

## Tracy Deasey

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**From:** ISA [isa@email.arizona.edu]  
**Sent:** Friday, 20 April 2007 4:09 AM  
**To:** Tracy Deasey  
**Subject:** Re: International Studies Association Annual Meeting - San Diego, CA, USA 22 March 2006

Dear Tracy Deasey,

Thank you for your inquiry regarding the ISA Annual Convention in San Diego. ISA has over four thousand members from over eighty countries and these members are grouped into regions and sections, program chairs are drawn from those regions and sections and it is they who review paper and panel proposals for the annual convention. The program chairs carefully review proposals and approve them for presentation in theme, section and region panels to be convened during the Annual Convention. This review process insures that the research presented at the Annual Convention is of the highest quality and contributes to the advancement of the field of international studies. The final step in the process is the actual presentation of papers on panels by the scholars, who then receive feedback from their peers. Individual papers are also archived on the web by the All Academic company for future reference. I hope this answers your question about the peer review process. Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further help. Thank you.

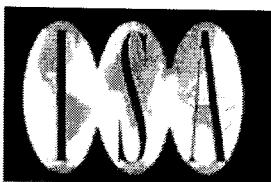
Sincerely,  
Joel Davis  
Internet Projects Coordinator

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International Studies Association  
E-Mail: isa@u.arizona.edu  
Web: <http://www.isanet.org>

Quoting Tracy Deasey <Tracy.Deasey@anu.edu.au>:

> Dear Conference Organiser,  
>  
>  
>  
> I understand that you were the one of the organisers of the 2006  
> Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association, held in San  
> Diego, California in March 2006. Could you please tell me whether all  
> conference papers were independently refereed in full, through a  
> process of external assessment or peer review? If so, could you also  
> please let me know if assessors had a broad national or international  
> representation? This information is required for a publications  
> collection to be submitted to the Australian Government Department of  
> Education, Science and Technology.  
>  
>  
>  
> A response to this correspondence stating that full conference papers  
> were independently refereed or peer reviewed is sufficient. Thank you  
> for your assistance.  
>  
>  
>  
>  
> Ms Tracy Deasey  
> School Administrator  
>  
> School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Arts  
>  
> ANU College of Arts & Social Sciences  
>  
> Copland Building #24, Room COP2147  
>  
> The Australian National University



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A group of scholars and practitioners founded the International Studies Association (ISA) in 1959 to pursue mutual interests in international studies. Representing eighty countries, ISA has over four thousand members worldwide and is the most respected and widely known scholarly association in this field.

Geographic subdivisions of ISA, called Regions, provide opportunities to exchange ideas and research with local colleagues. Over twenty special interest groups, called Sections, offer additional contact between members interested in specific areas within the field of international studies. Together, these Regions and Sections allow us to create communities of scholars dedicated to international studies.

Our international conferences and annual convention attract scholars from all over the world. We cooperate with 57 international studies organizations in 32 countries, and we are a member of the International Social Science Council, and have nongovernmental consultative status with the United Nations.

ISA's journals help define the field and showcase the research of our members. The *International Studies Quarterly* (ISQ) started in conjunction with the Association as its flagship journal. With a broad interdisciplinary and multinational perspective, the *International Studies Review* (ISR) tracks worldwide trends, synthesizing theory and literature in the field. *International Studies Perspectives* began publication in 2000 and is focused on teaching, research, and the state of the profession. *Foreign Policy Analysis* provides a peer-reviewed outlet for the highest quality academic research into the processes, outcomes and theories of foreign policy. Our most recent journal, *International Political Sociology*, is an interdisciplinary journal responding to the diversification of both scholarly interests and regional concerns in contemporary international studies.

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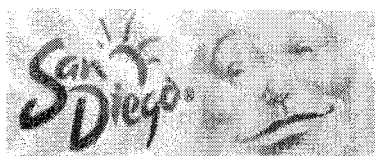
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47<sup>th</sup> Annual ISA Convention  
 March 22-25, 2006  
 Town & Country Resort and  
 Convention Center  
 San Diego, CA 96815 USA



## THE NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

Welcome to the main index page for the 2006 ISA Annual Convention in San Diego and thank you for your commitment to serve as a participant during the convention. The convention theme is: *The North-South Divide and International Studies*. This page will serve as a resource for information about your role as a program participant and will provide critical information about the upcoming meeting. Be sure to visit this site often in the months and weeks prior to the meeting as additional information will be added. For additional information, see the [Call for Papers here](#), or contact Rafael Reuveny, the 2006 Program Chair (see the [contact information](#) below).

- **NEW Hotels:** Our convention manager has just secured additional rooms at the Hilton San Diego Mission Valley. These rooms are offered on an "as available" basis. Please note, there is no shuttle service from this hotel to the Town & Country. The Hilton is 2.2 miles from the host hotel and a cab ride will cost \$5 each way. This offer is available until March 17th. For information on the host hotel and the five overflow hotels, please see our [hotel website](#).
- **NEW Program:** The program is now online, visit the [Program Website](#) for links to the Program and the Participant Index.
- **NEW Paper Archive:** The All Academic website is now accepting papers for the online archive. The archive can be found [here](#) and features instructions and full search capability. The archive is public, you do not need to login to search and download papers, only to edit your abstract and upload your paper.
- **NEW Convention Blog:** The [official blog](#) of the annual convention will be updated onsite by ISA staff to let you know all the latest information from the floor of the convention center.
- **Child Care:** The Kiddie Corp program has reached maximum enrollment capacity. Please contact Kiddie Corp to be placed on a waiting list or to check availability: [www.kiddiecorp.com/isakids.htm](http://www.kiddiecorp.com/isakids.htm)
- **Hotel Room Reservations:** Our host hotel for the 2006 Annual Convention is the Town & Country Resort. For current hotel information and room rates and availability at ISA overflow hotels please see our [hotel website](#).
- **Register:** The late-registration period has begun, register [here](#). ISA will accept online late-registration from Dec. 01, 2005 - March 15, 2006, after which time you will be asked to register ON-SITE starting at 1:00 PM on March 21, 2006, late registration rates will apply. You will find the Reg Desk located in the Atlas Foyer of the Town & Country Convention Center Complex during convention hours.
- **Audio Visual Rentals:** Overhead projectors and screens are provided in all panel rooms. Panelists and paper presenters who wish to rent LCD projectors or other A/V equipment must do so at their own expense. For rates and contact information, [click here](#). To rent audio visual equipment for an ISA or affiliate business meeting or workshop (non-panel or poster events) please contact the [ISA Convention Manager, Jeanne White](#).
- **Sponsorship Opportunities:** Publishers and companies are invited to sponsor a reception, coffee break, or e-mail station during the annual convention. Your company name will be listed in the Convention Program, on the website's preliminary program, and on event signage. For more information, see the Sponsor website located [here](#).

- **Notifications:** The paper and panel proposal submission process has now ended, thank you to all those who have submitted proposals. Acceptance letters and notifications have been sent out by e-mail from ISA starting on September 30, 2005.
- **Guidelines:** The Call for Papers for the Annual Convention & Participant Guidelines can be found [here](#).

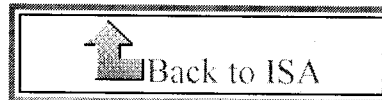
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## Contact Information

For more information, contact the 2006 Convention Program Chair:

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*This page last modified on 14 March 2006 by [Joel Davis](#)*



## North/South Securitisation Versus Security

### Most common word stems:

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### Publication Type: Conference Paper/Unpublished Manuscript

**Abstract:** For the North, trafficking has become a security issue, for some women of the South it is a necessary risk to be taken in securing income and the choice to participate in the cornucopia 1st World. This paper will explore current research on human trafficking occurring in the Southeast Asian region. It will also look at the resources that have become available for the education of the general populace, implementation of new legislation, training of personnel, the bringing to justice the offenders and the treatment of the 'victim'. The analytical framework, upon which this paper rests, is the Copenhagen School's approach to security and securitization. It is argued that there are problematic areas in the research on trafficking that silences some trafficked women's voices and, this paper will be presenting this other voice, by way of a case study drawing on research conducted in Thailand in 2003. I will argue that a coalition of feminists and the Christian Right movement have securitized trafficking for moral and economic but not for their stated humanitarian purposes. The paper will question the assumption that all trafficked women are 'victims'. This questionable assumption, propagated by scholars, NGOs, journalists and government, is that all women are victims of 'wicked and greedy' traffickers rather than engaging in a calculated, considered and often informed choice.

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 North/South Securitisation versus Security: Are sex workers a threat or a political bombshell? [Paper presented the 47th Annual Convention of the International Studies Association Panel TA39 Securitization 23 March 2006 San Diego CA] Judy Hemming  
[Judy.Hemming@anu.edu.au](mailto:Judy.Hemming@anu.edu.au) 1 Abstract From the outset of this millennium there has been a renewed commitment by the North specifically the United States to stop the infiltration of unwelcome people into

uk Development of Education in Thailand <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/International/ICE/natrap/Thailand.pdf> accessed 10 March 2006. U.S. Library of Congress Education and The Arts <http://countrystudies.us/thailand59.htm> accessed 10 March 2006. Williams M. C. 1998 'Modernity Identity and Security: a comment on a Copenhagen Controversy' Review of International Studies 24 pp. 435-439. Wong d. n.a. The Rumour of Trafficking: Border Controls Illegal Immigration and the Sovereignty of the Nation-State pp.1-35. 'World Bank

Releases Development Indicators' 2005 China Through a Lens pp. 1-3 <http://www.china.org/cn/english/2005/Apr/126096.html> accessed 13 February



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
FACULTY OF ARTS  
THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

*North/South Securitisation versus Security:  
Are sex workers a threat or a political bombshell?*  
[Paper presented the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the  
International Studies Association, Panel TA39, *Securitization*,  
23 March 2006, San Diego, CA]

**Judy Hemming**  
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## Abstract

From the outset of this millennium there has been a renewed commitment by the North specifically the United States, to stop the infiltration of unwelcome people into its borders. As globalisation continues to have its impact on the South, its unsuspecting citizens still regard as probable the opportunity to improve their life chances through migrating into, and gaining employment within, wealthy nations. The incentive to improve their life chances operates as such a strong motivating force that not only do these people embrace such opportunities, but pursue them with such conviction and tenacity that they are willing to encounter and endure hardships along the way in order to have a 'piece of the pie'. Hence, it is said that globalisation has created a new war – human [sex] trafficking. For the North, this 'new war' has seen sex trafficking elevated to a national security issue in which women from developing nations have often been perceived as 'victims'. Considering that sex trafficking has become a national security issue this paper will explain North/South attitudes toward both development within the developing world and the women that reside within it via the Copenhagen School of securitisation.

Specifically, this paper focuses on a case study of the Thai sex worker which will in turn be employed as a lens through which some of the underlying reasons why some of these Thai women choose to engage in sex work and extra-legal migration can be investigated. Put simply, it is intended that this case study will be used in order to begin to construct an answer to the question of why so many Thai sex workers are trying to improve their life chances by exposing themselves to a precarious 'adventure',- "*pai tai auo dapna*" (go prepared to die in the next war/trip)<sup>1</sup>.

### Are sex workers<sup>2</sup> a threat or a political bombshell?

<sup>1</sup> Pasuk Phongpaichit, 1999, 'Trafficking in people in Thailand', *Illegal Immigration and Commercial Sex: The New Slave Trade*, London, Frank Cass, p. 76.

<sup>2</sup> I use the term 'sex worker' rather than 'prostitute' as an indication of my respect for *all* the women who find themselves in this situation. I regard this activity as a form of work and there are, as in most forms of employment those who are exploited and those who are not, therefore for those who are exploited and

“Clearest thinking of the world is done, and the finest art is produced, not by men who are hungry, ragged and harassed, but by men who are well-fed, warm and easy in mind”  
(Mencken, 1994:5)

### **Introduction:**

The Thai sex worker is both a blessing and a curse to the Thai nation. She is an economic actor and yet, the Thai and U.S. government do not extend her this status or right. Unbeknownst to the sex worker her identity has been constructed to further Thailand's political standing among imperialistic nations. This paper will examine the commitment of wealthy nations to progress within developing nations, specifically relating good governance and educational policies the formula set out by the North as good instruments for economic growth in Thailand. In doing so, I will briefly examine the G8 Summit and argue that these nations, and specifically the U.S., are only expressing concern over poverty if it furthers their national interests.

Globalisation has contributed to the problem of poverty by creating a new war, namely human [sex] trafficking (Na'im Moses 2005) . In turn, I show how the U.S. government has in its attempt to eradicate the world of sex trafficking securitised the Thai sex industry and its worker. It has done this by elevating the issue via politicalisation. Furthermore, I discuss how the Thai sex worker has dreams and desires which she thinks can be accomplished through her extralegal migration. The data used in this paper has been gathered during fieldwork in Patpong, Nana District and Singapore.

The desire for temporary migration to 'greener pastures' can be traced back to globalisation. As television ownership is extremely high in Thailand and as a conduit for cultural influence, there has been an Americanisation in programs which emphasise gender role reversal and independence. For many of the interviewees the desire to be modern (*thansamay*) leads them to employment that gives a good financial return for their labour.

### **Hang on a minute, wasn't the promise and purpose of globalisation to lessen the gap?**

As Mencken writes, "poverty is not honourable, it is an unescapable misfortune" (1994:5) and for many, particularly women, in the developing world, this is a reality. In the West however, the general populace could be excused in their thinking that poverty is a

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know that they are a 'victim', my labelling their 'employment' with a deviant and degrading term does not help the situation. Some would argue that the use of this term is a form of education toward societies who accept, are blinded, or simply don't care and would bring about the alienation of the user or more specifically, the eradication of this exploitation. However, within my consideration and choice of term, I am not 'victimising' those who are voluntarily in the sex industry and are utilising their capacity to improve their life chances by doing so, but at the same time recognising their choice (under the International Declaration of Human Rights), to engage in a economic venture that will give them a lucrative financial return for their labour.

diminishing and controlled issue, because almost daily we are inundated with information of how our concerned rich governments are attempting to overcome the problem. In support of this, recent there were reports from the G8 Summit, held in Gleneagles Scotland in 2005, read "Rejoice! The world is saved! The governments of Europe have agreed that by 2015 they will give 0.7% of their national income in foreign aid". Just a mere 35 years past its already set target (Monbiot, 6 June 2005). In the lead up to the summit, Bob Geldof and Bono, two musicians both committed to the reduction of poverty in Africa, attempting to educate the naive and ill-informed international public through the promotion of *their* sponsored 'Live 8' concert[s]. These concerts took place around the globe in July 2005 and served as forums for people not to give money but, *their* voice to convince the G8 countries to commit to eradicating poverty from the world. These musician crusaders challenged the richest countries' governments to eradicate poverty once and for all through a debt reduction plan. And many world citizens were swept along with the momentum and the pairs' enthusiasm by attending the concerts, encouraging their governments to do the right thing, expressing grief and despair for those who could not feel 'honour'. After the June 12 announcement the G8 adopt this plan Geldof was reported to have said, "Tomorrow 280 million Africans will wake up for the first time in their lives without owing you or me a penny ..." (cited in Pilger 2005).

I cannot speak for the majority I don't often think about the foreign debt that my country (Australia) owes, as I'm too self-adsorbed in trying to keep myself financially afloat. Although in saying this, it doesn't mean that I don't think about or understand the correlation between the public issue of foreign debt in a globalised world and my private troubles – trying to earn enough money for my own needs or in fact others' needs (see C. Wright Mills 1959). More to the point, I don't think this debt reduction plan had any immediate consequence for those 280 million Africans of which Geldof spoke. For the vast majority, life did not change. They are still going hungry, there is still no clean water, and there are no more jobs or generic anti-retroviral medicines. Children did not wake up with school uniforms on the bed (for that matter - what bed?), lunch in a satchel alongside their books ready for them to spend the day, as is the norm for Western children or their country's elite children, in school. Nor do they have, a less corrupt government, and a vibrant working 'market' which does away with inequality, unemployment and distributes wealth evenly.

Headlines, such as "Far from challenging the G8's role in Africa's poverty, Geldof and Bono are legitimising its power", "[T]he G8 Summit: A Fraud And A Circus" and "Spin, Lies and Corruption" were published by politically engaged news outlets, penned by activists and journalists alike, who could see through the rhetoric and glamour of the facile and empty promises to bring about opportunities for equality to those who are trapped and experiencing this "...unescapable misfortune". As this protest accurately suggested, the debt reduction promises that were hailed for their effectiveness and provoked such jubilation, did, in fact, prove to be fraudulent. As George Monbiot reported information, circulated from leaked documents obtained by the World Development Movement on July 15, which showed four European directors from the IMF were already in the process of overturning the debt reduction plan that was instituted at Gleneagles 2005. On July 19 an announcement was made that the extra monies promised for aid and debt relief were in actual fact the same, a further death blow to the

G8 commitments came eleven days later when the US along with Australia, China and India undermined the Kyoto protocol. Being signatories to Kyoto protocol is not in these countries national interests. The World Bank also put the dagger in by stating that the G8 had not wiped the debt of the poorest nations, they had only provided repayment relief till 2008 (9 June 2005). As John Pilger argues, the 55 billion for Africa really amounts to 1 billion over 18 countries. Far short of the headlines displayed in the *London Observer* on 12 June 2005. Notwithstanding that the debt relief package required the African nations to accept conditionality's which were based "... on vicious, discredited economic programmes ..." such as boosting the private sector or eliminate impediments for private investment (Pilger, 2005:1). Meanwhile, the UN announced that the promised money, from the same summit, for famine relief in Niger and Mali fell enormously short of what was really needed and thought promised (2005:1-2).

Supposedly, globalisation will bring about equality – through privatisation, a liberalised market, deregulation, and the promotion of individual responsibility all of which underpins the global economic framework. This notion that globalisation can create equality, however, is a contradictory one. In many élite's minds' economic liberalism does not need to be altered. In fact, they argue neo-liberalism opens up markets to free trade and an international division of labour which is economically beneficial for all. Moreover, it strives toward little government intervention as in the broad sense will eliminate the state corruption which plagues developing nations. It is also argued trade between countries will promote global stability.

According to the National Intelligence Council (a U.S. government center for strategic thinking) the 'successful' development formula is simple and universal and thus, it can work in Africa, Asia and the Pacific region – these governments just need to get on board. And once there, no matter which position they occupy, they should feel privileged to be on the same playing field as the richest nations. Therefore, the answer articulated by David Gordon, Vice Chairman for the National Intelligence Council in conjunction with the release of its latest report, *Mapping the Global Future*, concludes that, in relation to globalisation "[T]he risk is that the gap between the 'haves' and 'have-nots' will widen – unless the 'have-not' countries pursue policies that support the application of new technologies, such as *good governance, universal education and market reforms*" (The Globalist, February 11, 2005). All of which seem good in themselves, yet it would seem that the rich nations are forgetting history. The U.S. or European countries have not lend themselves to good governance. Western corporations bribe developing nations in order for trade deals and business to take place. But there is corruption and *then there's* corruption. The question could be asked, are Western governments not full of corruption themselves? Or they are more cunning, as being seen in the current 'Food-for-Oil' - Cole inquiry in Australia, or the ever expanding U.S. lobby group business (see Cornwell 2006). This, too, is notwithstanding the illegal wire-tapping or the Abu Ghraib abuses which are presently plaguing the Bush Administration (Goldenberg, January 2006; Leopold January 2006; Goldenberg, February 2006; Hendren, October 2004). Perhaps it really just comes down to the fact that imperialism continues to reign and is an implicit component of not only the U.S. foreign policy, but others as well. In other words, development is not the tear-jerking appeal made by Tony Blair's pre-election campaigning for humanitarian concern for the world's poor (Monbiot, May 2005) nor is

it reflected in George W. Bush's rhetoric of helping the poorest nations move toward good governance but a one-size-fits-all straight jacket

"[T]he United States is ready to eliminate all tariffs, subsidies and other barriers to free flow of goods and services as other nations do the same. This is key to overcoming poverty in the world's poorest nations" (International Herald Tribune, September 2005)

In reality the expressed humanitarian concern is only to be carried out if it advances the G8 nations' economies, but more specifically, important U.S. priorities. This is clearly demonstrated, for example, in the following statement released in a White House document that refers to the TRIPS agreement. "President Bush secured agreement with leaders on a G8 Leaders Statement urging action against intellectual property rights piracy and counterfeiting". Under this agreement local pharmaceutical company's have found it increasingly difficult to overcome the patents for anti-retroviral medicines, which in turn has had a direct bearing on many of the poor in Asia and Africa who have been infected HIV/Aids by severely restricting their opportunity to gain access to this much needed medication. Meanwhile, John Bolton's appointment to the UN has been memorable as he has attempted to eradicate the mention of the Millennium Development Goals from impending documents to be signed by world leaders during the UN Summit (The New York Times, September 2005).

But how does this relate to Thailand and more specifically, the Thai sex worker and her desire to work in international sex industries. Many of the U.S. based advocates who argue against recognising prostitution as work see poverty, like militarism, as a contributing factor which pushes women into this industry. Women are often forced, it is argued, to enter prostitution to feed their families, because their traditional means of employment, agriculture has been modernised. Those same advocates object to developing nations either for legalising or just turning a blind-eye to their sex industry's and yet they did not lobby against their own governments' decision to further continue and endorse its economic programs which continue to *reproduce* and maintain poverty. Alongside the feminist coalitions such as the *Coalition Against Trafficking in Women* (CATW), the Christian Right coalition vigorously oppose prostitution and argue that prostitution and sex trafficking are one and the same "[T]he 'abolitionists' truly believe all prostitution is trafficking, and if a woman says she did enter it voluntarily, she's mistaken". In their opposition the Coalition argues that any country which is turning a blind eye because it is a profitable industry of globalisation is promoting the exploitation of women, and are taking a hypocritical stance (see CATW; Pasuk, Sungsidh & Nualnoi 1998). The concept of supply and demand has a fundamental relationship to neoclassical economics. However, still, there was no public protest from the American anti-prostitution feminists or the Christian Right coalition at the lack of U.S. commitment to the G8 promises. Although an unlikely coalition as they joined forces in the global fight to overcome sex trafficking and prostitution they were successful as they lobbied the Bush Administration over the dehumanising treatment toward women in prostitution and sex trafficking; terms, which they argue and endorse as synonymous.

The coalitions influence came under the guise of a domestic 'violence against women' Act, but its influence has now gone beyond that realm into foreign policy to bring about the *Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act* of 2000 (TVPA) and the establishment by the State Department of its *Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in*

*Persons*, whose legislative responsibility rests in annually producing a *Trafficking in Persons Report* (TIP) which monitors and scrutinises each country's ability and effort to overcome human trafficking. Thailand is considered the Southeast Asian hub for women being trafficked both into international sex industries as well as its own. Thailand has been threatened with losing its current TIP status (level 2) if it does not improve its ability to monitor and protect its borders and entry ports thereby working toward the eradication of the sex industry and trafficking of foreign women through its territory. Furthermore, this unlikely coalition successfully lobbied the U.S. administration to include in its *Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act* of 2003 the stipulation that international organisations, such as Empower in Thailand, only receive funds from USAid if they condemn prostitution (McKelvey, 2004:20). And since it is believed that only poor women are sexually exploited and find their way into this arena, either because of the concept of supply and demand or their supposed lack of choice in employment, I would argue that the G8 Summit nations and in particular, the U.S. derailment of helping to alleviate global poverty directly affects Thai sex workers.

### **Methodology:**

During my ethnographic field work, on the sex tourism industry, I concentrated on two bars – an open beer bar in Patpong and an expatriate bar in the Nana District in Bangkok. In addition, I spent time in Singaporean bars which operated outside of the legal Singaporean sex industry in 2002-2003. Although this was not my first time Thailand, however, as I'd spent time familiarising myself with a general overview of the sex industry the previous year, I chose these bars based on the reception that I was given. There were some bars that it became apparent I posed a risk to trade. Whilst this study is not representative of the entire Thai sex industry or its workers it makes a contribution to the field. Furthermore, even though the number of participants interviewed is not large (45), I maintain, that their voices are still valid. I do not try and generalise their life experiences in part, because I consider this as a flaw in the works of authors such as Kathleen Barry, Donna Hughes and Janice Raymond, or the International Justice Mission's President and CEO, Gary Haugen, amongst others. Mainly because as with any other individuals' experience it is their own, and I argue that there is a gap in the literature and methodology where a micro perspective is required which focuses on the non victimisation of these women. While I was able to interview women that had been involved in illegal migration, I have not just taken their word at face value; I was able to corroborate their story. This happened during the course of my fieldwork, as I interviewed other participants such as their colleagues, family, friends and NGOs of the study. I am aware that many Thai women are exploited and I do not wish to trivialise their experiences by discounting them, or through my argument that *all* women are not victims. But many of the participants in this study are politically engaged, they too have an understanding of C. Wright Mills concept of *Sociological Imagination* – public issues and private troubles.

### **An overview of the old and new economic policies:**

Whilst the issue of poverty dominates the existing literature of the Thai sex industry (see Bishop & Robinson 1998; Robinson 1993; Poulin 2004), there are: nonetheless other explanations of why Thai women become involved in sex work (see Ghosh 1990; Pasuk

& Baker 1998; Truong 1990; Askew 1998; Hemming & Piper, forthcoming; Hemming; see also Mills 1997) and amongst these are: that the women are creating their own life chances which will enable them to have a life-style that they want, they want; the identity of being modern '*thansamay*' and of course the economics – sex work gives them a better financial return for their labour. These aspects will be discussed later in the paper, but for now I will return to the topic of poverty, and the historical impact made upon Thai women from policies developed and implemented by the Thai government and other international bodies during the 1970s. During this turbulent period, the Thai government was encouraged by the World Bank to implement tourism as a development strategy. After the Vietnam War, from which Thailand had developed an entertainment infrastructure, it needed foreign capital to modernise. Despite the fact that the late President Kennedy had already tactically devised a two-fold plan: where tourism would be the non-military strategy which could achieve both political stability in the region, and ensure the U.S. national security (Truong, 1990:116).

The blame, however, cannot be solely placed on these developments. Domestic policies such as Thailand transforming its economic policies away from a traditional agricultural economy to an export economy also contributed to the adoption of tourism as a policy (see Pasuk & Baker 1998). Thailand, in conjunction with changes in the world economy, also changed its policy choices due to the internal changes such as the new alliances being made between the rising middle-class for control of the state apparatus (Truong, 1990:158). Businessmen started to control the direction of development, rather than the government (Pasuk & Baker, 1998:6). Due to these development strategies, inequality was increasing among the different regions and it started to become quite obvious that Thailand was 'Bangkok', and as a result, the rural regions were plundered to support Bangkok's growing business centres and its importance to the global economy. Adopting tourism as a policy further opened the way for foreign investors, which included U.S. interests, and the rising Thai middle-class to join together in business ventures to provide a formidable tourism industry. This saw the further demise of rural jobs for women but a growth in employment in the urban centres and in the service or entertainment industry. Sex tours were advertised international escort agencies were increasing and sexual services were valued—added to many venues such as hotels, massage parlours or bars.

In keeping with the formula promoted by the National International Council, good governance is an interesting notion within Thailand, particularly as Prime Minister Thaksin has just called a snap-election for April 2. Thaksin has come under immense political pressure because his family recently sold, tax-free, their stake in telecommunications company, Shin Corp, which netted a profit of US\$1.9bn as well as allowing a national asset to fall into the hands of Singaporean investors (see *BBC News*, 'Thai premier calls snap election' Friday, 24 February 2006, *Bangkok Post* 'Bangkok security tightened' 2006). Many of Thaksin's critics, such as M.R. Rumpiapha Kasemri (widow of the late former ambassador to the U.S. and His Majesty's private secretary) are claiming "Mr Thaksin [is] an "immoral man" who presided over several corruption scandals" (*Bangkok Post* 'Social 'elite' call on King to appoint PM' Monday 6 march, 2006). This assertion comes in light of previous accusations toward his dubious and corrupt business practices. In 2001 Thaksin had been cleared of any wrong doing by Thailand's constitution court and Securities and Exchange Commission after being indicted by the National Counter-Corruption Commission (NCCC), for not declaring

US\$100 million in assets in 1997. Furthermore, he tried to hide these assets by putting shares in various people's names; his wife, driver, security guards and maids (Greenfeld 2001). However, according to Professor Medhi Krongkaew, Thaksin is technically not breaking the law. "Stock which is sold in the stock market of Thailand, the SET, is tax free".

Despite this, Medhi acknowledges and promotes a change in the law, because although this law is decades old and was good for the past development of Thailand, in today's economy, it "will create greater inequality in society". However, in an attempt to off-set the criticism, Thaksin *did* pledge US\$1 million to his own foundation to be used for distance education (Seminar - Australian National University, 10 February, 2006). The quandary which overshadows this episode is that the Thai people, who themselves pay 10% tax, are wondering why the Prime Minister is not looking out for the national interests of the country since Thai leaders adopt a patronage relationship toward the citizenry (see Mulder 2000:45,57,61,62). Although, it could be argued that within the concept of *bunghun*<sup>3</sup> Thaksin's responsibility of *bunghun* toward his family members has taken precedence over his official or formal *bunghun* relationship; that is toward his people.

What is troubling for Medhi Krongkaew is that Thailand's income inequality, which is measured by the Gini index, now indicates Thailand to be among the highest in the world. In keeping with this, Thaksin needed to demonstrate his further concern and responsibility toward his constituency. However, if Thaksin has only committed a cultural error then reports from both *The Nation* and *The Bangkok Post* making the claim of him paying for supporters to go to Sanam Luang and protest against the anti-Thaksin protesters become highly disturbing (*Bangkok Post* 'Social 'elite' call on King to appoint PM' Monday 6 March, 2006; Somroutai Sapsomboon & Supalak Ganjanakhundee, 4 March 2006). The criticism does not end there; Thaksin has been blamed by other critics of human rights violations in his dealing with the war on drugs in early 2003. However, by 2004 there were 2500 corpses with no accountability toward them; this is notwithstanding his expanding control over the media, and his self-aggrandising success in dealing with poverty (Bamford and Chanyapate 2006). It is said, Thaksin hands out 'state' money when confronted with needy people, as a vote gaining strategy (Medhi Krongkaew 2006). Thaksin, is seen as not the prime minister of Thailand, but its' 'CEO'.

Furthermore, Thaksin is not alone in this type of behaviour. Many former Thai leaders, including previous kings, who too have had an obligatory paternalistic and patronage relationship toward their citizenry, have also developed its economy but only in the interest its élite. Historically, kings' Mongkut (1851-67) and Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) negotiated unequal treaties with Western imperialistic powers – which eventually transformed every sphere of Siam's life. Such aspects are the Westernisation of the social and political realms. Eventually there was a move away from the absolute monarchy to military rule, which in turn progressed to a more democratic system, but with each political change came an increase in prostitution because of different policy and geo-

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<sup>3</sup> Bunghun relationships are social relationship expressed between parents, elders, and teachers in a ritual or moral manner. There are two levels of relationship in which this concept is exercised – the intimate and formal. It is at the formal level that can be applied to the political realm where the relationship is of unequal power and seen in patronage (Mulder 2000).

political foci. It began with the West not approving of the Thai polygamy system. To the West, this system barbaric and uncivilised therefore, but with the end of slavery, many of the freed women chose to enter prostitution, rather than be 3<sup>rd</sup> wife or *Mia noi* (minor wife) to the élite, and found employment in brothels. Also during the late 1800s and early 1900s, Thai women underwent 'cosmetic' changes for political economic purposes in an attempt to enhance their attractiveness to Western males thereby, among other reasons, increasing trade. For instance, they were encouraged to grow their hair long to resemble European women because from a distance Thai women with their hair cropped and wearing a sarong around their waist were often not distinguishable from their male counterpart.

To varying degrees these changes were also class related. Furthermore, as Craig Reynolds argues, culture policy and national identity were being forged by political means (1991). With the demise of the absolute monarchy Cultural Mandates emerged, and under the leadership of Field Marshal Plaek Phibun, the concepts of Thai identity and its national security merged. Meanwhile, Cultural mandates went as far to prescribe correct dress; for example, the sarong was not to be worn in public, within the capital, and betel-nut chewing was outlawed: Western males did find blackened teeth attractive. Urban Thais were subjected to further social changes such as, for men they were to kiss their wife goodbye each morning and women, were to wear hats (Reynolds 1991:1-35). With the adoption of these Cultural Mandates, social norms were linked to national identity hence, it became un-Thai not to comply and specifically for the Thai women's identity. Robinson (1993) argues that during the 1970s and 1980s poor women were encouraged by provincial governors to enter the service industry to enable Thailand in its ability to develop and become a global economic actor. All Thais were asked to consider what their role could be to project Thailand into the globalised economy. It was their nationalistic duty to assist Thailand in this way, and thus with the demise of agricultural employment and the traditional employment of rural women, it was their duty to migrate to urban centres and find employment which was plentiful in the service industry.

It was argued in the 1970s that sex tourism – bringing the North to the South, would only be a temporary measure for Thailand, it was a necessary evil needed to draw the much needed foreign currency, as a way to finance its development policies. Predictably, it became a very lucrative industry. But at this point, I will return to Gordon's formula for development laid out in *Mapping the Global Future*. Albeit briefly, I have discussed good governance, and now I will move to education.

Historically, it has been noted in Leslie Ann Jeffrey's book *Sex and Borders* that women, with the abolishment of slavery, needed to be educated in order to live a productive life. Despite this fact, King Chulalongkorn declared that it would be an impossible task since there were enormous national budget constraints (2002:11). Consequently, many women went into prostitution to support themselves. However, education reform in Thailand has been successful. According to Pasuk and Baker, the rise in enrolment for higher education rose from 8% to 13% between 1987 and 1994, accordingly, the statistics are Upper Secondary 24%-33% and Lower Secondary 33%-63% (1998:146). In 2001, as indicated in a government document *Development of Education in Thailand* (UNESCO), the retention rate for the various levels of education were Primary 87.6, Lower Secondary

95.6, Upper Secondary 81.6 – General 86.9 and Vocational 75.1. The literacy rate, is the highest functional literacy rate in Asia, rising from 50 per cent in 1950 to 85.5 in the mid-1980s (U.S. Library of Congress) and now it has risen to 97 per cent (M), and 94 per cent (F) for the age group of 15 and over (World Bank, UNDP, CIA Government Publication, cited by ILO updated March 2005), however UNESCO cites it at 95 per cent overall. The reforms developed under the Ministry for Education's Strategic Plan (2004) are to continue to help Thai people to deal with globalisation. The Compulsory Education Act, requires all children between the ages of 7-16 to have 12 years of schooling however, this is often difficult in the rural regions because of the lack of teachers rural children are unable to reach even a portion of the required schooling.

Thailand has been conscious of the need to educate its people and since 1997, the new Constitution has stated, that the government was responsible for education due to the changing economic and social environment (National Report 2004). With that in mind, reform of the system began in 1999, to ensure that life-long learning was possible. The Thai government understands for it and its people to be competitive in a globalised world, the education system needs to prepare students for professions as well as relevant training for the local conditions and requirements in which its citizens will work (UNESCO:6; National Report 2004).

This is very impressive for a developing nation. Not only does Thailand have a tiered educational system that prepares its people around their interests and abilities but it also has built into the system a flexibility that permits adult learning that resembles a professional development system. However, with further examination of different bodies of literature, an understanding might be gained as to the influence of and the reasoning behind the World Bank, IMF and other international institutions actions. According to Marjorie Griffin Cohen (2000), in 1999 educators around the world "became riveted on the WTO" when the U.S. Trade Ambassador Charlene Barshefsky announced prior to the Seattle meeting that the U.S. wanted free trade in education and health to be included in the new round of negotiations. In 1998, the U.S. had earned \$265 billion in service exports, which supported four million jobs and thus they wanted to open up the market (Barshefsky 1999 cited in Cohen, 2000:1). Unbeknown to the general public, negotiations over education at all levels have proceeded, even though the Seattle WTO meeting was in many ways a failure. The WTO regards 'barriers' to trade, as restricting the ability for "private providers to compete for students". These barriers include the existence of government monopolies, the inability for foreign institutions to be recognised as a degree-granting institution, restrictions on recruiting foreign teachers, and high government subsidies to local institutions (Cohen, 2000:11). From this, it becomes clear that the U.S. wants a market that provides *it* with a financial and human capital return.

Similarly, Thailand is concentrating on its ability to train its people to have human capital. Vocational training is an important function of the system and government commitment. However, Paul Cammack manages to put an interesting twist on the subject. In his article, *What the World Bank Means by Poverty Reduction, and Why it Matters*, he argues that the World Bank is committed to poverty reduction but it is conditional, its goal is to change social relations and institutions in the developing world (2004:190). This becomes important when words, such as development, aid or financial assistance are spoken, the general public thinks that genuine concern is being expressed by wealthy governments or institutions. Little do they understand that behind this façade

and rhetoric are conditionalities which will increase the likelihood of poverty. According to Cammack, poverty reduction is focused on “promoting the productive use of labor”. This is not for socioeconomic benefit, but “the promotion of strategies that would increase the productivity of labour and competitiveness across the world” (1004:194). The World bank has no thought to move away from a neo-liberal framework, if anything it is a shift toward “‘deep’ neoliberalism” (Cammack, 2004:192).

Furthermore, the purpose and promotion of education within this overarching understanding expressed by the World Bank to endorse the concept that “[T]he majority of the world’s poor were to be groomed as a future proletariat”. Consequently, the World Bank only perceives poverty reduction as a means to change whatever society, meanwhile only to embed a competitive market, within its borders. Thereby, the notion of universal education which Gordon articulates is not for the benefit of the developing nation or its people but for the further development of the richest nations.

In its educational reforms the Thai government engage in the rhetoric of preparing its citizenry for the impact globalisation has, and will continue to have on them but in reality, the true meaning becomes starker when the *Education Council Crisis Recovery Plan* document is examined (2005). As the Thai government remains bedfellows with the WTO, both reiterate the importance of tourism to orchestrate the expansion and growth of an open market upon the Thai economy. Fundamentally, the *Education Council Crisis Recovery Plan* identifies principle areas that have been affected by the Boxing Day tsunami subsequently the tourism workforce has been drastically impacted through “deaths, disappearances, and abandonment” and subsequently this workforce needs to be replenished. Therefore, training and expansion to tourism products and areas need to be considered (2005:1). Human capital is of the utmost importance to both the WTO and the Thai government. There is a need to educate individuals, in order for them to begin their productive labour in an industry that has an estimated value of 490 billion baht for the local economy. This is astronomical when you understand that tourism leakage from Thailand is estimated at 70 per cent of all monies spent (Nondhanada Intarakomalyasut, 2004:1; UNEP 2002).

In tandem with the Thai educational system, the Thai economy, and the reinforced ideology of the WTO and World Bank and aid donors are closely examined, it becomes apparent that just one goal is to be realised for the later actors, that is “...the whole of the ‘aid community’ is to be drawn into the strategy of global mobilisation of the productive labour of the poor” and not a seriousness of eradicating poverty (Cammack, 2004:191). Or as Mark Berger argues, that “[T]he Vietnam War proved to be a watershed for ‘Third Worldism’ and an important turning point for the US-led effort to manage the ‘Third World’ (1994:259). In light of this revelation, it is little wonder why there are many problematic aspects when you further consider the social impacts on the Thai poor as a consequence of the World Bank’s programs.

Therefore, before I turn my focus to securitisation and the sex worker, I will briefly begin to show reasons why many Thai women do enter sex work rather than other employment. This will further reveal that the management formula employed by the U.S. government, alongside its other wealthy cohorts and international financial institutions. In 1997 Thailand experienced an economic crisis, plunging many into unemployment, and it was claimed that this further forced women into sex work and made them more vulnerable to

being [sex] trafficked. Yet, with the estimated US\$124 million trafficking business (CATW cited in Poulins, 2004:2) and a sex industry with an estimated value of between \$4 billion annually (Bishop and Robinson 1998:vi) and 100 billion baht valued-added the Thai economy continued to flourish with this informal economic sector (Pasuk et al, 1998:213). According to Supara Janchitfah (a Bangkok Post journalist) the World Bank's focus on export competitiveness is not helping Thai workers or farmers. The World Bank's Country Director in Thailand J. Shivakumar contends that Thailand needs to have a competitive export industry to reduce its poverty problem and in all likelihood consumers will benefit with lower prices and better products. Export performance is the only strategy to overcome its economic crisis (Supara Janchitfah, 1999:1). However, stories such as "Soy's", contradict the view that garment industry workers are benefiting from the 2,248.08 billion baht export business as has been suggested. Soy is only earning 45 baht a day. Yes, it could be argued that at least she has a job albeit not one that allows her to even enjoy a decent meal at the end of her day to replenish her strength to go back to work the next day (Supara Janchitfah, 1999:1). Supara Janchitfah argues that the Thai branch of the World Bank is not working in for the betterment of the Thai worker, neither for the eradication of poverty or inequality, only interest groups, big business and the political élite (1999:3). Moreover, both the World Bank and the IMF encourage the privatisation of government infrastructure which includes schools (1999:3). According to Jean-Louis Sarbib, the World Bank's Senior Vice President for Human Development,

"[W]ealthy donor countries need to help developing countries, which are serious about giving all their boys and girls a quality primary school education, with the additional finance and support they will need... Progress on education – as with many other development challenges – becomes possible when political will and resources come together" (World Bank Development Indicators 2005).

With naïvety, it could be asked 'whose' resources? This, then shows the true workings of the national government, foreign governments, and multinational corporations when they invest or establish policies, as well as the international financial institutions set up to assist the enhancement and development of these struggling countries. No matter, how the North sets the formula for success, it is likely that failure or at least a non competitive economy will continue to exist.

### **Securitisation:**

My argument in this paper is that the Thai sex worker is being securitised by the U.S. government because of its effort to constantly *manage* the Third World, leading the developing nation to be in competition against each other in a race to reach the bottom first. In other words, these countries have to employ the "TINA principle" (Tabb, 1997:20 cited in Greig, 2003:110). Even though Thailand is better positioned than many, yet, with a CEO as a prime minister instead of a politician, the image being conjured up, particularly with the memory of the 1997 economic crisis still fresh in people's mind, is that Thailand does need to, again, put on the "Golden Straitjacket". Political and economic decisions can only be made, with this in mind: that a country's economy will grow albeit the growth will benefit the élite, while across countries and within countries inequality and poverty increases. However, although the poor are to be the mobile workforce, it is now becoming evident that wealthy countries are rethinking the impact that [illegal] migration is having on its national interests. Anne Gallagher questions the

motive of these nations as they use humanitarian language to speak of human [sex] trafficking, but in reality they are protecting their sovereignty and borders (2001:975).

Thai women have become part of the [illegal] migration 'problem'. What was manifested from the interviews that I conducted was that many of the women had entered the sex work industry for reasons not solely related to poverty. Although their choices of course have been curtailed through the U.S., WTO, World Bank and IMF's intervention and influence on the economy and via tourism's promotion because of its financial benefits to the economy, as seen by both Bishop and Robinson and Pusak et al's estimates, women do weigh up the best financial return for their labour alongside their desire to become modern (*thansamay*), travel and hence improve their life chances. Many of the women I spoke with were in the same situation as Soy, earning a meagre wage, until they went into the entertainment sector.

### **Analytical framework:**

In keeping with this, my analytical framework to examine this industry and its workers is the Copenhagen School of securitisation (Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde 1998). The Copenhagen School authors have broadened the concept of security to include traditional and non-traditional issues – military, environment, economic, political and societal sectors thereby, challenging the state-centric position (Buzan et al 1998). According to Buzan et al, non-traditional security concerns are challenging to the dominant realism and neo-realism school of thought, linking the international political economy and economic-military sectors by moving toward a social constructivist approach (McSweeney, 1999:3; 1998). However, technically it remains within the orthodox (realism) framework. Despite that fact, the Copenhagen School is useful and this paper further focuses on the non-traditional *societal* sector. Buzan et al's framework refocuses the securitisation process to include non-state actors – a securitising actor-speech act, referent object, an appropriate audience and an existential threat (1998). A successful securitisation process is only determined by the fulfilment of specific units of security analysis, the actors and audience negotiate the claim of an existential threat and the issue is addressed by using emergency measures (Buzan et al, 1998:36). Within this process, the authors have specified units of security and the societal sector's unit of analysis is the national or religious identity.

Human [sex] trafficking is now on the international agenda and as such, this permits a securitising actor to use a speech act to convince an appropriate audience that there is an existential threat to a referent object. Destination countries' governments see trafficking in the context of the 'politics of migration control' (Gallagher 2001; Wong forthcoming). There are many problematics with the Copenhagen School theory such as the speech act, static identity and gender issues (see McSweeney 1999; Hansen 2000; Williams 1998) however, I concede that for the purpose of this paper, it clarifies the argument that whilst the U.S. (along with other wealthy nations) continues to increase poverty through its economic globalisation and foreign policies, it believes that its national security is *now* being challenged. However, as discussed in other articles (see Hemming & Piper forthcoming; Hemming, 2005), I find it necessary to expand the notion of the Copenhagen School's concept of identity beyond the national or religious to be inclusive of a gender identity. As argued by Hemming and Piper (forthcoming), "the Thai (woman's) national identity has been shaped by the occurrence of sex work". In a similar

way to the universal concept of the woman, the Thai woman's, identity is based on motherhood – purity and self-sacrificing. This then is under an existential threat.

Before proceeding I need to return for the moment to the shortcomings of the Copenhagen School theory. Firstly the speech act, which begins the securitising process, becomes problematic since the authors of the Copenhagen School only permit the élite of organisations to have a voice in the securitising process. The reason is that the élite has social capital and this form of capital provides legitimacy to the securitising act as they utter the 'speech act' (Buzan et al, 1998:33). From their position of authority, the bourgeois voice is heard whilst the referent object – the Thai women is quieted. This has happened because the Thai sex trafficked women is referred to as a victim, she is portrayed to be incapable of expressing any subjectivity or choice (see Barry 1995: Leuchtag, 2003:10-15), even though they have voluntarily taken up sex work.

Another contestable issue is that it permits the securitising actor to freeze the concept of identity (see McSweeney 1999; Albert 1998). Arguably societal identity is not a fixed concept and this then makes an unrealistic starting point for the securitisation process. Unrealistic, however, it has been beneficial for the securitising actors to convince an appropriate audience of an existential threat against the Thai women's identity.

#### **Non-traditional actors:**

According to the Copenhagen School the securitising actor, who are an anti-prostitution feminist coalition and the Christian Right<sup>4</sup>, performs the speech act. Initially, the speech act was formed by this alliance to the Clinton Administration at the time when the administration was supporting, in principle the United Nation's Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDEW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Both the Christian Right and the anti-prostitution feminist alliance argue that these Conventions place the security and sovereignty of the U.S. at risk. The basis for this argument lies in the fact that the Conventions try to enforce actions, ideas and values which are in opposition to the foundational ideology of the U.S. In the CEDEW the UN suggested that any country which had a sex industry should legalise it. However, when success for the feminist-right-winged alliance was not apparent with Clinton and a changing of the guard become evident, the Bush Administration was targeted. The anti-prostitution feminist coalition and the Christian Right lobbied the U.S. government (audience) and successfully influenced both its domestic and foreign policies. This unlikely alliance came about because the feminist coalition knew that in order to get [sex] trafficking into the international discourse they needed politically influential partners. The Christian Right were politically closer to the neo-conservatives, which dominate the Bush Administration, therefore success was anticipated. What the feminist coalition contributed to the alliance was an ideology that vigorously declared prostitution to not only be degrading, but an act of violence against women, which is in line with the Christian Rights' attitude. Both groups acknowledged that it would take a concerted effort if they were to convince the Bush Administration that all sex work should be condemned (Hemming & Piper forthcoming). The feminist-right-winged alliance will not

<sup>4</sup> The more prominent spokespersons are Donna Hughes, Kathleen Barry, both part of CATW as well as academics, Charles Colson (leader of the evangelical movement), and Charles Horowitz (Abolitionist Movement).

concede that women ordinarily would choose prostitution, unless they were coerced and exploited. The alliance continuously maintains that prostitution and sex trafficking are synonymous terms. Hughes and Barry declare that if a country, like Thailand, has a sex industry, its government is promoting sex trafficking.

The existential threat, which arguably can be extrapolated from the feminist-right winged coalition's speech act, is that these women are in a life threatening situation – they are at the risk of violent acts being done against them by the pimps and 'johns', furthermore disease, illegal forms of transport, and conditions of slavery are life threatening. Also, in Thai culture women achieve high social status in their role as wife and mother. They are self sacrificing and virtuous, no longer a person, but sacred (Mulder, 2000:70-71). This is further supported by Harrison's argument that Thai women are defined by the institution of the family; their sexuality is monitored and controlled by the binaries of good/bad women (1999:168). However, this does not provide any space for a counter-narrative that Thai women would choose sex work or engage in sex trafficking and not be a victim, but with a constructed and fixed identity it then can be argued this identity is under threat.

Accepting the claim of an existential threat the U.S. Senate established the State Department's *Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons*, headed by former Republican Congressman John Miller. It is the legislative responsibility of this office to produce an annual report – *Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP)*. The U.S. assesses each country's, excluding their own, performance under a three-tiered system according to its efforts in combating human trafficking from its borders. Thailand currently is on tier 2 however, because it is the hub for the Southeast Asia region for receiving, sending and transient, the U.S. has threatened to downgrade its classification. The incentive for Thailand to comply with U.S. demands, will be to continue to receive non-humanitarian monies and not have economic sanctions imposed (O'Beirne, 2002:2; Associated Press 2003). Furthermore, Thailand does not want to sour diplomatic relations as this could impinge upon many aspects of the US/Thai relationship<sup>5</sup>. For instance, the joint military operation – *Cobra Gold Exercise*, from which Thailand gains much of its invaluable military training, plus the shared intelligence to fight drug trafficking and terrorism. In 2003, Thailand was elevated to Major Non-NATO Ally status, which to some extent is the position that they have wanted since the 1950s and 1960s – this reflects the good will between the two countries and provides economic rewards for Thailand (US Embassy in Thailand 2003). To show its further cooperation, Thailand has permitted U.S. sponsored

<sup>5</sup> Thailand's armed forces are currently estimated at 314,200 active personnel. Thailand's military expenditure was approximately \$1.8 billion in 2000, which is 1.8 percent of its Gross Domestic Product. Since the 1950s, the United States has been furnishing Thailand with military equipment and assistance. According to the UN Register of Conventional Arms, from 1993 to 2003, Thailand received 238 armored vehicles, 48 combat aircraft, 125 battle tanks, 40 large caliber artillery systems, two warships, and 166 missile launchers. According to U.S. government data, between 1990 and 2001 Thailand received approximately \$335 million in Direct Commercial Sales (DCS) and over \$100 million in Foreign Military Sales (FMS). Also during that period, Thailand received approximately \$3 million in Foreign Military Financing (FMF). The FMF, however, was distributed only in 1990. In addition to military equipment, since the early 1990s the United States has been increasing its military training programs in Thailand; sometimes reaching up to 40 joint exercise programs a year. Indeed, between 1990 and 2001 Thailand received close to \$18 million in IMET (see <http://www.cdi.org/friendlyversion/printversion.cfm?documentID=2391>).

task forces such as *Trafcord and International Justice Mission* (faith-based organisations) to conduct raids on brothels in the Northeast regions around Changi Mai, to 'rescue' sex workers (Asian Human Rights Commission 2003; SWAN 2003).

### **Thai sex worker heads north:**

However, whilst the migrant is no longer welcomed by the wealthy nations (George, 2004:172) many of my study's participants are still eager to embark on their adventures, which are deemed by those nations and specifically the U.S. as unsafe, illegal and an aggressive act against their national interests. AS the U.S. co-opted support from other nations toward its TIPs report based on national security issues, it elevated the issue of trafficking and prostitution to a securitisation level. Border protect programs are funded by the U.S. *Department of State* as well as its *Agency for International Development*, this has been happening since 2001. They have trained the Thai military and police to guard their borders - a traditional means for a non-traditional security issue.

Moreover, the stories of two women will show how both economic and technological globalisation has lured these women into illegal migration. The women involved in the sex industry are regarded as a homogenous group – that their identity is poor and unskilled and willing to sacrifice their lives for the betterment of their family. But most of the women that I interviewed were not sending remittances back to their family; in addition they were educated, albeit along the lines of the WTO and World Bank's formula – to be the mobile labour force.

Aoi came to work in Patpong after her marriage had broken up. Her family was concerned for her well-being because her ex-husband was threatening to kill her. These threats came about because his supply of drugs, alcohol and gambling had been cut off. He no longer had Aoi's income to spend. Her brother organised, with her consent, to travel to Bangkok and work in a bar there just until the ex-husband left town. Her previous employment was in a factory, where the money was not very good money. However, after spending a few months in Patpong, her earnings rose incrementally. At the open beer bar where she was employed the women were able to make the choice as to whether they wanted to be brought out by a customer. They were given a wage each month of 6,000 baht (this was almost equivalent to a pass degree graduate). After that the women negotiated with the customer on the service charge and her income could go as high as 18,000+ baht. After spending several months at the bar, Aoi and a new found friend Phi decided that they wanted to travel. Phi had been to Europe and she enjoyed her trip there but now, wanted more adventure.

Thailand has welcomed many of the effects of globalisation and amongst them, television and radio. According to Pasuk and Baker (1998:162, 165) by 1985 most urban families had a television whilst half of the rural homes owned one, but by 1996 90 per cent of all homes had televisions. It is acknowledged that television is an important conduit of cultural influence. Audiences throughout Thailand are spell bound by the soap operas that are showing changes to the cultural and social norms. These shows depict the gender role reversals and social mobility. At the same time, it is very evident that these concepts are impacting the way women are thinking about themselves and their abilities.. Furthermore, there are television and radio programs that are educating and discussing world events. The Americanisation effect has hit Thai television, radio, music and film genres. Many of

the women, along with meeting Western men have the desire to go to a Western country, just like any traveller, to discover for themselves what it is like.

Phi said, "I liked Germany. I was there for 3 months. I worked in a bar, my 'boyfriend' got me there safely and I was able to stay with him. I did trust him because I had known him for sometime".

This time both Aoi and Phi were trying to get into Singapore. They had saved their money and Phi knew a man who would be able to assist them. They both thought that the numbers of customers were diminishing because summer was coming, and the weather gets too hot for Westerners. They knew that financially, if they took an apartment together, they could pool their money and the next few months would not be too bad. But the desire to travel was there for both of them.

After making the initial contact with the 'trafficker'<sup>6</sup>, they were given a departure date and details of their accommodation in Singapore and working expectations. Just like many migrants or travellers, not everything is going to be exactly as expected however, for both these women; their stay in Singapore was a good experience. They worked in the illegal side of the sex industry; it was a profitable time for them. Many of the customers were not as exciting as those they knew from their Patpong bar but they were able to shop and sight-see during the day and work at night. They had more autonomy than a lot of women who go to other countries and this was, because they didn't need to either have family pay for the trip or borrow the money from the 'trafficker'. Singapore was a stepping stone for both these women. Their aspirations are for further trips to the North however, with the paranoia over migrants as national security threats I'm not whether this aspiration will ever be fulfilled.

There is no conclusion to this quandary. Since the U.S., in conjunction with other wealthy nations and financial institutions are determined to continue to control and manage the Third World, for its own economic benefits. Immigrants, both legal and illegal, have been the backbone of its economy expansion such as the Mexican 'wetbacks' (see Truthout 2005). But with the fear that it is losing its sovereignty rights over border control the U.S. is becoming more and more draconian in its responses as it builds a wall of protection between itself and Mexico, thereby making illegal migration a felony charge. Many Thai women are only able to proceed through immigration and customs with the help of 'traffickers' since their political identity is so constructed as a sex worker. However, their desire is quite normal but they are restricted and discriminated against because the anti-prostitution feminist and Christian Right have joined their political voice to argue that they are unable to make choices – they are unable to choose sex work and go on a working holiday.

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<sup>6</sup> These women would be considered as 'trafficked' from the definition put forward by the anti-prostitution feminist and Christian Right coalition rather than the UN's 2000 definition of trafficking.

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