Thailand and abroad, has grown to such an extent because it is characteristically men who control women prostitutes. Not only as owners, but also as cheermen, policemen, managers and/or negotiators, men dominate all the major roles in the sex businesses.

Feminist researchers have the ability to analyse changes in the gender of those who control prostitutes. The position of Thai women as proprietors in the New Zealand sex trade should be evaluated, along with the actual impact of this change. The forces which may be leading to increasing power to compel women's contributions should also be studied. Both qualitative and quantitative research is required. The issue of whether and how former prostitutes become proprietors or play other roles in the network of sex trade control also requires investigation.

Work alternatives for poor and working class Thai girls and women

Feminist researchers could employ effective methods of finding options other than sex work. The underlying assumption should be that Thai women working class prostitutes can attain the skills required to do other jobs. This research, besides, needs to be multidisciplined, and both qualitative and quantitative.

Feminist research methods will be appropriate to deal with these topics. For example, interviewing former prostitutes would bring forward answers as to how sex workers acquire the skills and confidence to make a fresh start in other work. A comparison of the economic circumstances of sex work and other professions undertaken by these women should be an integral part of such research.

Conclusion

This chapter covers the implications for future research, which could beneficially use and arise from the findings of this thesis. It is hoped that the implications will be taken into account by feminist and non-feminist researchers, whether Thai or others.

This thesis shows the magnitude of the problems involved in, and the solution to, the quandary of prostitutes. The interview findings substantiate the conclusion that poor and working class Thai women prostitutes have not gained positively from sex work, but instead experienced such hardship from prostitution in Thailand that they became determined to leave their country. The solution arising from this study does not rely on finding other choices of vocation or assistance in migrating to New Zealand. Instead the essential issue is how to promote the rights of these women.

The lives of Thai prostitutes are an incredibly broad and varied topic for feminists to study. However, any study of prostitutes can become non-feminist research if the subjects studied are not empowered sufficiently. So another purpose of this study is to demonstrate Thai feminist methodology.

All Thai women prostitutes need a code of equal rights, gender equity and choices for their lives. All Thai and other feminists want to see adequate power given to prostitutes. In order to do this, the vicious circle afflicting Thai women prostitutes in the sex trade must be diminished or removed. Future research should deal with how this is to be done.

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(All names are pseudonyms)

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Buay	21 September 1999	Chester's Grill Fast Food in Department Store Bangkok, Thailand
Dara	18 January 2000	KFC, Pattaya, Thailand
Fanny	19 January 2000	Food Court near bars area, Pattaya, Thailand
Hope	23 September 1999	Japanese Restaurant in Department Store, Bangkok, Thailand
Jieb	25 September 1999	Sukiyaki Restaurant in Department Store, Bangkok Thailand
Joi	24 September 1999	Sukiyaki Restaurant, Bangkok, Thailand
Juri	12 October 1999	Food Court, Bangkok, Thailand
Nid	21 September 1999	Macdonald Fast Food in Department Store Bangkok, Thailand
Nida	24 September 1999	Swensen (Ice Cream Parlour) in Department Store Bangkok Thailand
Orn	14 October 1999	Macdonald Fast Food, Bangkok, Thailand
Panna	17 January 2000	Macdonald Fast Food, Pattaya, Thailand
Pueng	25 September 1999	Noodle Restaurant in Department Store, Bangkok Thailand
Puke	17 January 2000	Thai Restaurant, Pattaya, Thailand
Rattana	18 January 2000	Sisler Restaurant, Pattaya, Thailand
Rung	22 September 1999	Black Canyon Restaurant in Department Store, Bangkok, Thailand
Tong	22 September 1999	Pizza Hut Restaurant, Bangkok, Thailand

Tooy 23 September 1999 Food Court, Bangkok, Thailand

New Zealand

Aim	25 May 1999	Food court	Auckland	New Zealand
Dalat	14 May 1999	Café	Wellington	New Zealand
Dang	22 May 1999	Food court	Auckland	New Zealand
Intira	12 May 1999	Café	Wellington	New Zealand
Jang	29 May 1999	Food court	Auckland	New Zealand
Jumm	18 May 1999	Burger King	Central Auckland	New Zealand
Nok	18 May 1999	Food court	Auckland	New Zealand
Nuna	13 May 1999	Café	Wellington	New Zealand
Oom	20 May 1999	Food court	Auckland	New Zealand
Tiaa	21 May 1999	Chinese Café	Auckland	New Zealand
Tien	21 May 1999	Chinese Café	Auckland	New Zealand
Tuui	25 May 1999	Café	Auckland	New Zealand

Special Interview date and place with Catherine Healy, National Coordinator of New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NZPC)

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APPENDIX ONE: LETTERS TO INTERVIEWEES (ENGLISH VERSION)

4 September 1999

Dear (Name of Interviewee)

Confidential Subject: Interview for educational research purpose to conduct a Ph.D. thesis

My name is Piamsuk Menasveta. I am a Ph.D. student at Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand. I am conducting research into the reasons why Thai women and girls enter the sex industry as child prostitutes (girls only), sex workers or as mail order brides, and why they decide to come to New Zealand and other first world regional countries. The research objective is to revisit the constraint factors that driven numbers of Thai poor and working class girls and women to do sex work intentionally or unwillingly.

I want to interview a number of Thai women residents in Thailand and in New Zealand and hope that you will agree to be interviewed. I can assure you of full confidentiality. I will use a pseudonym and disguise all personal details in my thesis. I will either take notes or tape the interview depending on your preference. I will send you a copy of whatever I write based on your interview for correction or deletion. You may also withdraw from the project at any time before the completion of this thesis.

I will also keep my notes and tapes in a locked filing cabinet at home, which only I will access to, during my research and will destroy them once thesis is submitted to additionally protect your identity. I will give you a copy of my thesis, if you wish, once it has been completed. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information, by telephone 01-6454630 or write to the above address. Thank you very much in advance.

Yours Faithfully,

Piamsuk Menasveta

APPENDIX ONE: LETTER TO INTERVIEWEES (THAI VERSION)

134/3 ถ.พญาไท

เขตราษฎร์เทพวิ กทม.10400

วันที่ 4 กันยายน พ.ศ. 2542

เรียน คุณ (ชื่อผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์)

เรื่อง การสัมภาษณ์เพื่อหาข้อมูลในการศึกษาวิจัยปริญญาเอก

ข้าพเจ้าชื่อ น.ส. เปี่ยมสุข เมนะเสวต เป็นนักศึกษาปริญญาเอกของมหาวิทยาลัยวอชิงตัน-ออฟเวลลิงตัน เมืองหลวงเวลลิงตัน ประเทศนิวซีแลนด์งานวิจัย ของข้าพเจ้านั้น ได้จัดทำเพื่อการค้นหาข้อมูลที่เป็นประโยชน์ สำหรับการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ปริญญาเอก ซึ่งเกี่ยวข้องกับเรื่องราวของหญิงบริการในรูปแบบต่างๆ เช่น เด็ก และ หญิงบริการทั่วไป และ คู่รักทางไปรษณีย์ (Mail-Order Brides) ทั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อวิเคราะห์ปัจจัยของสาเหตุ ที่ทำให้ผู้หญิงไทยที่มีโอกาสทางสังคมน้อย ต้องหันมาตัดสินใจประกอบอาชีพนี้เพื่อความอยู่รอดทางเศรษฐกิจ และ บางท่านเดินทางไปยังประเทศต่างๆ รวมถึงประเทศนิวซีแลนด์เพื่อประกอบอาชีพนี้

ข้าพเจ้าจำเป็นต้องสัมภาษณ์ หญิงบริการ หรือผู้ที่เคยประกอบอาชีพเหล่านี้จำนวนมากทั้งที่ประเทศไทย และ ที่ประเทศนิวซีแลนด์เพื่อทำงานวิจัยการเรียน ข้าพเจ้าหวังเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่าท่านจะให้ความร่วมมือโดยข้าพเจ้ารับรองว่า ข้อมูลส่วนตัวทุกอย่างของท่านจากการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกเก็บเป็นความลับ และ ชื่อสมมติจะนำมาใช้เล่าเรื่อง สำหรับการเปลี่ยนแปลงข้อมูลส่วนตัวที่จะ โขมมาถึง ผู้ถูกสัมภาษณ์(ท่าน) ก็จะนำมาใช้เช่นกัน ขั้นตอนการบันทึกเทปขณะทำการสัมภาษณ์จะต้องได้รับอนุญาตจากท่าน และข้าพเจ้าจะจดข้อมูลรายละเอียดต่างๆที่สำคัญเท่านั้น ส่วนข้อมูลที่ข้าพเจ้าจะนำมาเขียนเกี่ยวกับเรื่องราวของท่าน (ผู้ให้สัมภาษณ์) จะมีการพุดคุยกัน ได้ และอาจส่งไปถึงท่านอีกทีเพื่อคัดแปลงหรือลบข้อมูลที่ท่านไม่ต้องการเปิดเผย ในกรณีที่ถ้าท่านติดต่อกลับมาก่อนการเขียนวิทยานิพนธ์ ทั้งนี้ ท่าน (ผู้ถูกสัมภาษณ์) สามารถถอนตัวจากการวิจัยได้เมื่อท่านต้องการ โดยการติดต่อข้าพเจ้าก่อนการส่งวิทยานิพนธ์

บันทึกข้อความและเทปบันทึกจะถูกเก็บไว้ในตู้เก็บเอกสารที่บ้านของข้าพเจ้า โดยจะเก็บล็อกไว้ในตู้และมีข้าพเจ้าเท่านั้นที่สามารถนำออกมาใช้ได้ ข้าพเจ้าจะทำลายเทปบันทึกทั้งหมดนี้เมื่อวิทยานิพนธ์ได้ สำเร็จสมบูรณ์ ถ้าผู้ถูกสัมภาษณ์ต้องการที่จะได้สำเนาเรียงพิมพ์วิทยานิพนธ์ ข้าพเจ้า ก็จะมอบให้ หนึ่งชุดสำเนา ถ้าหากท่านต้องการทราบรายละเอียดข้อมูลเพิ่มเติมอื่นๆ กรุณาโทรติดต่อ 01-6454630 หรือเขียนจดหมายเจ้าหน้าที่อยู่ข้าพเจ้าข้างบนจดหมายนี้ ขอบพระคุณในความร่วมมือนล่วงหน้า

ขอแสดงความนับถือ

เปี่ยมสุข เมนะเสวต

APPENDIX TWO - THE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH (ENGLISH VERSION)

Piamsuk Menasveta, Ph.D. Student, Women's Studies, Victoria University of Wellington

Consent To Participation In Research.

Title of project: THE QUANDARY OF THAI WOMEN PROSTITUTES:

Contemporary Situations of Thai Poor and Working Class Thai Women Sex Workers in Thailand and New Zealand.

- (1) I understand that Piamsuk Menasveta is a Ph.D. student in Women's Studies at VUW and that she is conducting research for her Ph.D. on Thai sex workers for the above project.
- (2) I have been given and have understood an explanation of this research project. I have had an opportunity to ask questions and have them answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information which I have provided from this project at any time before the thesis is submitted, without having to give reasons.
- (3) I do/ do not want the interview to be taped.
- (4) I understand that tapes and all other information will be destroyed at the end of the project when the thesis has been completed.
- (5) I request that a pseudonym be used in the published thesis and that any personal details, which identify me are disguised.
- (6) I understand that only Piamsuk Menasveta will see a copy of this contract and that it will also be destroyed at the completion of the thesis.
- (7) I agree to take part in this research. I freely consent to participation in this research by signing this following research consent form.

Signed:

Name of participant (Please print clearly):

Date:

APPENDIX TWO - THE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE RESEARCH (THAI VERSION)

น.ส. เปี่ยมสุข เมนะเสวต นักศึกษาปริญญาเอก ภาควิชาสตรีศึกษา (Women's Studies)

มหาวิทยาลัยวิกตอเรียของเวลลิงตัน (Victoria University of Wellington)

สำเนาการขออนุญาตสัมภาษณ์เพื่อการวิจัย ภาคภาษาไทย

หัวข้อวิทยานิพนธ์, ความไม่แน่นอนในชีวิตหญิงโสเภณีไทย, การศึกษาความ ไม่เท่าเทียม

ของชายและหญิงในสังคมไทยที่มีผลต่อความยากจนทางเศรษฐกิจ ของผู้หญิงไทยชนชั้น

แรงงาน เกิดภาวะบังคับให้ทำอาชีพหญิงบริการทางเพศ ในประเทศไทยและประเทศนิวซีแลนด์

- 1) ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่า น.ส.เปี่ยมสุข เป็นนักศึกษาระดับปริญญาเอก และกำลังทำวิทยานิพนธ์เกี่ยวกับหัวข้อเบื้องต้น
- 2) ข้าพเจ้าได้รับทราบ เกี่ยวกับเหตุและผลทุกประการของการวิจัยสัมภาษณ์ครั้งนี้ ข้าพเจ้าสามารถถามคำถามของผู้สัมภาษณ์และยินดีตอบคำถาม จากการตัดสินใจของข้าพเจ้า ข้าพเจ้าสามารถถอนตัวจากการวิจัยได้ และสามารถจะเปลี่ยนแปลงข้อมูลหรือตัดสินใจที่จะไม่ให้ผู้สัมภาษณ์นำข้อมูลไปใช้ได้ ก่อนวิทยานิพนธ์จะตรวจสอบเสร็จสมบูรณ์ ทั้งนี้โดยต้องมีเหตุผลใดๆมากำกับ
- 3) ข้าพเจ้าต้องการ/ ไม่ต้องการถูกบันทึกเทปข้อความ
- 4) เทปบันทึกข้อความจากการสัมภาษณ์จะถูกทำลายเมื่อวิทยานิพนธ์เสร็จสิ้น
- 5) ข้าพเจ้าต้องการให้ใช้ชื่อสมมติ หรือนามแฝง และดัดแปลงข้อมูลส่วนตัวที่บ่งบอกถึงข้าพเจ้าได้
- 6) ข้าพเจ้าเข้าใจว่า น.ส.เปี่ยมสุข จะเป็นผู้เก็บสำเนาของสัญญาฉบับนี้ และสำเนาจะถูกทำลายเมื่อการวิจัยเสร็จสิ้น และวิทยานิพนธ์เสร็จสมบูรณ์ด้วยดี
- 7) ข้าพเจ้ายินยอมที่จะมีส่วนร่วมในการวิจัย และอนุญาตให้ผู้สัมภาษณ์โดยการเซ็นกำกับดังนี้

ลายเซ็นชื่อ:

ชื่อ - นามสกุล:

(กรุณาคัดตัวบรรจง)

วันที่สัมภาษณ์:

APPENDIX THREE - THE ETHICAL STATEMENT

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

HUMAN ETHICS COMMITTEE

Application for Approval of Research Projects

Nature of Purposed Research:

A Student Research, Degree: PhD, Course Code: WISC 690

Project Title: THE QUANDARY OF THAI WOMEN PROSTITUTES: Contemporary Situations of Thai Poor and Working Class Thai Women Sex Workers in Thailand and New Zealand.

(a) Principal Investigator

Name: Piamsuk Menasveta

Dept/ Group: Women's Studies

(b) Other researchers: N/A

(c) Supervisor Kay Morris Matthews, Head of Women's Studies

Alison Laurie, Senior Lecturers, Women's Studies

Margaret Clark, Convener of the Board of Studies for Women's Studies.

Proposed Starting Date 1 May 1999

Proposed Date of Completion 1 December 2001

Proposed Source of Funding

1. New Zealand Official Development Assistance Scholarship, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trades
2. New Zealand Research in Asia Scholarship, Asia 2000 Foundation, New Zealand
3. The Faculty Research Grant, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Victoria University of Wellington

(a) The Objectives of the Project

To investigate the reasons why Thai girls and women enter the sex industry as sex workers, and traveled to overseas locations, specifically New Zealand; some women sex workers are traveled as mail-order brides. And with sex workers in Thailand who have worked in New Zealand or who intended to travel to New Zealand.

(b) Method of Data Collection

Approximately 30 interviews with notes taken or interviews taped if consented by the participants. The relationship of interviewees and researcher (me) is expected to be non-hierarchical, comfortable and relaxed. Open-ended questions and checklist are used to allow other aspects of findings ensued. I mean to obtain only facts and opinions that are constructive for the analysis of this thesis. When participants' narratives will be conducted briefly, because the analysis of interview materials is concerned as the significant accounts.

(c) The Benefits and Scientific Value of the Project

To understand the underlying causes and consequences and to illuminate the need of the participation of Thai women and girls in the New Zealand sex industry, and to empower the subject studied as individual women.

(d) Characteristics of the Participants

Solely Thai girls and women from Thailand and New Zealand who involved in the sex industry ages from 18-36 will be interviewed. I attempt to find 18 Thai women sex workers whom are nine women prostitutes who entered the sex trade when they are 15 years or younger and former and current sex workers who traveled to countries excluding New Zealand for the purpose of sex work. The interview with 12 Thai women former and current sex workers who worked or intended to do sex work in New Zealand will be included.

(e) Method of Recruitment

In New Zealand: introduced by a Thai women sex worker which already known and interviewed. (Snowballing) In Thailand: advertisement posted with reward.

(f) Payments that are to be made in Expenses to be reimbursed to Participants

Payment as gifts and/or as money recompenses is made to participants who request this and as advertised. As a Thai woman myself, I am sensitive to Thai cultural requirements in those circumstances.

(g) Other Assistance (e.g. meals, transport) that is to be given to Participants

Payment may be made for any expenses, which are appropriate and acceptable such as time and transport compensation.

(h) Special hazards and/or inconvenience (including deception) that participants will encounter

None.

(i) How informed consent is to be obtained, including a copy of any consent form and information sheet that is to be used.

1 Information Letter to Interviewees (Thai and English language)

2 Consent Form (Thai and English language)

The participants in the research have an option to choose to sign the consent form either in Thai or English version as preferably.

(j) How issues of anonymity of participants are to be dealt with if the research is to be conducted on an anonymous basis.

Strict confidentiality will be provided- notes and tapes will be numbered and real names will not appear on any of the material. Real names and identifiable details will not be used in the thesis. Facts and opinions from interviews will be applied as quotes in thesis; this will be told. On condition that participants requested to have their stories cut partly or deleted in thesis, they will contact me either at my address and phone number given in the letter. This specification will be told at all interviews.

(k) Procedure for the storage of, access to and destruction of data, both during and at the conclusion of the research.

All materials will be kept in a locked filing cabinet at my home and only I will have access to it. All the materials will be destroyed following the acceptance of the thesis. Whenever the participants like, they may also withdraw fully if they wish to before the completion of thesis. Once the material has been destroyed, I will inform the participants and my supervisors that this has taken place.

(l) Feedback Procedures

At the end of each interview, I will attempt to obtain some feedback from participants as how they realise the interview process and their requests spontaneously. Regarding a

draft of information (as case studies), facts and opinions relating to participants for proposed inclusion in the thesis and/or a copy of the completed thesis will be organised to be free to correct by participants as long as they request. Otherwise, I will contact them to assure if they request any modification of their information before the cessation of thesis.

(m) Reporting and Publication of Results

I expected a production of a PhD thesis for examination and possibly conference papers.

Researcher

Piamsuk Menasveta, PhD thesis student, Women's Studies

(Signature) Date 1/ 5/ 1999

Supervisor

1. Alison Laurie, Senior Lecturer, Women's Studies

(Signature)

Date 29/4/1999

2. Margaret Clark, Gonvenor of the Board of Studies for Women's Studies.

(Signature)

Date / / 1999

Approved for Ethics Committee
J. Neale
3.5.99.

**APPENDIX FOUR - THE COPY OF ADVERTISEMENT POSTED
FOR INTERVIEWEES WANTED FOR THIS RESEARCH**

ต้องการสัมภาษณ์หญิงบริการ หรือผู้ที่ผ่านการประกอบ

อาชีพนี้ จำนวนมาก!!!

กรุณาติดต่อ คุณเปี่ยมสุข หรือ คุณแปง

โทรมือถือ **01-6454630**

\$500 บาทต่อ 1 ชั่วโมงการสัมภาษณ์ พร้อมค่าเดินทางฟรี

***การสัมภาษณ์นี้

เขียนวิทยานิพนธ์เท่านั้น***

Translation in English in Retrospective Sentences

Interviewees Wanted For

**A particular number of Thai women who are currently working or
have been working in the sex industry**

PLEASE call, Khun Piamsuke or Khun Paeng,

Cell phone: 01-6454630

\$Baths 500 (Approx. \$NZ 28) per an hour plus free transportation.

*****The interviews purpose is only for the thesis resources of an
educational research.*****

APPENDIX FIVE - INTERVIEWS CHECKLIST QUESTIONS

Specific Delivery

1. Introducing a research topic and goals of interviewing. (In the beginning of the interview)
2. Signing consent form: any enquiry? (In the beginning of the interview)
3. Processing of in-depth interview, start recording. (30-45 minutes)
4. Informing participants the anonymities of their information and get feedback instantly. (At the end of the interview)
5. Give participants my home contact details in Thailand if they request later for the alteration of their information. (At the end of the interview)
6. Pay the interview hour and offer of transportation cost such taxi. (At the end of the interview)

General Survey

1. Where originally did you come from in Thailand and where do you live now?
2. How old are you?
3. How old were you when started sex work?
4. How long have you been involved in this industry?
5. Are you still do sex work?
6. Where do you work now?
7. Have you worked in the sex businesses, intermittently or continually?
8. Are you married, any dependents?
9. What nationality is your boyfriend/husband?
10. How many serious relationships you have had?

Flashback Accounts

1. Can we talk about your past circumstances such as your childhood, educational background and family relationship?

2. What did you do before sex work?
3. How did you get involved in the sex trade?
4. Who persuaded you to do sex work and/or why you decided to?
5. What was your family financial circumstance like before you started sex work?
6. What have you contributed to your family? House, cars, televisions, etc.
7. Did you have children/family members to support at that time?

Sex Work Issues

1. How much did you earn per month? (approximately) Are you happy with it?
2. Where do you like to work for and why?
3. Did you like your job? Any bad experiences?
4. Did you have any difficulties at workplace, for examples, with your boss, clients, please specify?
5. Did you get paid full or deducted by percentage? How did you feel?
6. Do you worry about your health including sexual health? Do you usually use condoms?
7. What do you think about drug at workplace?
8. What countries have you worked or plan to go to do sex work and why?
(Trafficking)
9. How did you arrange the trip? Did anyone help you arrange the (trafficking) trip?
10. What was the experience like such as work conditions, foreigner client interactions and payments?
11. Why and how did you go to overseas countries (including New Zealand)?
12. Did you plan to join mail-order brides?
- (Questions 14 - 19 only for mail-order brides interviewees group)**
13. Do you like living in New Zealand?
14. *How did you meet your New Zealand husband? Did he know you were a sex worker?*
15. *Does your husband support you financially? Is he nice to you?*
16. *Do you gain New Zealand citizenship?*
17. *If now separated or divorced, how did it happen?*

18. *Have you encountered racism experiences in New Zealand and how?*
19. *Did you still want to live and work in Thailand/New Zealand or go somewhere else?*
20. What is your future plan in sex businesses and personally?
21. Do you think that you are content with sex work condition?
22. Are you secured financially by sex work
23. Do you think about quitting prostitution?
24. If you have left prostitution, why?
25. How is your family' financial circumstance at the moment?
26. Do you still have children/family members to support? Are they all right?
27. By the way, do you have anyone supporting you emotionally or financially?

Thoughts of Society

1. What do you think about gender correlation in Thailand and in New Zealand?
2. Compared when you were living in Thailand, what is the difference of New Zealand and Thai culture?
3. Have you been supported by programs from Thai government and non-governmental organisations such as rehabilitation for girls prostitutes, information about trafficking? How does/did this affect your decision?
4. What do you want to say to people who blame prostitutes as social problems?
5. What do you think women's liberation's solutions for prostitutes?

APPENDIX SIX- MAIL-ORDER BRIDES INTERNET EXEMPLARY SOURCES

www.adobe.com, last searched 21 October 2001

www.Thaisic.com, last searched 21 October 2001

www.annas-russian-brides.com/asia/Thai01/html last searched 21 October 2001

Help Ladies From Thailand To Make New Foreign Friends In "America" And "Worldwide", For for the Purpose of Friendships, Romance, Marriage, Culture or Language Exchange or Business. THAIS also welcomes Canadian, Australian, European: German, French, Italian, Swiss, Scandinavian, and Gentlemen From Many Other Countries in That Part of the World.

On A Very Limited Basis We Help American Ladies Find Friends In Thailand And Thai Men To Find New Friends In America. The Reason That I Say That It is Limited is Because We Do Not Get Many Requests From American Ladies Who Seek Asian Men. We Also, on a Limited, Very Limited Basis, Have A Few Thais And Americans Seeking "Alternative Life-style Situations". As This Is Not the Main Focus of This Service, You Will Need to Contact THAIS by E-mail or Telephone For More Information About Alternative Lifestyles or Assistance for American Women Seeking Asian men.

THAIS Service Is Generally For Marriage Minded People, But Is Not Limited To marriage minded singles. We Occasionally Have Ladies And Gentlemen Who Only Seek Friendships For Penpals, Correspondence, Culture And Language Exchange Or Business. For Information about new U.S. Immigration Laws concerning marriage and visas and new laws concerning spousal abuse and penalties for marriage fraud, contact an Immigration Attorney. THAIS is required to disseminate certain U.S. Immigration Laws, information and disclosures to our foreign female clients in their own native language, basically to forewarn them about the penalties for fraud and the risks of spousal abuse by marrying American men. If you are offended by the insinuations of the U.S. Government and "Certain Activist Groups", that American men, who seek foreign brides, are "more likely" to be abusive spouses, then I urge you to Contact Your U.S. Congressman or Representative to voice your opinion. They need to hear from you, otherwise they may enact new laws which may impede you from seeking a foreign bride.

The ladies write or contact you first.

Co-ordinate your Thailand travel with the placement of your:

Thailand classifieds personals ad in Thailand newspapers, translated into the Thai language. Your classified personal ad seeking a Thai girlfriend can run during your Thailand vacation or Thailand holiday.

If you are planning a trip to Bangkok, THAIS can place your very own personal advertisement in Thailand newspapers in Bangkok to coincide with you visit. Based

on past experiences, this approach seems to be quite successful as evidenced in the past by the amount of responses generated.

The ladies write to you first. They can write to where ever you are staying or they can call you directly.

Place your photo personal ad including your bio data, photo and message on our Thai language sister site called Asian Women Thailand .com. Our sister site was designed as a means for women of Thailand to be able to apply for a personal ad online and also for them to view the singles personals ads of the foreign men seeking Thai women for dating and marriage.

THAIS website (this site) is purposely blocked from viewing in Thailand for the privacy of the single Thai females. Our sister site Asian Women Thailand.com which can be viewed from Thailand, has a section containing singles personals ads of American men and European men and other foreign men seeking Asian women for marriage or Thai women for marriage or for friendships. All internet traffic in Thailand (originating) is re-directed to the sister site. Many Thai people find search engine links to THAIS and now they have a place to go instead of getting the 403-Forbidden message and of course they can view your ad.

Your Thailand photo personals ad will be translated into the Thai language by my experienced Thai translator. All we need are some nice, clear and handsome photos of yourself to place on the website. Your choice with or without. Take a look at the foreign men seeking Asian women section. Please note that Thai Women like the clean cut, clean shaven, well dressed man look, so I do not recommend that you send photos of yourself in raggy T-shirts.

Our sister site also has an online application form for Thai women to use to apply for THAIS Thai introduction services and it also has a method for the women to send photos to THAIS over the internet. You can use this method also or you can attach photos to an email in .JPG format.

We usually email you a copy of the English version of your ad for you to verify and proof read. We do not want to get your mailing address or email address botched up. Please note that I sometimes have a problem with understanding the foreign addresses (outside the USA) so please do not abbreviate your address. Please print or type your address in it's long form and be sure to include your postal codes.

Please note:

Most of the Thai people who read the Thailand newspaper that I advertise in are from Bangkok.

THAIS recommends that you write to as many ladies as time may permit. You never know when a lady may become unavailable, so never limit yourself to only one. Also, do not be afraid to attempt to contact Thai girls from our previous catalogs. I am sure that many of them are still around and available. I delete the addresses of the girls that I know are unavailable.

A Bit of Good Advice for writing to Thai women:

When writing your letter of introduction to a Thai lady, say:

I received your profile, photo and address from THAIS or say you are a member of THAIS and received their information from THAIS and of course provide them with your profile also.

NEVER start your message by saying:

Hello, I just saw your photo on the internet or I just got your name and address from the internet.

Dah, why is that?

Due to the language barrier, making a statement like that usually leads to a lot of confusion as to how you got their information. Don't get the lady of your dreams worried and distracted with side issues as you will not achieve the desired effect.

These ladies have entrusted their info to THAIS and by not being careful about how you say things, you could cause them to think that their contact info is posted openly on the internet for anyone to see which is not the case. I only mention this because I have been getting reports about this lately. Also, NEVER call the Thai girl before you write your introductory letter and get a positive response as your unexpected call may cause her a lot of problems due to Thai social and cultural issues and embarrassment.

A word to the wise though, do not mention that you are also writing to other ladies or more than one lady or you may jeopardise your chances for friendship with that special lady. No one likes to feel as though they are being "selected or picked over" or in some sort of competition. You do not want to be unjustifiably accused of having too many girlfriends due to a cultural misunderstanding. Once it happens, you will most likely not be able to correct it.

When you travel to Bangkok, Never tell more than one "potential new friend" what day you will arrive in Bangkok or your flight number. Many a gentleman has become quite embarrassed and frustrated by the results of what happens when several new Thai friends, whether planned or unplanned, were inadvertently waiting to greet him at the airport. When that happens, and it happens quite often, you have a big mess that you will not be able remedy.

APPENDIX SEVEN - PHOTOS OF SOME
AREAS IN PAT PONG IN THE YEAR 2000

From [www.soicowboy.com/patpong/walking street.html](http://www.soicowboy.com/patpong/walking%20street.html), 12 December 2001.

**APPENDIX EIGHT - PHOTOS OF SOME
AREAS IN PATTAYA IN THE YEAR 2001***

* Photos were taken in the year 2001, Bangkok, Thailand.

APPENDIX NINE – PHOTOS OF MASSAGE
PARLOURS AREAS IN THAILAND
(RATCHADAPISEK RD, BANGKOK,
THAILAND) IN THE YEAR 2001*

* Photos were taken in the year 2001, Bangkok, Thailand.

**APPENDIX ELEVEN – CONSTITUTION OF THE KINGDOM
OF THAILAND, B.E. 2540 (1997) FOREIGN LAW DIVISION
OFFICE OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE, CHAPTER III:
RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES OF THE THAI PEOPLE, SECTION
30, PAGE. 8**

Section 30. All persons are equal before the law and shall enjoy equal protection under the law.

Men and women shall enjoy equal rights.

Unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of the difference in origin, race, language, sex, age, physical or health condition, personal status, economic or social standing, religious belief, education or constitutionally political view, shall not be permitted.

Measures determined by the State in order to eliminate obstacle to or to promote persons' ability to exercise their rights and liberties as other persons are so capable shall not be deemed as unjust discrimination under paragraph three.

APPENDIX TWELVE – MAP OF THAILAND

APPENDIX THIRTEEN
MAP OF NEW ZEALAND

From www.govt.nz/aboutnz/nzmap.php3, NZGO: Map of New Zealand, 10/8/02