

Historical and contemporary manifestations of ‘Global Britain’: A case study of Thailand

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Abstract

After the European referendum in 2016, the UK government promoted the concept of 'Global Britain' to represent British foreign policy ambitions throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. However, there has been much debate over what 'Global Britain' means for the UK's post-Brexit position in the world, and how the UK government would establish or preserve relationships with the EU and other countries in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

This study aims to explore historical and contemporary foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand. A case study approach has been applied to analyse if and how foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand have changed as the UK departs the EU within the 'Global Britain' narrative. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with thirty-four participants representing Thai elites and experts with specialised knowledge and expertise in Thai and UK relations, examining their perspectives and experiences related to the 'Global Britain' narrative and how the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept has influenced the relationship between the UK and Thailand. These narratives are then analysed with respect to historically located and realised in contemporary manifestations of concepts of informal empire. It demonstrates that the 'Global Britain' narrative in Thailand means cementing elite networks that have developed over the last four-hundred years as mutually beneficial relationships. These perspectives have dominated the 'Global Britain' concept, which focus on the legacy of British imperialism being both historically rooted and currently relevant in Thailand. The result of these partnerships is described by Evans (1979) as 'dependent development' within neo-colonialism. These dynamics were characteristic of semi-peripheral nations that still had relations with dominant countries and were able to pursue and accomplish intensive industrial development through local elites.

The research findings illustrate that the 'Global Britain' concept is failing. It is inconsistent with the British government's ambition for a radical shift in relations with Thailand and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It appears to be just a continuation of the concept of an 'informal empire', which is arguably the same approach the UK government has always wanted to adopt but could not achieve inside the EU. Therefore, the 'Global Britain' concept is shaped by informal imperial thinking. However, there is nothing new going on in Thai-UK relations beyond trade agreements. The findings suggest that the 'Global Britain' concept can be used in Thailand to strengthen Thai and British relations through cultural and social development but with little economic and political influence. This study contributed to knowledge and practice by demonstrating the legacy of the informal imperial approach as a model for Anglo-Thai foreign policy relationships. The incorporation of informal imperial legacy and dependent development into the post-Brexit concept of 'Global Britain' will help Thai and British policymakers and stakeholders, as well as those from other developing nations, in their study and understanding of contemporary and modern British policy.

Dedication

Dedicated to my parents, who are my inspiration and taught me to believe in the meaning of

Education is the key to success and unlocking the golden door of freedom.

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Author's declaration

I declare the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programs and that is that not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's work. Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author.

SIGNED: _____ DATE: _____

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List of Abbreviations

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
AMM	ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting
BBC	The British Broadcasting Corporation
BC	British Council
BCL	Borneo Company Limited
BBTC	Bombay Burma Trading Corporation
BCCT	British Chamber of Commerce
BOI	Board of Investment
CCAF	Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance
COP	Conference of the Parties
CP	Charoen Pokphand Group
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
DFID	Department for International Development
EC	European Community
EEC	European Economic Community
EEC	Eastern Economic Corridor
ETP	European Free Trade Partnership
EU	European Union
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
G20	Group of Twenty
ISI	Import Substitution Industrialisation Trap of Lesser Value-Added Output

JETCO	Joint Economic and Trade Committee
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation And Development
PCA	Comprehensive Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
RFD	Royal Forestry Department
SEATO	South East Asia Treaty Organisation
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SMES	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
TNE	Transnational Education Project
TPR	Trade Policy Review
TUBLC	Thai-UK Business Leadership Council
UKEF	UK Export Finance
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WHO	World Health Organisation

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Research rationale and justification

The aim of this study is to explore historical and contemporary manifestations of the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand. A case study approach has been applied to illustrate foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand, and to examine the concept of ‘Global Britain’ in terms of whether it can be a truly global strategy and have meaning outside the more obvious UK foreign policy priorities. Furthermore, the study considers how the UK government has utilised the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand. This thesis begins with an investigation of British foreign policy, which is changing following the UK’s departure from the European Union (EU). It reviews current literature on Brexit which focuses on promoting the ‘Global Britain’ concept in post-Brexit Britain’s foreign policy (e.g. Wright, 2017; Gamble, 2018; Oppermann, Beasley and Kaarbo, 2019). These scholars comment on what pro-Brexit politicians are saying that the Brexit phenomenon is re-establishing British liberties, protecting national self-confidence and focusing on the vision of ‘taking back control’. According to Gamble (2018), Britain is said to have an exceptional opportunity after Brexit to recover the commercial agility and entrepreneurial drive which it displayed in the imperial period. This implies a return to a greatness and independence in world affairs that had been impossible as a member of the EU, and suggests that the British people could be afforded more benefits outside the EU after forty-three years of membership.

In the same vein, much of the Brexit literature on British foreign policy emphasises nostalgia for the imperial past; the policy’s mentality and some of its ambitions strongly resonate with the concept of British global dominance during the imperial period. Thus, the ‘Global Britain’ concept is arguably just another incarnation of a traditional approach and a return to policies which depended on Britain’s former colonies as neo-colonialism in the twenty-first century. This nostalgia encourages a re-examination of the political-economic and cultural legacies of the empire, which continue to be a focus of British foreign policy in the post-Brexit period. However, in reality, the British government cannot currently build another formal empire in the manner of nineteenth-century colonialism. The imperial approach, in which the British exercised

complete sovereignty over colonies' territories, is outdated and impossible to realise because the country lacks the necessary resources and capacities. It is evident that for post-Brexit Britain, there is no way the empire can be revived (Gamble, 2018).

Much of the literature on colonial expansion has identified the features of British imperialism; it was the formal and informal exploitation of other countries by bringing them into the global economy through liberal economic policies and free trade (Gallagher and Robinson, 1953; Cain and Hopkins, 1960; Thompson, 1999; Onley, 2005; Attard and Dilley, 2013; Grocott and Grady, 2014). However, rather than studying the formal empire, this thesis will analyse the notion of an 'informal empire' as a key mechanism to explain the current configuration of the modern world, including globalism (Barton, 2014). Within the longstanding relationship between the UK and Thailand, Evans' 'dependent development' approach is one of the principal ideas underlying dependency theory, and this will be used as a general framework.

Previous studies on British foreign policy have given less attention to the idea of an 'informal empire'. A recent study by Barton (2014) contends that analysis of the process of interconnectivity known as 'globalism' has consistently neglected the concept of 'informal empire' within the transformation model. Thus, using Thailand as a case study is challenging but useful in terms of exploring Britain's nostalgia mentality and ambitious approach through the idea of an informal empire. The Siamese state was never directly colonised. However, this thesis argues that Siam (the former name of Thailand) was part of Britain's informal empire after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855. The impact of this relationship was that Britain had economic dominance in Siam and became closely associated with Siam's ruling elites, establishing elite networks to influence Siam's cultural and social development. The relationship between Britain and Siam could thus be viewed as 'mutually advantageous' for elites.

During the post-Brexit period, Thailand has been identified among British interests in the Indo-Pacific region. The UK government plans a new foreign policy toward the region, as mentioned in the Integrated Review, launched in March 2021. With deeper diplomatic and trade relationships, the UK would pursue more engagement in the Indo-Pacific in support of shared prosperity and regional stability in Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Vietnam. Notably, the administration seeks to strengthen ties with existing institutions including the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for

Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). This could lead to 'informal empire' being the pattern for Anglo-Thai relations within the 'Global Britain' concept of the post-Brexit period. In other words, the concept of 'Global Britain' might prove informed by the legacy of the informal imperial approach, which took the form of 'dependent development' in terms of political, economic and cultural dimensions among elite networks. In short, this thesis will explore the 'Global Britain' concept through the lens of an 'informal empire' in Thailand, using the idea of 'dependent development' to analyse foreign policy relations between the two states. The British imperial past, and the political-economic and cultural legacies of the empire, will be re-examined in an attempt to address British foreign policy during the post-Brexit period, and in particular, the UK's interest in the Indo-Pacific region after departing the EU.

The remainder of this chapter will briefly discuss British foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' narrative, then go on to consider the longstanding relationship between the UK and Thailand, showing the significance of this relationship as 'dependent development'. It will then outline the following chapters and the general arguments of this thesis.

1.1.1 The continuity of British foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' narrative.

British foreign policy has consistently been characterised by a global approach, mainly due to its imperial legacy (Ferhusin, 1914; Hopkins, 1960; Darwin, 1997; Harvey, 2011). Gamble (2003) suggests that the experience of hegemony and empire created the perspective that Britain should be the centre of a wider network of economics, politics and leadership. Although there have been critical academic examinations of both continuity and change in British foreign policy since the Second World War (e.g. Lee, 1996; Harvey, 2011; Johnson, 2003). The British government has attempted to maintain the country's international significance. Britain has engaged with different sets of international allegiances and engaged in multilateral power through international institutions, such as becoming a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 1945, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949, and the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1973. Notably, in 1948, Churchill's government characterised Britain's interests as being within 'three circles', namely, the British Commonwealth and Empire, the Anglosphere partnerships, and European countries. This strategy aimed to maintain British global influence after the post-war period. However, Britain had lost most of its colonies by the early 1960s, and its financial and military weakness had destroyed the British role in the

Middle East, Africa and the Asian region, particularly following the 1956 Suez Crisis. British governments then attempted to maintain global influence by shifting their role to being a transatlantic bridge between the United States and European countries. Britain's position thus changed from 'three circles' to 'two stepping-off points', a role apart from Europe and in a special relationship with the United States (Wallace, 2005), and a European role, with the application for membership of the European Community (EC) in 1961, though membership was not secured until 1973 (Oliver and Williams, 2016). It could be considered, therefore, that the British government sought to continue to influence the world after decolonisation. By the 1970s, British foreign policy was centred on both a close relationship with the US administration and on its commitment to Europe, such as by being an ally to the US during the Cold War (Niblett, 2007).

Notably, the UK has continually sought global influence in its active foreign policy towards world affairs. The British government tried to secure a leadership role in Europe based on its relationship with the US, though foreign policy centred on its relationship with the European Union in terms of economy and security. However, Eurosceptics argued that joining the EU had significantly undermined and constrained the country's global role (Lee, 1996; Geddes, 2013; Ellisin and Saunders, 2016). According to this view, the UK went from being an autonomous nation-state with global reach and influence to being increasingly subject to the EU rules and regulations, and with a loss of control in areas such as immigration and economic policy.

The decision to leave the European Union in the 2016 referendum changed the UK's global role. This could be seen in the new British foreign policy ambitions, which sought to establish the country's position outside the EU. The UK government is attempting to assert a more radical and potentially more successful role than when Britain was a member of the EU. As a result, many Brexiteers state that the Brexit phenomenon is re-establishing British liberties, protecting national self-confidence, and focusing on the vision of 'taking back control' (Gamble, 2018).

Since the 2016 referendum, the UK government's outlined plans for the 'Global Britain' concept as a framework for post-Brexit foreign policy have divided opinion. Niblett (2021) maintains that 'Global Britain' has been traditionally characterised by an adaptable global approach. However some argue that the concept of 'Global Britain' contributed to Brexit by articulating a shared imperial nostalgia within the context of British dominance through hard and soft power (Gryazin,

2021). According to former UK Prime Minister Theresa May (2016), the UK government promoted the idea of 'Global Britain' to represent British foreign policy ambitions throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. The concept arises from a shared belief in the potential of the UK's role as a global leader in both economic and security dimensions after having departed the EU (May, 2016). The British government planned to broaden its economic benefits through more beneficial trade agreements with other countries outside the EU, such as in the Middle East, Asia and Latin America (Haacke and Breen, 2018; Johnson, 2019). Similarly Liam Fox, a former Secretary of State for International Trade, affirmed in 2016 that the UK would have significant opportunities to re-establish the economic system it had successfully developed from the nineteenth century to before Britain entered the Common Market in the 1960s (Fox, 2016). In other words, the UK would develop its position as a free-trading nation within the concept of 'Global Britain'.

In addition, former UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson asserted in 2016 that the concept of 'Global Britain' could be established within the framework of the UK's military capability. In 2019, the UK government significantly increased its military and nuclear capabilities in order to be perceived as a great global power. For example, in September 2021, the UK joined the 'AUKUS' security partnership with the US and Australia to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines in the Indo-Pacific region (Kuo, 2021, O'Brien, 2021; Kaidan, 2021; McGleenon, 2021). Arguably, these post-Brexit strategies can be thought of as an effort to re-establish the dominance in economic and military power which Britain enjoyed before the decline of its historic relationships with former colonies, the Anglosphere and the British Commonwealth (Wellings and Mycock, 2019). However, the British government has indicated that the EU will continue to be the UK's regional partner. The European states will also continue to be important for British economy and security in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods (Oppermann et al., 2019; Wright, 2017). All these plans reflect the UK's continuous ambition for a global position through the 'Global Britain' concept during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

Most importantly, the UK government launched the 'Integrated Review: Global Britain in a Competitive Age' in March 2021. This review outlined new British foreign policy ambitions within the 'Global Britain' concept. Britain's reorientation towards the Indo-Pacific region has

proven a key principle in maintaining British global influence after leaving the EU. Moreover, the UK aspires to become a 'soft power' superpower by expanding British influence in the rest of the world, notably through science and technology (Integrated Review, 2021). However, the review ill-defines the meaning and purpose of the 'Global Britain' concept. As a result, there has been significant debate about what 'Global Britain' means for the UK's position in the world after its departure from the EU, and how the UK government will develop or maintain relations with the EU and other countries in the post-Brexit period. The examples above could be taken to mean that the concept of 'Global Britain' is linked to pre-existing knowledge of past imperial successes and acceptance of images of a revived empire among the British public. This view is supported by Turner (2019), who argues that 'Global Britain' constitutes not just an idea or a slogan, but a foreign policy narrative and, more specifically, the narrative of empire.

Clelia (2020) and Berry (2021)) have expressed a range of views on the pragmatic meaning of the 'Global Britain' concept. They argue that the concept of 'Global Britain' as a vision of 'Empire 2.0' has often been used to engage with the range of arguments made by Brexiteers to justify the principle of leaving the EU. The British government has placed a particular emphasis on countries with which the UK has a 'historical relationship', such as the Commonwealth, the Dominions or the Anglosphere. In other words, Brexit is an expression of imperial nostalgia, and the Conservative government wants to provide more benefits to the British outside the EU than were feasible during the forty-three years of EU membership. The UK seeks to revive colonial memories of Britain's imperial past, and to re-establish the dominance it is perceived to have had before joining the EEC in 1973. Thus, the concept of 'Global Britain' is arguably just another incarnation of a traditional approach and a return, in the post-Brexit period, to British policies which depended on its former colonies.

However, it is rarely made clear exactly what form the idea of 'Empire 2.0' might take or what its wider political implications are. Notably, the British government cannot currently build another formal empire in the manner of nineteenth-century colonialism. Nonetheless, by leaving the European Union, the UK government has promoted and restructured its foreign policy in a manner which has contributed to maintaining a nostalgic perspective of the imperial past in post-European Britain (Clelia, 2020). Specifically, the British government's restructuring is in line with its foreign policy after 1945 but before British and European integration. One of the reasons

for this could be the UK government's attempt to be flexible in promoting relationships with other countries, particularly in the areas of security and defence, free-trade systems and financial services.

This thesis argues that imperial foreign policy has been, to a certain extent, reintegrated within the framework of post-Brexit foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' concept. Although the UK government is unable to expand its dominance in line with the formal rule of the British Empire, the focus of this thesis will be on the notion of an 'informal empire', which is defined by economic dominance, cultural imperialism and governmental pressure, such as may be achieved through unequal treaties and the occasional military intervention. This notion was prevalent throughout the British imperial period, which existed from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

1.1.2 The longstanding relationship between the UK and Thailand

Britain has influenced Thailand in a longstanding relationship over the last four hundred years. The historical role of Britain was powerful in Thailand during the imperial period because Siam became part of Britain's informal empire in the nineteenth century (Jamsai, 1970; Barton, 2014; Lersatit, 2016). Britain thus had significant influence in terms of free trade, political power and diplomatic ties in Siam. Recently, both states have maintained a 'strategic partnership' in their contemporary relationships since 2014. In terms of historical links, the first recorded official contact was that of the English ship, *The Globe*, which arrived at Siam in 1612. Royal contacts were utilised as the key mechanism to encourage trading relations on both sides, which have remained important elements in the Thai-British relationship ever since (Foreign and Commonwealth Office London, 2000). However, the most important element in the development of closer relations was the arrival of Sir John Bowring. The Bowring Treaty was signed between the two states in 1855, and dealt with import and export taxes and the rights of British citizens in Siam. This treaty then became the blueprint for other treaties which Siam subsequently signed with other dominant countries, such as France and the United States. After the signing of the Bowring treaty, British trade with Siam accounted for almost 68 percent of Siam's total trade and by 1892; Britain's share had risen to 93 percent. Furthermore, British investment in the Siamese economy was highly significant, particularly in the teak industry. In 1895, Siam exported 61,800 tons of teak and most of it was controlled by British teak companies (Sophonpanich, 2011;

Barton, 2014). In 1894, Britain established financial services and banking systems in Siam, as well as London-based insurance companies, which were the main providers of insurance in Siam (Sophonpanich, 2011).

Relations between the royal families have always been central to the development of the wider partnership between the two states. For example, King Rama IV established a close personal relationship with Queen Victoria through the exchange of letters and gifts in the imperial period (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1996; 2015). The reign of King Rama V maintained Siam's independence but allowed over one hundred British experts who worked in the Siamese government to modernise politics, economics and culture in the country. Notably, King Rama V was the first King of Siam to visit Britain in 1897, and he was awarded an honorary degree by Cambridge University. By then, another important foundation element of the Thai-British relationship was education. More than fifty Thais studied in Britain during the reign of King Rama V, and by 1924 there were over two hundred. In 1932, Siam changed its political system from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy and British-educated King Rama VII, who occupied the throne at the time of the transition, was sympathetic to the cause of democratic political reform. Shortly after the political revolution in Siam, however, King Rama VII abdicated and announced his decision to live in the UK until he died in 1941 (Sophonpanich, 2011).

During the First World War, a Siamese expeditionary force was sent to France to fight with the Allies. In the Second World War, despite Thailand being officially allied with Japan, many Thais served in the British Army and London was the base for the 'Seri Thai' or 'Free Thai Movement'. Many royal family members were part of this, such as Prince Subhasvasdi, and subsequently received awards from King George VI in recognition of their services to the Allied cause. In more recent times, members of the British and Thai Royal families have been visitors to each other's countries; in particular, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited Thailand in 1972, highlighting the continuing bonds between the two monarchies.

In terms of bilateral and partnership links, the UK was a founder member of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in the 1950s, which helped to protect the Thai government against risks from external forces. In the 1970s, Thailand was dealing with a massive influx of refugees from neighbouring countries during the Cold War, and Britain provided much practical

assistance to help Thailand cope with this major challenge. Britain also supported the formation of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), in which Thailand was a gateway to the Southeast Asian region. In the early 1970s, Thailand was the largest recipient of British bilateral aid in terms of economy and culture outside the Commonwealth. That is no longer the case today, which reflects Thailand's economic growth and development (Foreign and Commonwealth Office London, 2000). From the above, it can be considered that Britain and Thailand's relations are reflected in links and contacts across a range of aspects, including economy, security and human activities, within the context of a history of Thai dependency on the UK. Most recently, since the EU referendum in 2016, Thailand and the UK have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation and become a strategic partnership, notably in the areas of economic and regional cooperation, as well as in global problems of mutual interest (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). From this perspective, the UK government has friendly relations with Thailand.

This thesis argues that the UK government could easily reconfigure its influence in Thailand as an old friend in the Southeast Asian region. It is likely that the relationship between the two countries would be able to develop flexibly, particularly in terms of trade and investment in Thailand. Since officially departing the EU in 2020, the UK has been focusing on trade policy as a priority, and seeking more flexible commercial activities as a means of finding new trade partners globally. As Britain's influence in Thailand has been maintained through a free-trade capitalist model and Western values since the nineteenth century, this is a good opportunity for the UK government to ensure bilateral relations with Thailand as a longstanding trade partnership in the Southeast Asian region.

Based on the research of Daddow (2019), the future success of 'Global Britain' is dependent on whether it is meaningful to international stakeholders. This to a large extent can be measured through their understanding of the 'Global Britain' as a concept that establishes a coherent approach to establishing a post-Brexit foreign policy. In this context, the concept could arguably be tested in Thailand through stakeholders who are elites or experts in Thai-UK relations. They may be more receptive to the 'Global Britain' project than other Southeast Asian countries which directly experienced British colonialism. However, recent UK foreign policy documents promoting 'Global Britain' generally emphasise former colonies in the Southeast Asian region,

such as Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam (Storey and Thi Ha, 2021). Previously published studies on the ‘Global Britain’ concept affirm that British foreign policy in the post-Brexit era will afford new opportunities for a ‘truly Global Britain’ to collaborate with ‘old friends and new allies’ (May, 2016; Glencross, 2018; Turner, 2019). This confirms that new British foreign policy will focus on new partnerships to create new international engagements (Integrated Review, 2020).

The Integrated Review indicates that Southeast Asia will be an important region for the new British foreign policy’s ‘tilt’ to the Indo-Pacific. The UK intends to prioritise bilateral trade deals with Southeast Asian countries and focus on facilitation and harmonisation with ASEAN nations. Thus, the UK plans to strengthen its diplomatic, economic and security engagement with the region to deepen relationships (Storey and Thi Ha, 2021). From this perspective, Thailand is located on the mainland of Southeast Asia, which is a gateway for trade and security in the Indo-Pacific and the South China Sea. Arguably, therefore, the UK government could expand its position through Thailand as a strategic location to challenge the emergence of China. In addition, the UK could develop trade relations in Southeast Asia through Thailand as one of the most important ASEAN countries, which together have trade links with the UK worth £36 billion per year (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2018). Their economic growth is predicted to rapidly increase and become the world’s fourth-largest economy by 2030 (OECD, 2019). Thailand also emerges as a regional supply chain management and manufacturing hub in the Southeast Asian region, so many foreign companies will find considerable opportunities in Thailand’s logistics market (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2015).

Thus, Thailand has the potential to be central to UK trade interests and investment in the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asian regions after leaving the European Union in 2020. Even though Thailand is a small state and not the priority in new British trade policy after Brexit and Thai-UK economic relations have only improved by £2 billion since the EU referendum in 2016, the UK’s trade with Thailand is growing steadily. Thailand is the second-largest economy in Southeast Asia (Fox, 2018), and the UK has remained the largest European investor in Thailand since 2003 through long-established companies such as Tesco, Boots, BP and Thames Water (Bangkok Post, 2020). In addition, the UK and Thailand have recently encouraged regional connectivity by establishing bilateral platforms, particularly the Thailand-UK Joint Trade Policy Review and

Joint Economic and Trade Committee in 2020 (Royal Thai Embassy, London, 2021), and have agreed in principle to work on a bilateral free-trade agreement. They set up the ‘TH-UK Business Leadership Council’ in 2018 as a mechanism to further strengthen economic relations through cooperation between private enterprises, and to provide suggestions to the governments. The council also aims to improve the business environment and facilitate trade and investment growth for both sides, such as within the aviation industry in terms of the ‘Thailand 4.0’ policy, and a model to promote the high-technology industry (Bonura, 2018).

Moreover, Thailand is a key market in Southeast Asia for UK companies. For example, the current UK foreign policy has prioritised promoting Thai economic and business interests through the ‘British Chamber of Commerce Thailand’. This is the oldest chamber and the largest non-Asian organisation in Thailand. Arguably, therefore, the trading partnership between Thailand and the UK is strong. The UK and Thailand have developed elite networks to connect their relations and interests since the 19th century (Jamsai, 1970), and Thailand continues to be one of the UK’s largest trading partners in ASEAN. Ultimately, the UK has a long history of soft power which helps to sustain its relations with Thailand. The government has significantly encouraged British identities, norms and values through institutions such as the British Embassy Bangkok, the British Council and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). It has developed these in terms of soft power, including cultural influences, foreign aid, a liberal model, democratic political system and education as a priority policy in Thailand. With regard to the latter, the UK and Thailand have recently collaborated in the Higher Transnational Education project (TNE), which involves Thai students networking with UK university alumni and British government scholarships. The UK also collaborates with universities in Thailand in terms of double degrees. Arguably, therefore, the UK’s influence has significantly sustained ‘soft power’ through British institutions in Thailand as a strategic partnership approach. This supports the British roadmap to becoming a ‘soft power superpower’ by 2030 (Integrated Review, 2021).

The UK government has also employed its soft power in other developing countries. For example, the British Council promoted the UK’s influence in ASEAN countries through the ‘Value of Trust’ research project in 2018. The study demonstrates various countries’ perceptions and shows that the Thai sense of trust towards involvement in cultural relations with the UK increased from 2016 to 2020 by at least 71% (British Council, 2018). In addition, the UK

government supports innovation and science through the ‘UK Thailand Tech Export Academy’ project, and aims to promote the development of ‘smart cities’ to be constructed across Thailand. This project has also involved the collaboration of over 200 companies in the UK and Thailand (Savic, 2021). From this perspective, British foreign policy in Thailand is a mutually beneficial partnership set up on shared interests and principles. For example, the United Kingdom and Thailand agreed to expand Thai-UK Higher Education collaborations focused on quality, inclusion, and internationalisation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2022). Furthermore, Thai-UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in February 2023 to strengthen agricultural cooperation (British Embassy Bangkok, 2023). Notably, Thai-UK trade and investment have been mutually beneficial since the middle of the nineteenth century (British Chamber of Commerce, 2022). The new British foreign policy based on the ‘Global Britain’ concept encourages finding new economic partnerships with developing countries, so it would be good for the British government to negotiate new agreements, particularly free-trade deals, in Thailand.

Thailand, therefore, provides an appropriate and innovative case study to examine new British foreign policy after Brexit. The UK could aim to further develop British values and national interests in Thailand. As H.E. Mr Pisanu Suwannachot, Thai Ambassador at the Royal Thai Embassy in London, highlights, the new chapter of the Thailand-UK strategic partnership has been working within global megatrends, Brexit strategies, the ‘Global Britain’ project and the ‘Integrated Review’. These agreements will support Thai and UK interests in engaging with the Indo-Pacific region. He also affirms that Thailand’s roadmap after the Covid-19 pandemic will strengthen, deepen and encourage UK businesses in many sectors, such as food, healthcare and digital industries (Royal Thai Embassy, London and the Anglo-Thai Society, 2021). The importance of UK and Thai relations is already evident in several areas. Arguably, Thailand could be central to UK interests in trade, security, politics and soft power in the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asian regions in the post-Brexit period. Notably, Britain is a great power with significant economic, diplomatic, and military strength and influence, and its interests extend far beyond its own borders. The government thus has tended to develop its network of relationships through its dominance, and this can be used to ensure that the UK can maintain its power in Thailand and other ASEAN countries, particularly after Brexit. Even though there has been a very limited amount of published work on TH-UK relations during the Brexit period, the

research findings in this thesis could benefit British and Thai policymakers and stakeholders interested in UK and Thai collaboration after Brexit.

1.2 Outline of the research

1.2.1 Research aims and objectives

This research aims to investigate foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand within the ‘Global Britain’ narrative. It focuses on two primary research aims and objectives:

1. To explore historical and contemporary foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand.
2. To analyse if and how foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand have changed as the UK departs the European Union (EU) within the context of the ‘Global Britain’ narrative.

1.3 Research questions

This thesis seeks to establish the extent to which the origins of foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand are historically located, and realised in contemporary manifestations of concepts of informal empire. The thesis seeks to answer two principal research questions:

- 1) How global is ‘Global Britain’: what is the shape of the relationship between the UK and Thailand?
- 2) What is new about ‘Global Britain’ in terms of the strength of historical and contemporary connections between the UK and Thailand?

1.4 Overview of the research hypothesis

The concept of ‘Global Britain’ is informed by the legacy of informal imperial thinking, but also highlights that ‘Global Britain’ is new in that it prioritises the Asia-Pacific region rather than the Commonwealth.

1.5 Structure of thesis

The introduction set out in **Chapter 1** provides a research overview to explain the rationale for the study, research purposes, research questions, framework of analysis, the argument of the thesis, and structure of the thesis. **Chapter 2**, the theoretical chapter, is focused on theories which provide a consistent and coherent analytical structure for the thesis as a whole. The notion of an ‘informal empire’ will be discussed to determine how it was used to maintain global influence during the imperial period, particularly in terms of dominating economic dependency, financial services and culture around the world. Then, the concept of ‘soft power’ will be examined to explain how governments have used it to demonstrate their influence or power, particularly after the Second World War and the decline of empires. Dependency theories then will be identified, focusing on the ‘dependent development’ approach proposed by Peter Evans (1975), which is the formation of a mutually beneficial relationship, among developing country governments, domestic capital and multinational corporations. Ultimately, the main arguments will be summarised and the conclusion of the chapter will outline how this study will apply the theories of informal empire, dependency and soft power as an analytical framework. This framework will be used to understand the UK-Thailand foreign policy relationship within the ‘Global Britain’ narrative, which is both historically embedded and contemporarily relevant.

There are two analyses of existing literature; **Chapter 3**, the historical chapter, explores the British informal empire. The distinction between formal and informal empires in terms of the imposition of administrative control will be explained. Then, this chapter will investigate the features of the British informal empire in terms of political economy influences and cultural networks. Notably, Gallagher and Robinson's (1953) and Cain and Hopkins's (1980) approaches are highlighted as significant arguments about how Britain's informal empire worked during the imperial period. Many scholars (e.g. Winichakul, 1994; Pearson, 2002; Peleggi, 2002; Barton, 2014) argue that Britain's informal empire represented a sharing of benefits between Britain and local elites with regard to global economy and cultural power. In particular, Gallagher and Robinson's approach highlights that British imperial expansion through free trade with local elites was vital for establishing British economic relations with other countries. Therefore, the ‘dependent development’ approach, as the basis of the theoretical framework, will be used to analyse the formation of mutually beneficial relationships among developing countries’

governments, the local bourgeoisie and multinational corporations. Recent studies of the British informal empire will then be examined within the concept of ‘gentlemanly capitalism’, which offers perhaps the most thorough scholarly analysis and provides a deep-rooted understanding of Britain’s global past and present. Finally, the main arguments and research which have had a significant impact on the analytical framework will be summarised, prior to a detailed discussion of TH-UK relations within the ‘Global Britain’ narrative in the next chapter.

The relationship between the UK and Thailand up to the EU referendum in 2016 is set out in **Chapter 4**. This chapter will analyse the two states’ relationship within the formation of a mutually beneficial collaboration among developing country governments, local elites and multinational corporations, drawing on Evans’ dependency approach to demonstrate how third world countries can achieve progress, but through ‘dependent development’. The starting point is to examine historical relations from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries through the lens of the ‘informal empire’. A significant analysis of, and justification for, Britain's informal empire in Siam is presented by Webster (1988). Britain sought to maintain its influence through an ‘informal empire’ because it would allow British commercial and financial interests to control their objectives in the Siamese state under the most favourable conditions. It enabled the British government to strengthen the economies of other British colonial possessions like British India and Burma by providing cheap food and raw materials such as rice and teak from Siam. The chapter then provides context for British policy in Thailand in the post-war period. As the British Empire had declined and been lost, joining the EU helped the UK stay relevant in its global influence. In terms of Thai-UK relations, British foreign policy centred on its relationship with the European Union in terms of politics, economy and security. Thus, the UK went from being an autonomous nation-state with global reach and influence to being increasingly subject to EU rules and regulations in its dealings with Thailand. Finally, this chapter explores how the UK's decision to leave the European Union in the 2016 referendum has changed the UK’s global role. The British imperial past has encouraged a re-examination of the political-economic and cultural legacies of the empire, which continue to be used in British foreign policy in the post-Brexit period, particularly through royal family connections.

In **Chapter 5**, the research methodology and analysis are explained in terms of research design, data collection methods, data analysis, and data integrity. This qualitative research started with a

literature review on broader TH-UK relations, British foreign policy in Thailand and the concept of 'Global Britain' as a new foreign policy after the EU referendum in 2016. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with Thai and British elites in Thailand by using purposive selection and snowball sampling techniques. Data triangulation has allowed for a more critical analysis of the interviews and thematic analysis was used to evaluate the interview data. Content analysis was then used to examine the relationship between Thailand and the UK.

The fieldwork analysis is divided into two chapters answering the two research questions. **Chapter 6** examines the 'Global Britain' concept in relation to Thailand following the EU referendum in 2016. The findings show that Thai and British elites have similar perspectives on post-Brexit British foreign policy in Thailand, but responses to the meaning of the 'Global Britain' concept vary depending on each participant's field of experience, such as economy, finance, politics, culture and education. The findings reveal that the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept incorporates components of the imperial historical pattern, most notably the notion of an 'informal empire'. However, Britain's imperial dominance continues to have a profound impact on Thailand's cultural and social issues, rather than on economic and political matters. Nonetheless, elite networks are employed to sustain the UK-Thailand connection, which is centred on mutual benefits for these elites rather than for the majority of Thais. Thus, 'Global Britain' is seen as a 'nostalgic cultural power', rather than there being any economic or security dependency between the UK and Thailand in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

Chapter 7 investigates new elements of the 'Global Britain' narrative in Thailand in the post-Brexit period. It contends that 'Global Britain' in the context of Thailand is broadly the same as it was before the UK left the EU. This indicates that 'Global Britain' is failing in this regard. It is not consistent with the British government's desire to indicate a radical shift or change in relations with Thailand. In short, there is nothing new in UK relations with Thailand within the framework of the 'Global Britain' concept. The findings also reveal that Thailand highlights the notion of an 'informal empire' in different forms. Post-Brexit 'Global Britain' in the context of Thailand is more about social and cultural connections than military or economic ones. It can be seen that, as the UK does not really have any substantial power, its government is focusing on the concept of 'soft power' in an attempt to maintain some degree of influence. The use of Thailand as a case study therefore suggests that the UK no longer has global economic power but

it does have influence among elites, notably in terms of social, educational and cultural traditions. Arguably, the concept of 'Global Britain' is evidence of the continuity of Britain's decline.

Chapter 8 presents the conclusion of the thesis, in which the findings from Chapters 6 and 7 are discussed as responses to the subordinate research questions and, finally, the main research questions are answered. The contribution to knowledge is provided to demonstrate how foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand are changing as the UK's departure the EU within the Global Britain concept. Recommendations for further studies are also outlined.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Introduction

This chapter describes the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis in order to provide a consistent and coherent analytical structure for the thesis as a whole. Analysis of the ‘Global Britain’ concept is problematic, due to the UK government’s failure to clearly define its meaning and implementation, even though the idea is central to the government’s new policy after departing the EU. The UK government has attempted to claim that Britain can be afforded benefits outside the EU like those it enjoyed in the imperial period (Gamble, 2018). It has promoted the ‘Global Britain’ concept as the focus of plans for the new post-Brexit Britain foreign policy, particularly in terms of global free trade and defence policies in the Indo-Pacific region. Much of the pro-Brexit literature on British foreign policy embraces nostalgia for the imperial past, its mentality and some of its ambitions, which strongly resonate with the concept of British global dominance during the imperial period. Thus, the ‘Global Britain’ concept is arguably another incarnation of a traditional approach and a return, in the post-Brexit period, to British imperial policies. However, the UK government cannot currently establish its policy in the manner of the British Empire because of major geopolitical and economic power shifts. Therefore, instead of studying the formal empire, this chapter will discuss the notion of an ‘informal empire’ as a key mechanism to explain the current configuration of the modern world, including globalism, as well as to determine what is new about the ‘Global Britain’ concept and how it could be used in post-Brexit foreign policy.

This chapter is divided into four parts. The notion of an ‘informal empire’ will be firstly discussed to determine European empires’ influences in their colonies during the imperial period, particularly those involving domination over economic dependency, financial services, cultural expansion and elite networks. Dependency theories then will be identified, focusing on the ‘dependent development’ approach proposed by Peter Evans (1975), which describes the formation of mutually beneficial relationships, among developing country governments, domestic capital and multinational corporations. Then, the concept of ‘soft power’ will be

examined to explain how European empires employed this approach to sustain their influences in the periphery, particularly after the Second World War and the end of formal imperialism. The final part will establish an analytical framework to investigate foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand in the context of the 'Global Britain' narrative, and to analyse new British foreign policy in Thailand during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

2.1 The concept of 'informal empire'

The concept of 'informal empire' can be defined as the substance of empire without the form of empire. This notion is concerned with nominally independent societies and countries being dominated by external interests and states. It refers to the economic, political, social and cultural influences that imperial and great powers can have over developing states without the establishment of formal political control or sovereignty. Notably, there is a significant amount of published research describing the function of the 'informal empire', a concept which has been more resonant in international relations than in formal empires which directly control colonies. Britain's informal empire employed economic ventures, capital, and free trade relations to exercise British control over legally independent but economically subordinate Latin American countries (Reeder, 2020). Significant analysis and discussion on the notion of an 'informal empire' was first presented by Gallagher and Robinson (1953), who viewed it as a political as well as economic category of state expansion. These authors proposed an entirely new way of thinking about the dynamics of imperial expansion. The core of their argument about the 'informal empire' was the notion that British political influence was experienced in places where there was no formal British imperial sovereignty. More recent studies on the 'informal empire' built on this initial research, focusing on the formation of imperial networks which reached beyond those territories under British colonial rule. For example, Barton (2012) affirms that the 'informal empire' shaped the development of the modern world through a system of subordinate elites.

The distinction between formal and informal empires is in the imposition of administrative control (Gallagher and Robinson, 1953; Robinson, 1976; Cain and Hopkins, 1993; Darwin, 1997; Parrott, 1997; Curtin, 2000). A 'formal empire' is defined as direct control over an area, whereby complete authority is achieved through the transfer of sovereignty, whereas the concept

of ‘informal empire’ refers to indirect authority over an area through a still powerful form of dominance through economic dependency and mutually beneficial elite-level relations. For example, formal imperialism has traditionally been defined as ‘colonies coloured red on the map’ (e.g., Gallagher and Robinson, 1953; Winks, 1976), meaning a dominant country enlarging the territory over which it possesses entire authority. On the other hand, the ‘informal empire’ involves absorbing new territories into the international system of imperial power through trade, investment, finance and diplomacy, a policy frequently reinforced by unequal treaties and the occasional military intervention.

The ‘informal empire’ has had significant effects on many semi-colonial states, such as China, Mexico, Iran, Argentina and Thailand (Pizzo, 2016). European empires used indirect exploitation of semi-colonies through international capitalist systems, such as by establishing a network of relations with local small and medium native capitalist groups (Robinson and Gallagher, 1956; Barton, 2014) and creating bank and financial partnerships (Cain and Hopkins, 1960; Munford, 1975). Notably, many historians have argued that such indirect exploitation was a strategy to prevent the capitalist development, expansion and modernisation of so-called ‘third-world’ countries (e.g., Munford, 1975; Webster, 1954; Barton, 2014). Thus, during the imperial period, colonial powers could expand their economic influence in semi-colonies through a form of indirect imperialism. However, since the mid-1950s, the concept of semi-colonialism has been criticised by colonial historians and post-colonial scholars. Numerous studies have defined semi-colonial states as independent and sovereign countries that are dependent on foreign nations as suppliers of raw materials. These states were particularly exposed to imperialist power through capital, trade and political influence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (for example, Osterhammel, 1989; Horvath; 1972; Banaji, 1973; Ziltener and Kunzler, 2013; Gotteland, 2017). In the same vein, Horvath (1972) defines semi-colonialism as synonymous with informal imperialism, neo-colonialism and economic imperialism. It represents a form of inter-group domination in which formal administrative controls are absent, and power is channelled through the local elite. Likewise, Dean (2008) argues that the phenomena of semi-colonialism, informal empire and free-trade imperialism are the same general situations. In his analysis of colonial expansion, the informal empire’s significance is closely related to free-trade imperialism. As Gordon (2017), a researcher in colonial economic history, argues:

...the colonies and semi-colonies had all suffered from the ‘Development of Underdevelopment’ – that they had all been underdeveloped into their existing states through their relationship with Western capitalism in different forms and from different kinds of capitalism... (Gordon, 2017: 2).

To sum up, these studies indicate that there was no distinction between informal and formal empires in terms of colonial influence and power. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, European nations such as Britain expanded these areas into complementary satellite economies. The colonial powers obtained profits and cheap resources from their capital investment in these semi-colonies.

Other studies have explored the relationships between semi-colonies and dominant nations, which is again linked to the notion of ‘informal empire’ (Win, 1976; Dean, 1976; Osterhammel, 1986). According to Win (1976), the concept of ‘informal empire’ means the integration of a peripheral area into the economy of an industrial power in a relationship of dependence, in which the strategic decisions governing the direction and rate of growth of the ‘informal colony’ are made by the imperial power and governed by its interests. Other researchers, who have looked at the political dimension, have found that the ‘informal empire’, as a bridgehead, should be viewed in terms of the establishment of a secondary area of a foreign imperial power. The idea of an ‘informal empire’ comprises a differentiated system of business firms and political-military agencies capable of translating potential superiority into effective influence and control (Galtung, 1971). Similarly, Osterhammel (1986) provides an in-depth analysis of the work of Robinson, showing its relevance to the ‘informal empire’ concept. Robinson’s ideas are shown to have a potentially universal applicability that can explain the dominant powers’ use of unequal relationships to secure monopolies and control political and economic decision-making (Osterhammel, 1986). This analysis clearly defines the idea of the ‘informal empire’ during the colonial period, but Osterhammel fails to fully explain how the concept has been used in the post-colonial era.

In contrast, much of the current literature on the concept of ‘informal empire’ pays particular attention to its meaning and use in the post-colonial period through the lens of the international political economy. While scholars have different explanations of the nature of an ‘informal

empire', which are linked to theories of imperialism, they agree that the relationship between states in this situation is akin to an empire without an empire (see, for example, Knox (2019), Cain and Hopkins (2016), Barton (2014), Brown (2008), and Barton and Bennett (2010).

Since the 1990s, some scholars (Winichakul, 1994; Peleggi, 2002; Loos, 2006) have found the concept of informal empire less satisfactory for explaining dominant and peripheral relations in the post-colonial era. As an alternative theory of the connections between semi-colonies and dominating nations, Cain and Hopkins (1980) proposed the concept of gentlemanly capitalism. The concept could help understanding of corporations, colonialism, and capitalism, which was centred on British influence in periphery nations. The key aspect is that British financial services enabled Britain to exercise informal political influence outside of the British Empire. Moreover, one of the key tenets of the concept is that British imperialism was determined by individuals on the periphery rather than by individuals in Britain itself. They thus argued that there was a coalition of individuals both inside and outside the British government who promoted British financial investment outside the British Empire.

However, in Southeast Asian nations, particularly in Siam, the concept of gentlemanly capitalism is less prevalent. Webster (1990) emphasised the significance of agency houses, which formed with the end of the East India Company to promote import and export between Britain and Asia. Furthermore, many historical studies of British influences in peripheral states focused on bilateral ties within the framework of the larger British Empire and the world. In the case of the Bombay Burmah, for example, Siam was partly connected to Britain through India. The Bombay Burmah imported teak from Siam for constructing the new Indian railway. Similarly, Sophonpanich's work (2011) focused on Siamese economic and cultural modernisation rather than in the development of British financial sector in Siam. Thus, Informal empire is a concept that allows us to assess the ability of one nation to strongly influence another through finance, trade, investment, politics, immigration, private aid, cultural exchange and elite networks both during and after empire. In Barton's (2014) definition of the concept, he argues that:

...Informal empire is a relationship in which national or regional imperial elite intentionally or unintentionally exercise a dominant influence over the elite formation, identity, and conditions of exchange of the subjected elite in a nation or region with none of the formal structures of empire (Barton, 2014: 14).

All of the studies reviewed support the argument that an ‘informal empire’ can be a form of exploitation, emphasising transnational elite networks in terms of neo-colonialism. The concept of neo-colonialism refers to a situation in which former or continuing economic relationships are utilised to maintain influence over former colonies after nominal independence. In general, neo-colonialism is defined as the involvement of powerful Western countries in the affairs of less developed countries; it implies a form of economic imperialism (Horvath, 1972). Wallerstein (1974) classifies a hierarchy of three types of countries, namely, core, semi-peripheral and peripheral countries, all of which have their respective economic roles in the capitalist world system (Wallerstein, 1974). This theory can be linked to colonialism and neo-colonialism as a means of analysing practices that produce unequal economic exchange.

However, the concept of neo-colonialism fails to explain the hegemony of cultural power or the development process of dominance in less developed countries. It only focuses on the political-economic contexts of global capitalism. As a result, this thesis will investigate a structural dependency theory known as ‘dependency development’, which will provide a more critical examination of the development process in Thailand than traditional dependency theory. The ‘dependent development’ approach contends that development is not just about economics, but also about politics. The many types of socio-economic classes that form inside emerging countries impact the development possibilities, and as a result, the forces that drive and perpetuate dependence are not only global or metropolitan; they are also local (Evans, 1979).

Notably, much of the literature on development approaches emphasises how the theory of dependency is employed to reflect on how economically exploitative ‘soft power’ has made the process of development socio-politically incompatible with the norms in developing countries (Jakupec and Kelly, cited in Evans and Jakupec, 2021). For example, ‘soft power’ agencies such as the British Council are brought into consideration, particularly for their interests in and influences over developing countries (Evans and Jakupec, 2021). In the case of Thailand, the concept of soft power is important as a means for the British government to sustain its influence in the country. The next section will explore the structural dependency approach of ‘dependent development’ to analyse the foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand. Moreover, it will examine Britain’s role in Thai development by using the concept of soft power. Thus, one of

the contributions of this thesis is to identify and explain how dependency theory and soft power relate to the relationship between dominant and dependent countries.

2.2 Dependency theory

The literature on dependency theory has highlighted its role in the critical study of economic development in third-world countries. It concerns the impact of powerful states on less developed or developing countries through the structure of a dependent relationship (Dos Santos, 1976). In general, many scholars have utilised the theory of dependency to explore the economic development of a state in terms of external influences on national development policies (Cardoso, 1966; Sunkel, 1969; Furtado, 1970). The theory explains unequal relationships between developed and less developed countries in the international political economy (Namkoong, 1999; Ghosh, 2001; Joseph, 2016). Scholars such as Baran (1956), Cardoso (1966), Dos Santos (1970), Frank (1969), Wallerstein (1978), Prebisch (1980) and O'Brien (1982) developed dependency theory between the late 1950s and the 1980s. They identify three primary forms of dependency in international systems. Firstly, dependency divides the world into two parts, comprising countries which are dominant or dependent, at the centre or on the periphery, metropolitan or satellite. Secondly, the economic activities of the dependent states are influenced by external forces. These influences include multinational corporations (MNCs), international markets, foreign assistance, communications and advanced activities of industrialised countries (Sunkel, 1969; Furtado, 1970; Prebisch, 1980). Thirdly, the historical relations between dominant and dependent countries reinforce inequality in the development of capitalism (Dos Santos, 1976). In short, dependency theory explains the unequal relationships between developed and less developed countries within global capitalism. The theory explores the different external influences in order to understand the relationship between core and peripheral countries and how these external elements affect their policies.

However, traditional underdevelopment studies based on the modernisation approach are unable to adequately define Asian underdevelopment and poverty as an alternative theory in the majority of the development literature. In other words, the modernisation approach is unable to explain or transcend underdevelopment in any section of the Third World due to a lack of causal explanation. Notably, modernisation has had limited success in explaining the economic

development of developing nations, and much less in prescribing a solution for underdevelopment. For example, the adoption of Western democracy has not succeeded in solving Asian political problems; in most cases, the fragile democratic structure itself has collapsed. Thus, these are some of the facts which make modernisation theory, in general, a failure in Asia. In other words, the failure of modernisation has resulted in the emergence of a successor no less controversial. Thus, the dependence approach has a lot of potential for analysing the growth of Third World nations in the global capitalist system.

Dependency theory seeks to explain poverty in ways that modernisation cannot. Hopkins (1979) characterised some of the contradictions between the two approaches as follows:

Whereas modernisation attributed economic backwardness to internal constraints in internal constraints in traditional societies and presumed that external contacts would be instrumental in removing them, the dependency theory argues that it is the external links which have created economic backwardness by forging chains of dependence and inequality between a privileged core and an exploited periphery. Whereas modernisation theory was essentially a historical, the dependency holds that underdevelopment can only be understood as an historical process (Hopkins, 1979: 27).

A significant analysis of dependency theory and the world capitalist system is presented by Frank (1969) in his analysis of how European powers expanded their influence in the colonial period from the 1650s to the 1900s. This colonial expansion was achieved through capitalism and by using superior naval and military technology in colonised countries. Therefore, colonialism destroyed the local economies of colonised countries that were self-sufficient and independent, and replaced them with plantation mono-crop economies (Frank, 1969). Additionally, in his analysis of neo-colonialism, Frank (1967) identifies three characteristics. The first is that many former colonies are still dependent on the West in terms of trade. The process of exporting raw materials adds value to them, but the processing takes place mainly in the West. The second issue is that neo-colonialism is a leading cause of transnational corporations' increasing exploitation of labour and resources in peripheral countries. Thirdly, foreign aid is an

indirect strategy of the core countries to continue exploiting peripheral states and maintain their influence through dependent relationships such as financial loans, military funding and scholarships (Frank, 1967). These points are supported by Ghosh (2001), who argues that many developing countries and former colonies have taken enormous loans from developed countries to maintain or develop their states. Thus, they are still dependent on foreign trade and investment. The advantage for developing governments is that they can improve economic and social development, but only by encouraging export of food and other raw materials to wealthy consumer markets.

In the same vein, the current literature on dependency theory pays particular attention to explaining the underdevelopment of former colonial countries due to economic inequity after they became independent states. The points mentioned so far all indicate that the struggle for development in ‘third-world’ countries which are former colonies is attributable to the effects of colonialism and imperialism (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2017; Evans, 1979). The current primary roles of former colonial states in the international world economy, as the dominant sources of raw materials but significant consumers of manufactured products, results from long years of colonial dominance, exploitation and imperialism. Likewise, Wallerstein (1974) argues that colonialism is the most important cause of asymmetrical relationships between powerful states and the colonial periphery.

However, most studies in the field of dependency theory have only focused on economic developments between dominant and dependent countries. In this respect, Caporaso (1978) has adopted a broader dependency perspective, which is more concerned with the asymmetrical relationship. In his analysis of the linkages between dependence and power within political science and sociology, he identifies two primary links. The first link rests on the structural asymmetries of dependence which can be converted into decisional power with specific probabilities. A second link is a form of value-allocation process in structuring unequal exchange relationships. Similarly, Horvath (1972) asserts that dependency theory can be linked to the idea of domination, which is closely related to the concept of power. This suggests that the study of dependent relationships is applicable as a framework to study international and transnational politics and economics. Considering all the evidence, it is certain that colonialism and neo-

colonialism can explain how traditional dependency links to global inequalities in the twenty-first century.

Previous studies have also explored the relationship between dependency theory and elite networks. According to Dos Santos (1967), dependency is determined mainly by dominating external forces and internal controlling groups, such as elites and the bourgeoisie. This is supported by Galtung (1971), who studied the theory of structural imperialism, and points out that the dominant powers can maintain their influence in dependent states by having a bridgehead among the powerful elite of these outlying areas, whose interests lie with the powerful countries. Dominant powers used these elite networks to reinforce inequality and aid the development of capitalism in dependent countries in the post-colonial period. In addition, Thompson (1992) provides an in-depth analysis of the work of Robinson and Gallagher, showing the relevance of collaborating elites to the formation of an ‘informal empire’. These were viewed as the progressive classes on the periphery, such as the landed elite networks in Argentina (Thompson, 1992). Likewise, Hoogvelt (1997) affirms that the relationship between dominant countries and semi-colonies is linked to the position of the semi-colonial elite, which serves both its own interest and the interests of foreign investors.

Arguably, the concept of an ‘informal empire’, as a version of colonialism, could retain an enduring value for current projects in international law, foreign trade and investment, and cultural engagement through elite networks. It is also possible that the establishment of local elite networks, with emphasis on internal variables, is a form of exploitation in semi-colonies, particularly in countries which have unequal societies and unstable politics. However, Dos Santos’s concept of dependency theory does not fully explain the relationships between states, local capital and multinationals. Therefore, this thesis will explore Evans’ (1979) ‘dependent development’ approach, which is a central concept of dependency theory, instead. This is because his work examines the notion of an ‘informal empire’ through connections between state power, collaboration with elite networks, and multinationals. In addition, several studies have indicated that the ‘dependent development’ approach can explain unequal relationships through interactions between states, small groups and social classes within the core and peripheral countries (Barton, 2016; Hafez, 2021).

2.2.1 Dependent development approach

‘Dependent development’ is one of the principle ideas underlying dependency theory. This form of development historically concerned efforts to export primary resources from countries which were resource-rich but industry-poor. This approach makes the case that developed nations can force unequal exchanges on developing nations. This in effect stunts the economic growth and development of the nations that are dependent on the more industrial nations, which also happen to be more prosperous and economically advanced. Thus, imperial nations exploited developing nations in the era of colonialism. European superpowers formed colonies in far-flung territories that included most of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean, extracting resources which were shipped back to Europe. Following the Second World War and the end of colonialism, the dominant nations kept this process going through clever manipulation of the institutions they established through the United Nations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. These institutions established development projects for the poor nations of the south and loaned them money to build them. Thus, the dominant states utilised these institutions to encourage its influence through multinational corporations. Most recently, the dominant powers’ actions led to ongoing stagnation in the developing states of Latin America, Africa and Asia throughout the 1990s, which caused many economists and policymakers to doubt the continued practicality and desirability of this dependent development (Herold, 2021)

Much of the literature on dependency theory since the mid-1970s emphasises that dependent countries can achieve economic development. O’Donnell (1973) contends that bureaucratic authoritarian governments can support growth and capital accumulation to some extent. These countries protect the interests of international oligopolistic capital and actively encourage foreign direct investment (FDI). Evans (1987) agrees with O’Donnell that third-world countries may achieve development, but only through ‘dependent development’. Such progress is possible at the price of negative effects on the domestic society, such as the extinction of indigenous enterprises, unequal income distribution between urban and rural sectors, and marginalisation of the popular sector. This could be taken to mean that both O’Donnell and Evans acknowledge the role of the dominant state in the process of development.

Evans (1979) identifies the 'triple alliance' approach, in which the state, local capital and multinational corporations are seen as the key elements of 'dependent development'. He also highlights the power dynamics of semi-peripheral countries that maintained relationships with industrialised countries while pursuing and achieving independent paths in intense industrial growth. The politics behind these partnerships were exclusive and incompatible with democracy and active labour involvement, but they did promise a way out of the trap of lower value economy. In other words, the heart of 'dependent development' lies in its conjunction with many specific processes in the international economy and domestic politics. Notably, the triple alliances have collaborated to create a system that promotes industrialisation while excluding the general population from the benefits of prosperity. As a result, this approach is beneficial in demonstrating the execution of dominant governments' policies in developing countries through liberalisation and capitalist globalisation, particularly the establishment of elite networks.

However, the main weakness in Evans' view of 'dependent development' is that it does not explain the formation of mutually beneficial relationships in terms of cultural and social development. The theory only focuses on economic development and global capitalism, whereas there are other approaches which consider social-cultural contexts and international political economy. During the last few decades, development economists have defined theoretical frameworks to explain developing nations' underdevelopment. Young's (2016) recent study investigates the concept of neo-colonialism within the context of 'development and dependence theory'. He defines neo-colonialism within economic, cultural, sociological and political dimensions that could be related to the concept of 'soft power'. According to Moreno et al. (2018), the use of economic, political, cultural or other pressures by a dominating power to control or influence other nations, particularly former dependents, can be regarded as a type of neo-colonialism. For example, Britain has used soft power as a key component of British foreign policy to maintain its influence globally. The next section will explore the definition of 'soft power', and refer to previous studies to illustrate how the concept of 'soft power' is employed to sustain the influence of dominant states over peripheral states.

2.3 The concept of soft power

In international politics, a nation's 'power' is defined as its capacity to persuade others to achieve particular goals or outcomes. According to Nye (2004), power can be divided into three categories in terms of a 'carrot and stick' approach: military, economic and soft power (Table 1.1). Since the 1990s, Joseph Nye, a professor at Harvard University, has been developing his theories on power in international relations. As a result, in recent years, the notion of power has increased dramatically in scholarly analysis and administrative policy-making in international affairs.

	Behavioural Outcomes	Resources	Policies
Military Power	Coercion Deterrence Protection	Threats Force	Coercive diplomacy War Alliance
Economic Power	Inducement Coercion	Payments Sanctions	Aid Bribes Sanctions
Soft Power	Attraction Agenda setting	Values Culture Policies Institutions	Public Diplomacy Bilateral and Military Diplomacy

Table 2.1: Three types of power (Nye, 2014)

The concept of political power is illustrated in three dimensions. To begin with, the one-dimensional approach defines power as government decision-making to control others and formulate strategies. Second, the two-dimensional perspective establishes an agenda or framework for debating specific problems. Finally, the three-dimensional picture is the

government's capacity to draw people to their ideas and views via mass media or propaganda (Robinson, 2006). In short, the three perspectives on power can be classified into 'hard power' and 'soft power' behaviours, using resources such as coercion, inducements, agenda-setting and attractiveness.

Hard power, in terms of the 'carrot and stick' approach, can be characterised as the capacity to force individuals to do what the state wants. Its techniques are centred on coercive power, such as military intervention, coercive diplomacy and economic sanctions (Wilson, 2008). Nye (1990) uses the term 'carrot' to describe the offer of military protection during a war period, and the administration can employ inducements and rewards at times. The threat of military force is the 'stick' in this case. As a result, 'hard power' demonstrates the notion of command over actual power resources; it is a direct political method for coercing other countries. 'Soft power', on the other hand, is defined as a political actor's ability to draw the behaviour of other states through attraction and co-option (Hill and Beadle, 2014).

Thus, 'soft power' is the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or payment. The concept was coined in the early 1990s by Joseph Nye. Traditional literature on international politics has emphasised the use of 'hard power' to enhance domestic and international policy. Nye (2004), on the other hand, claims that intangible or symbolic resources, or 'soft power', could prove more successful than 'hard power' in international politics. The main form is the country's presentation of an attractive image through state and non-state actors. The key elements of soft power are therefore the use of persuasion, attraction, good manners and leading by example (Pallaver, 2011). Nye (2012) also points out that soft power is the ability to achieve outcomes through the attractiveness of policies. This can attract and co-opt people, rather than coercing them by using military force or economic sanctions. Notably, Nye (2004) characterises the concept of soft power into three parts, namely, culture, political values and foreign policy. He argues that:

... But sometimes you can get the outcomes you want without tangible threats or payoffs. The indirect way to get what you want has sometimes been called 'the second face of power'. A country may obtain the outcomes it wants in world politics because other

countries-admiring its values, emulating its example, aspiring to its level of prosperity and openness-want to follow it (Nye, 2004: 5)

Other contemporary researchers have focused on Nye's soft power concept, viewing it as an evolution of classical international relations theory and US foreign policy. In this context, Nye has written several books and essays about the role of soft power in world politics and international relations in the twentieth century. For instance, in his book 'Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power' (1990), he describes the foundations of soft power as culture, ideology and the social system (Lin and Hongtao, 2017). Nye also released the paper 'Soft Power' in the same year (1990), which defines soft power as the ability to use cultural perception and to persuade others to follow based on the nation's value. Furthermore, Nye argues that use of soft power indicates that a country seeks to gain from others, but that it prefers non-coercive authority over domineering power. His book offers instances of American soft power before the conclusion of the Iraq war. For example, former US Secretary of Defence, Robert Gates, claimed that spending money on home and foreign policies such as communication, information strategies and economic growth was essential to boost American soft power.

A soft power approach is built around two components. Firstly, governments promote a favourable image of their country overseas using symbolic resources such as culture, language, music and food, rather than overt social and political principles. Secondly, the ability to communicate and collaborate with other countries may be cultivated as part of the state policy-making process. The most effective examination of the idea of soft power, according to Hill and Beadle (2014), is a qualitative method that focuses on the structural assets or weaknesses of a given country, which governments may embrace and engage with using different degrees of priority than with tougher kinds of power. There are three categories of soft power approaches, including classical diplomacy, which is the connection between nations and other countries. A second approach is that administrations can interact directly with diplomats and people on the ground to develop norms or policies through public diplomacy. Finally, a country can establish state-private networks to improve instrumental collaboration strategies. Furthermore, the 'endearment strategy' is a key notion for extending soft power to other countries, which requires good national branding throughout the world. Governments, according to Hill and Beadle

(2014), have to demonstrate their good image and set an example for others in terms of both internal policies and international resources such as culture, language, food, fashion, films and education. In addition, the 'endearment' method is employed to strengthen the appeal of soft power resources, in order to persuade other countries on international issues with a non-confrontational agenda (Gallarotti, 2011).

The concept of soft power has recently become a dominant means of influencing other countries, as it can achieve significant outcomes through indirect methods and non-confrontational policies such as by encouraging admiration, imitation and cooperation. For this reason, soft power has been described as 'the power of attraction' (Hill and Beadle, 2014). A country can improve its cultural image through cultural products including institutions, democracy, a high-level education system, literary achievements, mass media and other entertainment. Therefore, the definition of soft power can be separated into behavioural outcomes and resources, to indicate government and non-government policies.

Although the world's political paradigms have changed, use of soft power has risen dramatically as a means to empower political resources and influence other nations' domestic and foreign policies. Government policies have established new soft power strategies to develop a nation's branding, which can be strengthened to attract international attention rather than using threats or force to enhance its role in foreign affairs. However, some critics have pointed out that the definition of soft power is uncertain, vague and meaningless (Fan, 2008). In particular, Nye's soft power concept, based on a state's wants or desires, is seen as too weak and unrealistic in relation to political power. Thus, only some countries have considered the implementation of soft power strategies in their foreign policy. In this respect, soft power has more generally been employed as just one part of the process of state empowerment. Non-state actors, such as intergovernmental organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and multinational corporations (MNCs), can help governments promote their national branding and build international collaboration (Hill and Beadle, 2014). For example, Chinese President Xi Jinping believed that China's soft power should be developed in order to build a more appealing image of openness throughout the world. The Chinese government thus recently announced plans to expand its media to improve global communication (Albert, 2018). Soft power is also associated with meta-power and balance of power concepts. These can be utilised to strengthen soft power

assets such as cultural institutions. Thus, the notion of soft power can be separated into behavioural and resource terms, as persuasion power and cultural products.

Arguably, soft power is associated with globalisation in current international politics. Governments must examine numerous elements impacting global politics, such as the worldwide economy, global travel and global information networks, when developing policy procedures. They can develop bilateral and multilateral policies through international organisations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), the World Bank, the European Union (EU), NATO and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Furthermore, governments can create state-private networks to boost national branding globally. For example, from 2003 to 2011, the United States pursued a unilateral approach, and as a result, America's soft power programme suffered a significant decline in the ranking of powerful countries (Lehmann, 2016). The UN and the EU, on the other hand, reflected their goals through multilateral diplomacy, such as support for human rights, anti-terrorism and participation in global issues. As a result, the participation of the UN and the EU in international affairs during the Iraq war was recognised (Hill, 1988).

To sum up, the concept of 'soft power' is the ability to appear desirable and attract others without being coercive. Different instruments can be used to enhance cooperation with others, such as setting the agenda, attracting cultures, absorption of social values, political values, institutional systems and foreign policies (Lin and Hongtao, 2017). In addition, soft power is based on engaging in private socio-cultural activities (Hill and Beadle, 2014). As Nye argues, the concept of soft power is the ability to convince others through 'attraction' instead of 'violence'. The attractiveness emerges from culture, political values, and foreign policy when the policy is established as appropriate in the eyes of others. Soft power is reinforced by ideas that are liked, respected, trusted and admired. As a result, soft power is a vital concept to improve global influence, particularly during the era of globalisation and the information revolution.

2.3.1 How states use 'soft power' to sustain domination

Most recently, many scholars have found that a state's soft power has a statistically significant impact on foreign direct investment (FDI), overseas student recruitment, tourism and international organisations of influence like the UK General Assembly (Ministry of Affair,

2017). For example, a new study by the British Council in 2017 demonstrates that a one percent increase in the number of countries which an institution from country X covers results in almost 0.66 per cent higher foreign direct investment (FDI) for that country. This point supports Nye's (2004) view that soft power can be used to maintain a country's attraction, national interests and foreign policy ambitions.

There are several main principles that states need to follow to develop the concept of soft power. The first of these is 'culture', which can be described as a way of life that represents certain social values, namely the basic habits and beliefs, of a group of people. Culture, as the primary element in the notion of soft power, may be divided into two categories: high culture and popular culture (Lin and Hongtao, 2017). In international politics, high culture refers to cultural exchanges such as national literacy, languages, technology, arts and innovation, and education systems, whereas popular culture is the most debated soft power asset (Hall, 2010), and concentrates on the film industry, television broadcasts, propaganda, music, sports and food.

In terms of attraction, culture can be used to enhance a country's foreign policy. Many countries have created cultures to involve universal values, so that they can promote their policies and values to other countries globally. As a result, a country's credibility can be improved, helping it to achieve its ambitions by using persuasion and leading by example. For instance, the American film industry is represented in the popularity of Hollywood films around the world, Indian television programmes show their culture through food, religion and fashion, and Japanese animations are broadcast in Asia, Europe and the Middle East. It can be considered that popular culture leads to the success of a country's cultural image. For example, America demonstrates in war films like *Pearl Harbor* (2001), *American Sniper* (2014) and *Dunkirk* (2017) that the US military was successful in the Second World War. Thus, popular culture can lead to the creation of positive perceptions across the world. As well as films, popular culture is related to television programmes, music, books, international study and the tourist industry (Nye, 2004). However, soft power's limitation occurs in political and general situations. It cannot solve all problems or completely persuade others to follow. For example, Kim Jong-il, the former supreme leader of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, liked to watch Hollywood movies but this did not persuade him to cancel his nuclear weapons programme (Nye, 2004). In addition, America's soft power is represented all over the Islamic world through public figures or actors,

but this cannot improve its attractiveness in Islamic countries. Hence, cultural persuasion does not directly convert social manners or values into political attraction (Nye, 2000).

A secondly principle to be considered is that ‘political values’, defined in the sphere of international relations, continually promote national values in order to enhance people’s ideas and opinions about the country. These are more significant soft power resources than cultural attraction, because they can be used to persuade people directly; in particular, democracy and human rights can be outstanding assets of soft power (Nye, 2004). Moreover, governments can set up their country’s rules in a manner which enhances national interests and their position in international affairs (Nye, 1990). Hence, political values are the main administrative strategy to improve state outcomes and foreign policy goals, as they can represent good national branding that affects others (Lin and Hongtao, 2017). For example, the Thai government announced ‘Twelve Values’ established by the Head of the National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO). Indeed, the NCPO promote the twelve core values to improve Thailand’s ethical standards and maintain Thai heritage (Ngammuk, 2016). Moreover, the promotion of American values during the Cold War achieved positive feedback and encouraged support for the US government’s domestic and international policies (Hall, 2010). Political values can also be used in combination with external actors to expand a country’s attraction in the light of domestic and international values. When governments support their own values, whilst also opening the country to improving international relations, it can help their national policies lead to international policy successes. For instance, after the Meiji Revolution in 1868, the Japanese government was reformed to restore the emperor’s rule but incorporating ideas from Western countries. This demonstrates how political values can be learned from other countries, such as military power, new economic systems and control of natural resources (Hall, 2010).

The third and final principle, ‘foreign policy’ is another significant element of soft power resources. This can be used to engage with many state-private networks and also to establish friendly frameworks. However, while a country’s foreign policy can influence and demonstrate its international role, it cannot be separate from the roles of other actors. It needs to be supported by its own government, perhaps in collaboration with other countries (Hull, 2010), and sometimes it can work with non-governmental actors such as international organisations or non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Hence, foreign policy affects the process of government

policy-making in terms of both politics and economics (Lin and Hongtao, 2017). Many countries have had to rapidly improve the quality of their foreign policy. For example, American soft power declined after the 9/11 situation, and the United States' role as the 'superpower' in world politics declined, which changed the world order in the twenty-first century. In addition, Xi Jinping's administration has pivoted towards Asia and Europe in order to improve China's foreign policy. China's leaders planned the new policy with the concept of a more peaceful, open and positive image. Xi Jinping pointed out that:

‘...foreign policy’s attraction can obtain the long-term international benefits. It’s easier to cooperate in terms of national interests and can be developed in a permanent relationship (Xi Jinping, 2017).

European countries also often maintain foreign policies on many global issues, such as goods and services, anti-terrorism strategies, international law and human rights (Nye, 2014). Notably, a foreign policy is most likely to be successful when a country participates in multilateral cooperation. It is also significant to note that the establishment of a strong soft power strategy requires a high standard of domestic and foreign policies, such as liberal democracy, financial services and global human rights. In this respect, the United Nations (UN) is an important international organisation involved in global issues, including politics, economy and finance, the environment, and science and technological affairs. Nonetheless, some countries consider that their individual soft power preferences have improved their economic power globally. For example, the UK's government has consistently attempted to sustain its global influence and power through its foreign policy. Its strategies are focused on democracy, free trade and financial aid around the world, particularly the new post-Brexit foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' concept.

Conclusion

The theoretical framework of this thesis is based on three theories. The notion of 'informal empire' serves as the foundation, with the concepts of 'dependent development' and 'soft power' providing a more developed framework of analysis. This theoretical framework will be used to provide an explanation of how British foreign policy in Thailand can be understood in relation to

the 'Global Britain' narrative, and to explore the meaning and practice of the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand following the EU referendum in 2016.

Both the concept of the 'informal empire' and the 'dependent development' approach are central to this research, which re-examines the historical development of Thai-UK relations in order to consider whether it is possible for these relations to remain relevant within the current 'Global Britain' context. Moreover, as part of this study's contribution to knowledge, aspects of cultural and social dependence in Thailand, resulting from British 'soft power' through elite networks, are discussed. This framework will be used to understand UK-Thai foreign policy relationships within the 'Global Britain' narrative, which is both historically embedded and contemporarily relevant. Since the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government has tried to employ diplomatic policies, culture and soft power to reinforce its influence. Thus, the concept of 'soft power' could be helpful in investigating the UK's role and power dynamics in Thailand after leaving the EU.

The 'dependent development' approach, proposed by Evans (1987), is the basis of a theoretical framework which is applied to each chapter. This approach demonstrates usefulness in analysing the formation of mutually beneficial relationships among developing country governments, the local bourgeoisie and multinational corporations (e.g. Evans, 1987; Tapen, 2003; Kvangraven, 2017; Naseemullah, 2022). Evans' framework is particularly helpful in understanding how governments in developing countries can establish policies in the context of global capitalism. According to Evans (1975; 1979), the various forms of state organisation, the bureaucratic elements that carry out developmental projects and programmes, and the nature of a state's relationship with its society and social classes, all have a significant impact on the development outcomes of developing countries. In using Thailand as a case study, Evans' approach has been beneficial in two ways. Firstly, it has helped to conceptualise 'Global Britain' in socio-political terms as a model of dependent development structure, rather than global economic dominance (Fernandes, 1975; Cardoso, 1977). This is linked to the sharing of benefits between governments and local elites in developing countries, which are used to preserve Britain's global influence. Secondly, it has helped to provide a framework linking the approach's most often discussed theme – elite networks – to a sustained 'dependent development' relationship between the UK and Thailand over the last four hundred years. Drawing on those who have also used Evans' approach to the role of local elites in developing countries, Tapen's (2003) work, in particular his

analysis of how the basic relationship between external forces and internal movements has been developed in developing countries, is particularly useful for this research. Tapen clearly indicates that the capital elites or dominant classes within the accumulation process adopted a rapid-growth policy, emphasising low wages for the workers and financial accumulation in the hands of a few. Furthermore, the dominant or developed states employed ‘soft power’ instruments, such as education, foreign aid and social development, to enable them to establish international rules, standards, values, norms and political agendas in developing countries, particularly among the ruling elites (Barton, 2014; Evans and Jakupec, 2021).

The concept of soft power is also particularly helpful for this thesis in that it provides a detailed framework for discussion of the role of ruling elites in the modernisation or Westernisation process through ‘development discourse’ in the periphery (Charoensin-o-larn, 2006). It will also be used to examine the UK's ideas and policies in Thailand following its departure from the EU. To discuss the meaning of the ‘Global Britain’ concept and how the concept can be used in Thailand to strengthen Thai-UK relations, the narrative of empire (Turner, 2019) has been considered, along with Daddow’s (2019) belief that the success of ‘Global Britain’ will be determined by its relevance to international stakeholders. These approaches will be used to discuss the ‘Global Britain’ narrative since the UK has left the EU.

Chapter 3

British Imperial and Contemporary History

Introduction

This chapter outlines British foreign policy in three phases of historical and contemporary development within a global context. The policies reflect the fact that Britain has continually sought to preserve its global dominance in its former colonies and dominions as an approach to global politics through a diversity of dependent relationships. The British Empire primarily undertook its foreign policy within the framework of a ‘formal empire’. However, it had another approach to conceptualising British foreign policy in the late nineteenth century, which was the formation of dependent connections between the empire and undeveloped countries through the notion of an ‘informal empire’. This concept is the major focus of this thesis, which leads to an analysis of British foreign policy within the new ‘Global Britain’ project after the EU referendum in 2016. One of the central themes emphasised in post-Brexit literature on British foreign policy has been nostalgia for the imperial past. However, most studies on post-Brexit foreign policy have only focused on the reconfiguration of direct British influence through the concept of ‘Empire 2.0’, as it relates to the UK’s relationships with the Anglosphere, the Commonwealth and fully colonised countries, in terms of a ‘formal empire’. This noted, the British government cannot currently build another formal empire in the style of nineteenth-century colonialism. This thesis therefore examines the ‘Global Britain’ narrative through the lens of the concept of an ‘informal empire’, which was characterised by indirectly controlled British influences in terms of political, economic and cultural dominance throughout the imperial period. It is challenging but interesting to apply this concept to imperial legacy thinking in British foreign policy. In other words, British imperial history encourages a re-examination of the empire’s political-economic and cultural legacy, with the goal of addressing Britain’s global foreign policy during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

3.1 British foreign policy in the imperial phase (1815-1945)

3.1.1 The Britain Empire and its imperial political-economic influences

Much of the literature on colonial expansion has identified the features of British colonies. The empire involved the formal and informal exploitation of other countries by bringing them into the global economy through liberal economic policies and free trade (e.g. Gallagher and Robinson, 1953; Cain and Hopkins, 1960; Thompson, 1999; Onley, 2005; Attard and Dilley, 2013; Grocott and Grady, 2014). Others have emphasised the significance of migration, culture and identity to broaden and help accelerate British global development (e.g. Seeley, 1883; Bridge and Fedorowich, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Buckner and Francis, 2005; Bell, 2007). Furthermore, the spread of industrialisation and foreign investment imposed new requirements on British policy. It necessitated the integration of undeveloped areas into British overseas commerce in order to access and control markets through the power of monopolies (Cain and Hopkins, 1960; Attard and Dilley, 2013).

Since the 1950s, a developing literature on British imperial policy has concentrated on the relationship between the British Empire and independent non-Western states through the framework of an 'informal empire'. Gallagher and Robinson (1953) examined the British Empire on the assumption that the Industrial Revolution presented Britain with economic dominance, which was then extended to political influence. For example, some independent Asian, African and Latin American countries became dependent on Britain as a supplier of manufactured goods, a market for exported commodities and a source of financial loans. Therefore, Gallagher and Robinson argue that Britain strengthened its control over peripheral states in the early and mid-nineteenth centuries within the framework of an 'informal empire'; that is, economic influence without the expense of political control. In addition, many scholars (Osterhammel, 1986; Darwin, 1997; Thompson, 1999) indicate that Britain preferred to employ an 'informal empire' for economic expansion rather than formal rule. Because of limited military resources and the ease of relationship management, an 'informal empire' could be more widely encouraged and reduce expenses. The British Empire did not use gunboats or direct administrative power to force other countries to accept British commercial expansion. Instead, the government increased its authority and global influence by establishing an informal empire based on economic

dependency and mutually beneficial relationships. Notably, Gallagher and Robinson (1953) and Cain and Hopkins (1960) agree that British imperial expansion had often used informal control rather than formal rule. Through dependent relationships, this informal rule may have had a long-term beneficial effect on Britain's dominance in its colonies.

Furthermore, Onley (2005) studied the principle of Britain's informal empire between 1820 and 1971 and found that British officials during the imperial era distinguished between formal and informal empires in terms of sovereignty and suzerainty. To these officials, Britain's formal empire consisted of British territory over which it had complete authority. Britain's informal empire, on the other hand, consisted of foreign territories over which it had gained suzerainty or partial sovereignty through treaties. However, this view is contradicted by Cain and Hopkins (1993), who argue that the difference between formal and informal control is not necessarily measured by constitutions or sovereignty; in contrast, the distinction between the two forms was the degree of control exercised by the centre. In addition, Parrott (1997) is much more concerned with power distribution between the dominant and peripheral states. Strict control methods may have included metropolitan threat and the usage of military resources. However, British imperial policy and degrees of control were not all at the same level of intervention or exploitation. They varied depending on the importance of markets and supply sources linked to British national interests in these areas. For example, in the mid-nineteenth century, mercantilist strategies of the formal empire were used to develop India, while in contrast, the 'informal empire' of free trade was employed in Latin America for the same purpose. Arguably, the idea of an 'informal empire' was an essential element and fundamental to the continuity of British imperial expansion.

Both Gallagher and Robinson (1953) and Cain and Hopkins (1980) highlight significant arguments about how Britain's informal empire worked during the imperial period. They accurately represent Britain's commercial empire outside of the formal empire. According to Robinson and Gallagher (1953), informal British control was determined by its success in attracting local collaborators and facilitators, and characterised by Britain's economic dominance and governmental pressure. Therefore, formal political control shifted to economic dependency and mutual benefit through free-trade systems. However, behind the appearance of a nominally independent state, the threat of force and economic levers were used. This view is supported by Barton (2012), who studied the idea of an informal empire in Asia. He points out that some

Marxist theorists have argued that those territories once under former imperialist control are still subjected to economic or political control by a former colonial power. In the same way, a country with nominal independence is still in a relationship similar to its former relationship as an informal colony.

Gallagher and Robinson's (1953) argument focuses on British economic expansion through elite networks. This concept articulates the justification for shifting from formal colonies to informal imperialism. Formal imperialism was expensive because maintaining colonies demanded military spending. As a result, Britain preferred an informal empire over formal control because it was cheap. By engaging local collaborators or elites, informal empires were more advantageous and cost-effective in securing a developing economy's boundaries. This view is supported by Onley (2005), who points out that the British could not have stayed without local collaborations. Similarly, a recent study by Barton (2014) develops Gallagher and Robinson's argument. Barton contends that Britain's informal empire represented a sharing of benefits between Britain and local elites in the global economy. Gallagher and Robinson's approach also highlights that British imperial expansion through free trade with local elites was vital for establishing British economic relations with other countries.

On the other hand, Cain and Hopkins (1993) coin the term 'gentlemanly capitalism', a dynamic complex of economic, social and political influences centred on the City of London, to describe the nature of financial imperialism within the social structure of Britain itself. Notably, the financiers of the City of London and the political elites of the government were either the same persons or had closely related interests. It can be said that 'gentlemanly capitalism' was the name given to the values of the commercial elite. Cain and Hopkins also contend that the government and financial elites had a vested interest in each other. Thus, the City of London's finance and service sectors, more than anything else, enabled Britain to operate informal political influence outside the British Empire. Cain and Hopkins' ideas contradict Gallagher and Robinson's views in terms of operations within local political systems to gain British economic interest. Cain and Hopkins (1960) state that provincial manufacturers remained political 'outsiders' who gained certain commercial concessions from the British government. The local governments never had the privileged position of City 'insiders', whose close relations to the aristocratic political class secured their dominance over business policy. They believed that financial and political elites

would protect and share their common interests. In other words, Cain and Hopkins investigated Gallagher and Robinson's informal empire approach and concluded that British imperialism was not determined by individuals on the periphery but in Britain itself. It indicates that the government's policies could lead to an expansion of British influence in the periphery.

In 1986, Cain and Hopkins established a connection between 'gentlemanly capitalism' based on landed wealth, and overseas expansion. From the mid-nineteenth century, the significant growth area was the financial services sector, and the most rapidly developing regions were the British colonies. British imperial influence as the primary source of long-term international finance had begun to spread to the colonies after 1850. It was evident that 'gentlemanly capitalism' had the virtue of acknowledging the importance of the settler colonies. Cain and Hopkins have made an important contribution to the understanding of imperialism through a broad perspective, emphasising the increasing importance of investment, loans, banking and insurance services since the late nineteenth century, as well as the invisible earnings from these services. To sum up, Cain and Hopkins accept Robinson and Gallagher's ideas regarding British economic influences. However, instead of Robinson and Gallagher's emphasis on the periphery, Cain and Hopkins believe that the emergence of the financial industry played a significant part in the formation of the British Empire. Significantly, there was a coalition of individuals both inside and outside the British government who encouraged British financial investment in non-Western countries. In other words, the expansion of London's financial and service industries increased the demand for global investment opportunities. Likewise, Darwin (1997) points out that the concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism' was the vehicle for commercial and financial expansion in the peripheral states, which continued far into the twentieth century.

Moreover, it is argued that British intervention in local crises of the periphery used 'gentlemanly capitalism' to maintain its influence. Cain and Hopkins give consideration to financial and commercial aspects of British policy, especially in South Africa. In addition, Attard and Dilley (2013) provide an in-depth analysis of the work of Cain and Hopkins, showing its relevance to a form of informal imperialism in Latin America and the dominions, based on what Ronald Robinson described as "the meshing of autonomous private enterprises with the internal politics of quasi-autonomous governments." However, Gallagher and Robinson's view of the 'informal empire' posits that British imperialism was dictated by individuals in the periphery rather than in

Britain itself. They also note that British politicians and civil servants in the nineteenth century had a common 'official mind' that meant they were determined to maintain balanced government budgets, low taxation and low government expenditure. Thus, the British ruling class relied on the expertise of diplomats and officials who were 'on the ground' in the non-European periphery.

A recent study by Dilley (2019) suggests that the concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism' put forward by Cain and Hopkins offers perhaps the most thorough scholarly analysis and deep-rooted understanding of Britain's global past and present. The concept may also lay the foundations of a future research agenda. In addition, Dilley highlights that Cain and Hopkins's approach might be characterised as an effort to combine Robinson and Gallagher's account of the mechanism of British imperial expansion with other, earlier, interpretations of imperialism. Likewise, Gildea's (2019) study of British foreign policy points out that the 'informal empire' is characterised as an 'empire of trade', directly linked to the concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism'.

These studies show that expanding British imperial dominance through free trade and financial services was an important strategy. Britain utilised the approach of a formal empire to become the dominant power in its colonies, but preferred to preserve its global influence through an 'informal empire' which involved unequal treaties, concessions, diplomats and elite networks. It is evident that the British Empire's position between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century, or during the Victorian era, was that of a powerful empire with economic supremacy. The concept of an 'informal empire' was therefore a fundamental continuity of British imperial expansion that extended British influence far beyond its formal empire.

Evans' (1975) 'dependent development' approach has been used in this study as a theoretical framework to analyse British global policy throughout the imperial period. This approach investigates the concept of an 'informal empire' proposed by Gallagher and Robinson (1953) and Barton (2014) by focusing on the relationships between governments, local elites and international markets. However, in relation to the use of Thailand as a case study, the idea that Siam was part of Britain's informal empire has been criticised since the 1990s (Sophonpanich, 2011). For example, Loos (2006) argues that Gallagher and Robinson's concept of an 'informal empire' is a broad generalisation from a Western perspective. Loos suggests that their concept ignores the cultural and historical diversity of individual geographical locations. Moreover, Wolters (1999), a Southeast Asian historian, argues that the way to approach studies of this area

is to focus on the region's distinctive culture and traditions, rather than on Western dominance in terms of economic and political power. Therefore, most of the research on British Empire settlement written during the 2000s (e.g., Bridge and Fedorowich, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Buckner, 2004; Desbordes, 2008; Attard and Dilley, 2013; Barton, 2014) pays particular attention to culture and identity in colonial expansion. Specifically, Attard and Dilley (2013) examined historiographical developments. They suggest that the emphasis of imperial studies has evolved away from traditional economic and political objectives and toward the cultural dimensions of empire or cultural imperialism. According to Johnson (2003), imperialism catalysed migration and colonisation, resulting in the enslavement of indigenous peoples. Furthermore, several studies (e.g., Bridge and Fedorowich, 2003; Johnson, 2003; Buckner, 2004) have shown that British imperialism influenced colonial identities. For example, achieving independence from colonial domination affected national identities in Asia and Africa. The next section will explore how British identity and cultural networks developed in foreign policy during the imperial period.

3.1.2 British identity and cultural networks

The definition of 'imperialism' refers to the imposition or spread of cultural values and ideas, which also links to the 'informal empire' concept. In this case, British imperialism had been dominated by trading networks and political power through colonial expansion. Additionally, British imperial influences within the 'British world' of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were shaping communities overseas and extending the country's values to non-British communities around the world (Buckner, 2004). Many recent studies (e.g., Bridge and Fedorowich, 2003; Buckner, 2004; Belich, 2009; Magee et al., 2010; Attard and Dilley, 2013; Bright and Dilley, 2017) have pointed out that the 'British world' is a broader concept than the British Empire or the British Commonwealth. Its principles are employed to describe the origins of the British identity and cultural networks in the dominions and the settler colonies. However, some opponents argue that the ideas of 'Greater Britain', the 'third British Empire' and the 'Empire-Commonwealth' all serve to better identify the dominating unit within studies of British global influence, while the 'British world' approach frequently neglects political culture and power in the British settler colonies (Bell, 2007; Bright and Dilley, 2017).

Research investigating the history of British imperialism has focused on the historiographical boundaries and cultural framework of the empire. It has focused on transnational processes across the borders of states and empires in terms of economic dominance and politics, rather than culture and identity. In recent years, however, there has been an increasing amount of literature on identity and cultural networks within Britain's role in global history. The 'British world' concept is distinct from British imperial history, and is defined by the networks and identities of global Britishness. Study of the 'British world' concept within Britain and its overseas empire was initially carried out by Bridge and Fedorowich (2003). Their concept demonstrates a distinction between the 'British world' and 'British imperialism'. The distinction between these approaches is that 'British imperialism' is a traditional approach that focuses on power relations between states within the context of political and economic power, and the 'top-down' structure of the formal empire, whereas the 'British world' approach examines a form of 'globalisation from below', developed through Britishness and the British experience abroad, and describes its origins, culture and identity from before the First World War until the 1950s.

As Bridge and Fedorowich (2013) explain, the key terms of the 'British world' concept are British identity regarding the free-trade system, finance and investment, and defence. The 'British world' also includes cultural networks and alliances in various areas, such as professional and education, sport, family and religion. The authors further argue that the 'British world' could be embraced by those who were not of British origin but who found the idea of belonging to the empire and imperial citizenship appealing. For example, non-British communities such as the Afrikaners, Jews and French-Canadians, found political and cultural sanctuary within a British imperial framework. In addition, newspapers, radio, film and sport bound people together to what, in many respects, was an imaginary or imagined empire, an empire of mind that projected a common set of ideas, opinions and principles.

Furthermore, Barton (2012) identifies characteristics of the 'British world' as key aspects of building imperial elite networks. In order to integrate the Western model in other regions, the network-building process employed British rule of law, scientific advancement, liberal ideals, industrialisation and professional modernisation. Thus, the 'British world' refers to elites from all over the world engaging with and being influenced by British elites (Barton, 2012). However, Attard and Dilley (2013) are more concerned with the methods through which the British

established and directed financial services and investments in settler societies. These were the primary channels for the movement of people, ideas, technology and values in the 'British world'. A crucial policy for expanding the country's influence globally was through the concept of liberal imperialism and the expansion of British foreign direct investment and corporations. The British government therefore employed investment to create a transnational network operating within the 'British world', and the forces that shaped that network. Finance was also a significant element in the power dynamics between settler societies and the metropole. This relates to Cain and Hopkins's (1960) idea of 'gentlemanly capitalism', whereby the essence of financial imperialism shifted its attention to self-governing settler societies rather than annexation and force in tropical zones. Conversely, Bridge and Fedorowich (2003) point out that Cain and Hopkins's thesis is narrowly elitist and economically deterministic. The above discussion implies that two significant types of British dominance continued to exert influence during the imperial period: financial networks and cultural power.

Smith (2008) and Dilley (2010) have studied the links between politics, culture and finance, particularly British investment in settler colonies, in order to better understand the 'cultural economy' concept in the 'British world'. Smith contends that the 'empire effect' was formed by close adherence to British institutions and a culture of empire loyalism rather than political control. Likewise, Bright and Dilley (2017) hold that the 'British world' core framework employed 'cultural economy' as a key element in the relationship between Britain and its settler colonies. Significant analysis and discussion on the concept are presented by Buckner (2004) and Bright and Dilley (2017) who argue that the 'British world' approach is the most appropriate way to understand movements in the history of British imperialism. The key elements of these writers' analytical frameworks are cultural networks and British identity. They also conclude that the 'British world' was a form of globalisation through migration and ideas of British identity.

Similarly, Buckner and Bridge (2003) argue that networks and identities are the 'British world' parameters for studying the expansion of the British Empire. In addition, the study by Magee and Thompson (2013) offers probably the most comprehensive empirical analysis of the integration of the 'British world' into economic dominance within the late nineteenth-century global economy through migration, investment, and trade. They also show that the term is necessary to explain the 'co-ethnic network' operation and bonds of trust facilitated by a shared British

culture. The notion of the 'British world' could be considered a tool for Britain to expand its trading networks within non-British groups, for example, the Federation of British Industries, which worked with the UK manufacturers' representatives' group within the Empire (Thackeray and Toye, 2019).

Although not all of those who use the term 'British world' would perceive precisely the same meaning, its core concept represents more than exploiting colonial territories for economic interests. The 'British world' refers to the formation of British communities abroad and the extension of British identities and values to non-British communities all over the world. In other words, the existence of the 'British world' could be maintained through cultural networks across the British dominions and its colonies. To sum up, the 'British world' defines a world dominated by the British through British identities and cultural networks in its formal and informal empires (Bridge and Fedorowich, 2003; Hall, 2005; Elbourne, 2005; Bright and Dilley, 2017).

However, Pietsch (2013) investigated debate over the 'Greater Britain' concept as a broader, global approach to exploring British imperial history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This approach investigates British settler societies as a central political idea that attempted to make sense of a changing geopolitical landscape. In recent years, there has been an increasing amount of literature on studying the empire and restoring the imperial connection. For example, Bright and Delley (2017) discuss the re-emphasis on migration and the settler empire through the concept of 'Greater Britain'. This has helped to reintegrate imperial aspects into the histories of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa and the UK. In addition, they argue that the 'British world' concept is better understood as a movement inside rather than outside of British imperial history, since the conceptual core of the 'British world' that integrates attention to cultural networks with a focus on British identity is insufficient to distinguish a new field of research. Likewise, Johnson (2003) points out that the 'British world' concept has not been successful, with doubts raised over what is meant by the 'Britishness' of the empire.

Therefore, new literature on imperial history has demonstrated a transformation in the study of the British Empire. These studies have deployed the concept of 'Greater Britain' (Bell, 2007) to analyse British imperial history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The idea of 'Greater Britain' focuses on an essential but neglected aspect of this history, namely, the debate in the late nineteenth century over the potential union of the UK with its settler colonies in Australia,

Canada, New Zealand and parts of South Africa. This was a response to fears and anxieties brought home by the new kinds of global connections of the period. Bell discusses the belief that establishing a global federal state would help counter the rising political, geopolitical and economic challenges presented by new developing powers such as the United States, Germany and Russia, and contribute to the stability of the international order. He suggests that the concept of 'Greater Britain' as the configuration and dynamics of economic and geopolitical power would become crucial foundations for the development of political policy in the twentieth century and beyond.

In contrast, Bright and Dilley (2017) argue that 'Greater Britain' can only be applied to a certain historical period in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Against a backdrop of expanding autonomy in the dominions, the term 'Greater Britain' was eventually sublimated into the term 'Commonwealth'. Nevertheless, Bell (2016) develops the idea of 'Greater Britain', focusing on reconfiguring liberal ideas in the imperial context. He argues that a range of perspectives for integrating Britain's white settler colonies into a new transoceanic government inspired liberal ideas of a global order of peace, development and prosperity. His concept is related to Greater Britain's 'post-imperial political association' and 'imperial imagination.' These factors can be utilised to investigate new British foreign policy in relation to the settler colonies within the context of imperial nostalgia.

In conclusion, The British Empire expanded in power and influence through free trade, financial services, capital, investment and culture at home and abroad. Although there were two forms of the British Empire, formal and informal, Britain often preferred to use an 'informal empire' rather than formal rule for colonial expansion. All of the studies reviewed here support the claim that the 'informal empire' was a key strategy in British foreign policy, notably dominating economy and finance across the world. In other words, the concept was critical in sustaining and deepening Britain's economic hold and political control over its colonies. Free-trade systems and liberal imperialism methods were vital to maintaining British imperialism and power during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Gallagher and Robinson (1953) address the concept of free trade imperialism, arguing that local collaborators or elites were critical to integrating areas into the developing capitalist economy. Furthermore, Cain and Hopkins' (1960) idea of financial expansion was employed in British colonies to preserve economic supremacy in long-term

dependent relationships. In terms of cultural expansion, Britain employed the 'British world' concept to influence settler colonies through migration, identity and cultural networks. Some studies, however, state that Duncan Bell's (2007) concept of 'Greater Britain' may be used to describe how Britain expanded its influence beyond a formal empire into a closer union, which includes Australia, Canada, New Zealand, part of South Africa and the United States. Arguably, therefore, the framework of British foreign policy in the imperial period included four elements: trade, financial services, capital and investment, and cultural networks.

In relation to this study, the foundation for this argument is Siam's incorporation into Britain's 'informal empire' in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Siam's political, economic and cultural spheres were affected by Britain. This thesis largely agrees with Gallagher and Robinson's position about the support or assistance provided by local elites on Britain's periphery in Siam. Additionally, recent research by Dilley (2019) and Gildea (2019) has had a significant impact on this study's overall analytical framework. These studies look at new British foreign policy and note that the 'informal empire' is characterised as an 'empire of trade', which is closely related to Cain and Hopkins' concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism' (1960).

The next section will look at the post-war transformation in British foreign policy. Churchill's 1948 reference to 'three circles' encompassed the special relationship with the United States, the Commonwealth and potential partners in European countries, all of which would help to retain Britain's dominating position in the post-imperial world. However, Britain suffered significant political and economic failures during the 1950s, highlighted by the 1956 Suez crisis. The British government then changed its stance toward European integration and became a member in 1973, seeking to maintain Britain's global influence through European integration rather than adapting European frameworks to British policies. As a result, since the initial proposal for British membership in the European Union in 1961, Britain's relationship with the EU has been a focus of intense political debate, with the rise of British Eurosceptics opposing Britain's relationship with the European Union. They consistently questioned the extent to which EU membership was in British interests, challenging its economic value and the loss of sovereign independence associated with membership (Elision and Saunders, 2016). Brexit thus demonstrates a shift in British foreign policy and its role in the post-war period. The UK's vote to leave the EU in 2016 has proved to be the most significant challenge to the UK's world role since the Suez crisis.

3.2 British foreign policy and the end of empire

During the 1850s and 1860s, British imperialism achieved highly variable degrees of success in the free-trade system and industrialisation by establishing world capitalism. The significant manifestations of Britain were imperial and maritime power, to which the country had a global commitment (Gamble, 1985; Louis and Robinson, 1994; Lee, 1996; Darwin, 2011; Johnson, 2003). Many countries rapidly industrialised due to British capital and domestic and international exports. The global economy, financial networks and world trade systems all developed and were all based in the City of London. However, the British economy suffered a significant setback in the post-war era. Britain declined as a global power in military, political and economic terms, symbolised in the Suez Crisis of 1956 (Gamble, 1985; Lee, 1966; Darwin, 2011). Moreover, the emergence of anti-colonialism accelerated demands for self-government and independence from the British Empire. By the early 1960s, Britain had lost most of its colonies, and its financial and military weakness had destroyed its dominance in the Middle East and African countries (Darwin, 2011; Johnson, 2003). In other words, Britain's 'great power' status had diminished and was entering a period of post-imperial crisis. Therefore, Britain had to adapt its domestic and international policies in line with the decline of its global commitments.

Nevertheless, during the post-war period, Britain provided a valuable link between the developing and developed states of the world, which enabled it to continue to significantly influence key international issues (Gamble, 1985; Johnson, 2003; Harvey, 2011). Britain and the US established the 'special relationship' in 1946. Notably, the US government advocated for the UK to join the European Economic Community to promote its interests and, as a result, the UK shifted from being an autonomous superpower to a dependent post-imperial power. Thus, Britain became a junior partner to the US after the post-war period (Gamble, 1985; Lee, 1996). In order to retain British global influence, the US government accepted this alliance since Britain was in a weaker position than previously and no longer threatened its power (Lee, 1996). British foreign policy emphasises strong military and economic cooperation with the US. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) remained pivotal for the British international profile. In the same veins, Britain looked for ways to enhance its economy, security, and defence with Europe in order to sustain its global dominance. This would lead to British foreign policy

maintaining a particular connection with the US and leaning towards the European Community in the early 1960s.

In the late 1960s, Britain changed its strategy to become a global economic power while its internal politics deteriorated (Gifford, 2014). Gamble (1985) supports this view, indicating that Britain's post-war position in the world had lost military dominance and its economic position relied on the continued existence of a free global market. As a result, Britain shifted its global economic strategy under the framework of 'neo-colonialism'. Gildea (2019) investigated British decolonisation during the 1960s and 1990s, when Britain granted independence to its former colonies. Britain's rule over its former colonies was replaced by neo-colonialism in order to preserve the countries' political identity while extending strategic and economic interests in the post-imperial era. The concept of neo-colonialism focused on economic leverage rather than force, exploiting debt to impose liberal economic frameworks on developing countries, which benefited the World Bank, the IMF and multinational corporations. Gildea's argument supports Cain and Hopkins' (1960) concept of 'financial imperialism'. Significantly, the US government supported Britain in establishing liberal economic frameworks in developing countries (Gildea, 2019). This strategy indicated that the patterns of external economic dependence on Britain, and internal orientation toward the British state and business, were a legacy of the British Empire.

To sum up, as Britain's imperial military, financial and industrial dominance declined, it tried to encourage new relationships to maintain its influence and power in the post-imperial crisis. This strategy demonstrates that British foreign policy has always been characterised by a global perspective. The next section will look at a significant shift in British foreign policy and its position in the world during the post-imperial period, focusing on Britain's relationship with the European Union.

3.2.1 The decline of the British Empire

Britain's global connections and imperial legacy were fundamental to British foreign policy and its role in post-war developments. The changes in British foreign policy emerged after 1945, when Britain had to communicate with various international allegiances as a multilateral power

(Lee, 1996; Wright, 2017). It was because of this that Britain improved and strengthened international organisations for power distribution in trade, military and defence, and global governance (Glencross and McCourt, 2018). The emergence of superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, threatened British power and Britain became financially and militarily more subordinate to the US. The consequence was that Britain's position shifted from one of global domination to one of weakness and dependence. According to Gamble (1985), Britain was not a self-contained national economy and security system in the post-war period but rather, a component of a much wider global system. Therefore, Churchill's 'three circles' of British foreign policy have been acknowledged in the literature on post-war Britain. This strategy was intended to ensure Britain's place as a post-war superpower alongside the United States and the Soviet Union (Gamble, 1985; Johnson, 2003; Geddes, 2013).

In 1948, Churchill had characterised British interests as involving 'three circles' which consisted of the British Commonwealth and Empire, the English-speaking countries, and Western Europe. He also highlighted Britain's position in these 'three circles'. He stated that:

These three majestic circles are coexistent and if they are linked together there is no force or combination which could overthrow them or even challenge them. Now if you think of the three inter-linked circles you will see that we are the only country which has a great part in every one of them. We stand, in fact, at the very point of junction, and here on this Island at the centre of the seaways and perhaps of the airways also have the opportunity of joining them all together (Churchill, 1948).

This could be taken to mean that despite losing its colonies, Britain maintained a global influence through these circles. Churchill stated that there was an order in which to prioritise these circles: the first and the most important were the British Commonwealth and Empire, the second was the English-speaking world and the third was a united Europe (Gifford, 2014).

Much of the academic literature since the mid-1990s onwards emphasises that Britain responded with pragmatism to using the model of the Commonwealth as a means of ending the empire (Lee, 1996; Darwin, 1999; Watts and Pilkington, 2001; Johnson, 2003). Britain established the Commonwealth partnership to replace British imperialism as a means of reviving the British economy in the post-war period (Lee, 1996). Notably, the Commonwealth continued to support the development of former colonial territories, inheriting a process that began with colonial

development loans. As Johnson (2003) contends, the Commonwealth clearly emphasised the end of the British Empire. It is a free association of nations that share a worldview rather than a common development. However, Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth dramatically declined due to internal political and economic problems in former colonies, which remain unsolved. The rapid emergence of nationalism in other parts of the empire, beginning in the 1920s, had led to an extensive series of independence demands, beginning with India in 1947, and by the 1960s, most of Britain's territories had gained independence. These areas of the empire were self-governing, but most maintained links to Britain as Commonwealth members. However, because raw material costs fell during the Korean War in the 1950s, trade ties between Britain and Commonwealth nations diminished, and the benefits they provided increased only slowly (Cain and Hopkins, 1993). For instance, during the 1960s Britain's trade with the Commonwealth expanded by only 29 per cent from £1.24 billion to £1.6 billion. To compare trading relationships, Britain's commerce with European nations increased by 230 per cent, from £463 million to £1.53 billion (Lee, 1996). This indicates that Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth was a limited success policy; while on the other hand, Britain's relationship with the European countries was gaining increasing economic benefits. Thus, as Greenwood (1992) argues, the Commonwealth disadvantaged the post-war British economy and ultimately, Britain shifted its foreign policy in the hope of becoming more global with the United States and the European Economic Community.

Regarding Britain's relationship with the US, Britain established a 'special relationship' with the US in 1946, which increase its financial and military dependence on America (Gamble, 1985; 2003; Gifford, 2014). The intention behind this policy was to sustain British military and financial support in parallel with the emerging Soviet Union threat. The 'special relationship' was therefore a foundation for Britain's post-war re-establishment as a global power, as the British government allied with the US to retain its status as a major power and defend its global interests (Gamble, 2003). Despite Britain's unequal relationship with the US, the British government recognised the US as a superpower and sought to become a subordinate national interest to it (Gamble, 1985; Johnson, 2003).

British policies with the US retained significant military commitments in certain parts of the world. According to Lee (1996), Britain reduced its armed forces after the Suez Crisis and the

publication of the 1957 Sandys White Paper. This combined a reduction in military capabilities with the adoption of nuclear weapons in the context of a special relationship with the American government and was a significant turning point. Furthermore, in a comprehensive study of the decline of British power, Louis and Robinson (1994) suggest that decolonisation was an attempt by Britain to return to an 'informal empire' with the backing of the US, particularly in terms of international trade and finance. Britain aimed to preserve the relevance of sterling as an international currency; though not as powerful or important as the dollar, it could still be an international medium of exchange.

Meanwhile, the US government welcomed sharing the advantages of the new global role with Britain. The two states sought to secure the democratic and capitalist world's security against the Soviet Union. Notably, the US encouraged the UK to join the EEC in order to strengthen its interests in Europe. In other words, the US recognised the benefits of sharing global leadership responsibilities while Britain remained subordinate to overall American interests and strategy. The consequence was that the relationship between the US and Britain was to the mutual benefit of both countries during the post-war period (Gamble, 1985; 2003). Although Britain's economic and military strength declined relative to this commitment, the US relationship was to reconfigure 'British global power' in the post-imperial crisis. Britain was a member of all military alliances that the US established, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO), and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). These represented a network of military bases in the rest of the world (Gamble, 1985). Moreover, Britain and the US accepted new economic and financial institutions, particularly the IMF and GATT, the financial stability programme, and more open trade (Johnson, 2003).

In short, Britain aimed in this respect to strengthen the 'special relationship' with the US. As Deighton (1993) highlights, stronger relations between Britain and the US could provide the foundation for the post-war re-establishment of Britain as a global power. In other words, the UK moved from an autonomous superpower to a dependent post-imperial power. As the government increased its dependence on the US as a junior partner, conversely, Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth stagnated. Because of the fall in raw material costs during the 1950s and their diminished import purchasing power, the Commonwealth and empire's economic benefits declined (Cain and Hopkins, 1998). Britain therefore applied to join the European Economic

Community to secure a wider Atlantic community which included the US, the British Empire and Commonwealth, and Western European countries. This strategy could help Britain's ability to promote European cooperation while maintaining its independence and sovereignty as a global power. Britain thus shifted its role from three circles to two stepping-off points, becoming closer to Europe and emphasising the 'special relationship' with the US, and aspiring to be a transatlantic bridge between the two (Gamble, 2003; Wallace, 2005).

However, Britain's relationship with Europe has been the subject of constant political discussion since the Macmillan administration first sought British membership in 1961. Despite attempting a re-defined relationship with the EU that was neither entirely 'in' nor fully 'out', Britain consistently focused on British national interests, identity and sovereignty within the European Union framework. This was evident, in July 2012, in David Cameron's response to questions in the House of Commons. He addressed his perspective on Britain's position in the European Union, stating that:

I think we should not be frightened of a variable Europe, with variable countries involved in variable projects. Our national interests are the single market, trade and cooperation over foreign affairs, where we have a huge amount to bring to the table. Our interest is not in being in the Schengen agreement; our interest is not being in the single currency. We have to be a bit more relaxed about a Europe of different types of memberships (Geddes, 2013).

This implies that while Britain sought to join the EEC in areas relevant to national interests, it never fully embraced or accepted the terms of membership. It can be seen that Britain's membership in European integration was a commitment to reconstructing British state power within global, rather than European, interdependencies that would re-establish British power. In other words, Britain primarily joined the EEC as a platform to reconfigure and maintain its power in the rest of the world.

3.2.2 The UK's membership of the European Community (EC) and the European Union (EU)

Although Britain's imperial power declined in the 1950s, the UK government sought to maintain its global power among European states. Many scholars have addressed the argument for joining the European Community, stating that despite Britain's leadership role in the Commonwealth, Britain's economic policies with Commonwealth countries had dramatically failed (Lee, 1996; Geddes, 2013; O'Rourke, 2019). Greenwood (1996), for example, argues that the Commonwealth was a disadvantage for the post-war British economy, and Britain thus attempted to join the European Community to preserve national interests as a global power after decolonisation. Furthermore, to transform the balance of power between Britain and emerging superpowers, Britain changed its foreign policy to a more specifically regional role (Lee, 1996).

However, British policy towards the European Community stood in contrast to the European ideal. Britain had sought association on exclusive terms in the form of the Free Trade Area (FTA), but continually attempted to avoid the supranational governmental structures preferred by intergovernmental cooperation. Lee claims that the British government, by drawing on the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) with the founding six member states¹ in the mid-1950s, was accused of trying to undermine the European economic framework and force the EEC towards the non-integrationist direction that Britain had always favoured. Lee supports this argument with reference to Macmillan's speech of 1957, when the British government tried to persuade 'the Six' to remain within the FTA framework. Macmillan (1957) argued that:

We must not be bullied...We could if we were driven to it, fight their movement...We must take positive action in this field, to ensure that the wider Free Trade Area is more attractive than the narrow Common Market of the Six (Macmillan, cited in Greenwood, 1996).

However, this EFTA framework failed because 'the Six' drew closer together in the EEC and Euratom in 1957. The objectives of 'the Six' regarding the FTA were considered insufficient to ensure economic development and political stability in the post-war period; it was felt that they needed European integration to build a common regulatory framework and supranational

¹ They include France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg.

institutions. Likewise, Geddes (2003) analysed Britain's role in the European Union and concluded that although the European project was sometimes conveyed in Britain, European leaders never intended to simply establish a glorified free trade area, but rather, to develop a core political framework for European integration. In contrast, Britain's relationship with Europe has consistently been opposed to the integrational framework, always favouring a global approach, and there were critical debates during the process of joining the European Community in the 1960s and the 1970s. Arguably, the rationale for entering the European Community was to preserve Britain's global power and expand its influence after these had declined by the 1950s. As Lee (1996: 289) concludes, "Britain was still a world power, but it was also in need of a closer connection with Europe." Ultimately, Britain was accepted to join the EEC in 1973 and gained significant benefits from the membership.

According to Gifford (2014), Britain had transformed its foreign policy into that of a global economic power, while its internal politics had declined at the end of the 1950s. Therefore, the government's foreign policy in the 1960s focused on a modernisation strategy which led to the proposal of its first application for European integration. However, Gamble (1985) highlights that British foreign policy in the European framework implied significant changes in Britain's relationship with the US. In the 1970s, Britain tried to approach European integration in global political and economic terms, rather than from an Atlantic perspective. Gamble also believes that this process indicated Britain was ready to abandon the last vestiges of its global role, particularly in military and economic terms. Britain seemed to become increasingly dependent on the European Economic Community.

Nevertheless, Gamble fails to examine how Britain adapted its policies to counterbalance its decline as an imperial dominance. Britain did not neglect its relationship with the US, but rather, attempted to play the role of managing multilateral relations in the post-war crisis in order to maintain its position as a global power. Britain's relationship with the US was still essential in British foreign policy, but joining the EC was a survival strategy in the post-war era, especially since Britain's military and economic deterioration. The British government had to adapt its domestic and international policies after decolonisation and the loss of its global commitments. Thus, Britain shifted its perspective from three circles to two stepping-off points, a role apart from Europe and in a special relationship with the US, with Britain acting as a 'transatlantic

bridge' between them to balance power (Wallace, 2005). It could therefore be considered that British foreign policy has been centred on maintaining a close relationship with the US administration while establishing new commitments to European countries (Niblett, 2007).

Moving on to the outcomes of Britain's EEC membership over the last four decades, British policy has been centred on its relationship with European countries regarding economy and security. It could be argued that Britain's leading role in Europe has developed a power dynamic between the US government and its active foreign policy towards world affairs (Wallace, 2005). In contrast, Geddes (2013) argues that Britain's position in European integration was problematic. To support this argument, in 1974, Harold Wilson's government had been forced to promise a 'fundamental renegotiation' of the British membership in membership (Gowland and Turner; cited in Schütze, 2022). Notably, The Labour government had the 1975 EEC referendum campaign to determine the UK should remain in or leave the EEC. The 1975 referendum's result of the 1975 referendum was that the British people decided to stay in the EEC. With a turnout of 64%, the results indicated that more than two-thirds of voters supported the UK's involvement in the common market. Therefore, the 1975 referendum renegotiated Britain's ongoing membership in the EEC, and as can be seen, the choice to remain in the EC was possibly the most significant of the post-war era. It could be considered that the EEC has influenced how Britain is governed, its economic patterns and its global position.

However, British reluctance emerged from the periphery rather than from Europe itself, with the result that in the late 1980s, emerging Eurosceptic movements had a significant influence on British politics. With the Conservative Party under Thatcher's leadership, Thatcher launched a new Conservative vision in a speech at Bruges in 1988. She said that:

We have not successfully rolled back the frontiers of the state in Britain only to see them reimposed at a European level, with a European superstate exercising a new dominance from Brussels ... [T]he Treaty of Rome itself was intended as a Charter for Economic Liberty ... By getting rid of barriers, by making it possible for companies to operate on a Europe-wide scale, we can best compete with the United States, Japan and the other new economic power emerging in Asia and elsewhere. It means action to free markets, to widen choice and to produce greater economic convergence through reduced government

intervention ... out aim should be to deregulate, to remove the constraints on trade and to open up (Thatcher, 1998).

This speech was an outcome of accepted Euroscepticism within the Conservative Party (Geddes, 2013), and it suggests illustrating British foreign policy through the lens of global approach. In this respect, the UK's position shifted from autonomous superpower to a largely US dependent post-imperial power.

In terms of UK-EU relations, despite the fact that the UK has been a member of the EU since 1973, the UK has never participated as a full member in terms of EU agreements; in particular, the Maastricht Treaty changed the primary orientations in the British economy, foreign policy, security, and justice (Gamble, 2018). The 2016 EU referendum could therefore be seen as a desire for a return to greatness and independence in global affairs, which was considered to be impractical as a member of the EU. After forty-three years of EU membership, Britain could be afforded more benefits outside the EU. Thus, according to Gamble (2018), the Brexit phenomenon is restoring British liberties and preserving national self-confidence.

In conclusion, rebuilding British state power, after it had declined from an established structure of imperial preferences with a global approach, was an essential principle in British foreign policy in the post-war period. In this respect, Britain changed the political and economic balance of power between the Commonwealth, the US and the European Union. In other words, as Britain's post-war decline became apparent, Britain's capacity to significantly impact critical international issues remained intact. The framework of British post-war foreign policy had arguably been Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth, the US and a united Europe within a narrative of British exceptionalism and decline. Then, due to the rise of anti-colonial nationalism and economic crises, Britain's relationship with the Commonwealth deteriorated significantly during the 1950s. The British government therefore adjusted its priorities to emphasise transatlantic relations as a bridge between the US and Europe. Britain sought to preserve its political, military and economic ties with the two. It is clear that the 'transatlantic partnership' with the US, and relations with the EU, constituted the next framework of British foreign policy in the post-war era. However, Britain's relationship with the EU was problematic. There was continual debate over British national sovereignty, economic problems and immigration. Meanwhile, Britain's special relationship with the US was being criticised,

particularly during the Iraq war in the 1990s. Therefore, in the late 1990s, the bridge between Europe and the US collapsed. Moreover, the UK voted to leave the EU in the referendum in 2016, then formally departed the EU in 2020. It is evident that Britain's place in the world is changing after the EU referendum in 2016.

Many recent studies have attempted to establish Britain's role in the world outside the EU. Some argue that the UK aspires to recover the place it had as a great power during the British Empire. This implies that the UK's departure from the EU may re-establish its ties with former colonies, the Commonwealth, and the English-speaking countries or Anglosphere. Others have consistently asserted that British foreign policy following Brexit should strengthen Britain's position as a 'global actor'. After forty-three years of EU membership, the UK could be granted additional privileges outside the EU, including national sovereignty and free-trade agreements. As a result, a new British foreign policy could promote new partnerships with numerous nations while maintaining ties with the Anglosphere, the Commonwealth and former colonies to become a truly global Britain post-Brexit. These arguments also indicate that the UK's ties to European nations will continue after Brexit. However, the transformation in the political environment and geopolitics in the twenty-first century, notably the emergence of China, has presented challenges to the British government. Thus, assessing the UK's Indo-Pacific strategy is a new aspect of post-Brexit Britain.

The next section will examine British foreign policy in the post-EU era. The UK government has continuously employed a global approach in its foreign policy, mainly due to its legacies of empire, and the 'Global Britain' concept is a foundation for post-Brexit strategies. It emphasises three areas: military strength, economic security and stronger global relationships (Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, 2022). The post-Brexit 'Global Britain' approach is informed by the legacies of informal imperial thinking, but also highlights that 'Global Britain' is new in that it prioritises the Indo-Pacific region rather than the Commonwealth.

3.3 New British ambitions in the post-EU period

This section explores new British foreign policy ambitions after the EU referendum in 2016. Since the referendum, the UK government has sought to outline plans for the 'Global Britain' project as a framework for post-Brexit policy (May, 2016; Glencross, 2018; Turner, 2019). The existing literature on British foreign policy indicates that Britain has always sought to influence the world, even when it was a member of the European Union. According to Gamble (2003), the experience of hegemony and empire created the view that the British could be the centre of a wider economic, political and leadership network. Specifically, Smidak (2021) points out that the 'Global Britain' project is designed to focus on Britain's place in the world outside the EU, enabling it to reclaim its historic greatness through the idea of the British Empire. British foreign policy has consistently been characterised by a global approach, mainly due to its imperial legacy, and Daddow (2019) suggests that 'Global Britain' represents to continue global aspirations in British history, establishing a vision for Britain beyond Brexit. It has the potential to push the UK into a new global position and establish a pragmatic British foreign policy in the post-Brexit period.

While it could be argued that 'Global Britain' has been traditionally characterised by an adaptable and global approach, some domestic and international opponents contend that this idea is simply a slogan for another incarnation of British imperial attitudes. On the other hand, others have seen the UK's departure from the EU as an opportunity to reinvigorate? global alliances. The UK government hopes to benefit from free-trade agreements, re-managed tax reduction and deregulation, and reduced immigration levels in the country (Gamble, 2018). Boris Johnson, a former UK Prime Minister, affirmed that the country would develop free-trade policies, achieve outward-looking interests, and build self-confidence based on British values and identities in non-European countries (Johnson, 2019). In other words, the UK government has promoted the 'Global Britain' project to represent global British foreign policy ambitions throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

The first attempt to formulate the concept of 'Global Britain' was in the speech of Theresa May in July 2016 at the House of Commons. This concept was the basis for reinvesting in the UK's

global partnerships in order to strengthen its position as a free-trading nation. Notably, the UK hoped to become a global leader even after leaving the EU. May said about Brexit that,

It should make us think of Global Britain, a country with the self-confidence and freedom to look beyond the continent of Europe and to the economic and diplomatic opportunities of the wider world. We are a protagonist – Global Britain is running a truly global foreign policy (May, 2016).

However, May's approach lacked many precise details about the shift in British foreign policy after Brexit. It is clear that since the European referendum in 2016, the 'Global Britain' concept has aroused political debate at home and abroad. Many Brexiteers argue that the Brexit phenomenon is an opportunity to re-establish the UK's global position (Gamble, 2018; Glencross, 2018). It implies a return to greatness and independence in world affairs that was not possible as a member of the EU. The British government could be afforded more benefits outside the EU. However, although many studies have continued to explore the concept of 'Global Britain' since the EU referendum in 2016, this concept has not been precisely defined in terms of what it means in practice (Glencross and McCourt, 2018; Oppermann, Beasley and Kaarbo, 2019; Daddow, 2019). Therefore, the next section investigates existing research and more recent studies of the 'Global Britain' concept, since much has been claimed about what this means for the direction of British foreign policy after Brexit.

3.3.1 Analysing the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept

After the referendum decision to leave the European Union in 2016, the UK government outlined plans for the 'Global Britain' concept as a framework for post-Brexit foreign policy (Glencross, 2018; Turner, 2019; Smidak, 2021). In March 2021, the UK government announced the 'Integrated Review: Global Britain in a Competitive Age' to describe British foreign policy through the idea of 'Global Britain' (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2021). However, this review lacks specifics and fails to define a meaningful British foreign policy post-Brexit. Thus, there is still much debate on what 'Global Britain' means for the country's direction after Brexit. In this context, this thesis challenges the views that the Brexit phenomenon is re-establishing British liberties, protecting national self-confidence and fulfilling the vision of 'taking back control' (May, 2016; Gamble, 2018; Glencross and McCourt, 2018; Storey, 2019). Some studies

have suggested that the UK government would like to return to Britain's nineteenth-century hegemonic position as an independent trading power of significance in the post-Brexit period (Dent, 2021; Smidak, 2021; Balls, Weinberg and Kailasa, 2021). In other words, the 'Global Britain' concept could be a reconfiguration of historical approaches to British foreign policy. However, it has been established that the government of post-Brexit Britain cannot build another formal empire in the manner of nineteenth-century colonialism. It is outdated and impossible to realise because the UK now lacks the necessary resources and capacities. Therefore, rather than formal rule, this thesis focuses on how the 'Global Britain' concept reflects informal imperial thinking in British policy after the EU referendum of 2016.

Much of the post-Brexit literature on British foreign policy emphasises nostalgia for the imperial past, its mentality and some of its ambitions, which resonate strongly with the thinking of 'Global Britain' (Johnson, 2016; Rees-Mogg, 2018). Notably, Turner (2019) highlights that the 'Global Britain' concept is rooted in imperial nostalgia, based on the successes of Britain's role and policies before the decline of its empire and entry into the EU. In support of this view, Fox, a former Secretary of State for International Trade, affirmed in 2016 that the UK would have significant opportunities to recover the global economic system which it had successfully developed in the nineteenth century, and before Britain entered the Common Market in 1973 (FCO, 2016). At the same time, Johnson (2016) contended that the 'Global Britain' concept might be an 'empire of the mind'. He stated that:

Though we never can take our position for granted, Churchill was right when he said that the future empires will be 'empires of the mind'. In other words, after leaving the EU, the British government aims to restructure historical imperial preferences and successes through the concept of 'Global Britain' (Johnson, 2016).

Moreover, there are additional approaches to be considered within the concept of post-Brexit 'Global Britain'. For example, Bell (2019) suggests that the British government may employ the notion of 'neoliberal imperialism' in post-Brexit foreign policy. This strategy might be considered a way for capitalism to progress and preserve British national interests. It could be stated that the imperialism of free trade in the nineteenth century could become 'neoliberal imperialism in the twenty-first century'. Storey (2019) identifies the 'Global Britain' concept within three global centres of economic, political and security influences. The UK government is likely to encourage

relationships with the US, European countries and the Indo-Pacific. Regarding its relationship with European countries, despite Brexit, the twenty-seven European countries will remain important partners for the UK (Wright, 2017). Additionally, Johnson affirmed that Brexit did not mean Britain would be leaving Europe, just leaving the EU (Glencross, 2018). The UK has been part of the EU's framework for over forty years, but after Brexit, it needs to develop a foreign policy involving multilateral and bilateral activism. Nevertheless, its dealings with European countries are still essential, mainly in economic and regional security terms.

Furthermore, Daddow (2019) argues that the UK has aimed to promote British values and interests in every part of the world in the post-Brexit period. He defines 'Global Britain' in terms of 'four pillars'. Firstly, the UK will need to focus on free-trade agreements with European countries as regional partners, and deepen its bilateral links with the twenty-seven member states. Secondly, the UK's influence outside of Europe could make it a global leader in relation to other countries, particularly in the Anglosphere, the Commonwealth and Asian countries. Similarly, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) statement in 2018 highlights that British contemporary foreign policy would seek to strengthen the special relationship with the United States further than ever before, especially in military and defence terms. Thirdly, the UK would seek to strengthen links with Asian economies as new markets to encourage new partnerships outside the EU. More specifically, the UK plans to promote its culture and values through research and innovation scholarships, such as the Newton Fund, the Chevening Scholarship and the Marshall Scholarship. The UK's soft power strategy is to use state and non-state actors through British institutions such as the British Council, the BBC World Services and British NGOs (FCO, 2017). Finally, the UK government aims to develop security and defence policies in Europe and the Indo-Pacific regions (FCO, 2016). This approach implies that the British government seeks to maintain its relationships with the United States, European countries and the Commonwealth.

Notably, the UK government also outlined its intention to establish a new connection with the Indo-Pacific region regarding economic, security and soft power. The relationship between the UK and Asian countries will be developed as a new pivot of UK administration through diplomatic defence and security networks (UK Foreign and Security Policy Working Group, 2016). In addition, the post-Brexit UK government looks to create new bilateral relationships to

enhance its long-term global influences and interests, as well as its foreign and defence policy priorities. It could therefore be considered that the concept of 'Global Britain' has emerged as central to this reconfiguration of British policies in the post-Brexit period. However, the strategic value of 'Global Britain' appears limited and is highly contested (Glencross and McCourt, 2018). The controversial debates on Brexit and 'Global Britain' at home and abroad have underlined the UK's position as uncertain. The 'Global Britain' concept may not prove popular with a domestic audience, who fear immigration, or with foreign countries which distrust an old colonial power (Gaston, 2021; The Policy Institute, 2021).

Dominic Raab (2020), former Foreign Secretary, identified the UK government's vision of a 'truly global Britain' in terms of three pillars, which included maintaining the relationship between European countries, promoting free trade across the world, and being an even stronger force for good in the world (House of Commons Library, 2021). Although these pillars were described as a new UK position after Brexit, some critics have argued that none of these principles represent a departure from traditional British foreign policy. The country's direction through 'Global Britain' is still unclear and has been debated as the organising slogan of UK foreign policy in the age of Brexit. Notably, the British government's 'Integrated Review', under the title 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age', was launched by a speech from former Prime Minister Boris Johnson on March 16, 2021, to examine further details of the three pillars and to outline how 'Global Britain' will work in practice after Brexit. The review focuses on the idea that there has been a significant step forward in British foreign policy after officially leaving the EU's structure in December 2020. Moreover, it identifies the British strategic framework and demonstrates the central significance of the UK government's priorities and narrative in the post-Brexit period. There are clear aspirations to take on a global influencing role as a 'global broker or facilitator' (Niblett, 2021; Smidak, 2021). Thus, the UK government hoped to identify the official opening of the 'Global Britain' concept through the publication of this review, presenting it as the construction plans for Britain's new world role in the post-Brexit period (British Foreign Policy Group, 2021; Smidak, 2021).

One of the fundamental concepts of 'Global Britain' in the review is to deepen engagement in the Indo-Pacific region after Brexit (Integrated Review, 2021). The UK government has identified a new strategic framework for this region to develop economic opportunities, security, norms and

values. Even though the emergence of China has been seen as a critical challenge to Britain's position in the Indo-Pacific region in terms of trade and security, the UK clearly intends to use its newfound post-Brexit sovereignty to collaborate with new regional partners in order to develop its global approach (Smidak, 2021). Therefore, it has plans to rapidly join international institutions based in the Southeast Asian region. For example, one new British strategy is to develop closer relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and strengthen trade, defence and security in this region; another is the application to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Focusing on the UK's foreign policy in Southeast Asian countries through the ASEAN organisation, there is sufficient evidence from existing research and more recent studies to show that the relationship between the UK and Southeast Asian and ASEAN countries will continue to develop and deepen engagement as a new pivot of UK's foreign policy in the post-Brexit period (Turner, 2019; Daddow, 2020). This strategy is significant because ASEAN is currently remarkably important due to growing trade tensions between the US and China. Therefore, the UK government intends to find a new position in Southeast Asia after leaving the EU, and address challenges between the US and Chinese governments by creating a balance of power in the region. However, Bonura (2020) argues that British diplomatic capacity with the ASEAN countries is still unclear, particularly in free-trade areas, unlike its relations with the EU, the US, Japan, Canada and Australia, which will be prioritised in the UK's foreign policy ambitions. Therefore, Bonura suggests, Southeast Asia is not considered an important regional partnership in British foreign policy priorities in the post-Brexit period. Conversely, Daddow, Glencross and Turner (2020) insist that the UK government has developed multilateral institutions to find new partnerships through 'three global circles', the Anglosphere, European countries and the Indo-Pacific region. Hence, Southeast Asia, or ASEAN, is one of the centres of political and economic activity central to Global Britain's post-Brexit future. It is concluded, therefore that Southeast Asia is a new regional strategy in British foreign policy, working through the ASEAN organisation.

The studies mentioned above demonstrate the implementation of 'Global Britain' as a new UK regional strategy, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region. The concept of 'Global Britain' has been extensively described as part of UK foreign policy ambitions in the post-Brexit period

(Integrated Review, 2021), and the review focuses on British multilateral and bilateral trade links with ASEAN countries in the post-Brexit period. The UK government has launched a new inquiry on the potential accession of the UK to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) in March 2023, which includes four ASEAN states, Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam. Additionally, the UK and Thailand plan to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to set up a Joint Trade Committee on Commerce and Economic Cooperation and a future trade agreement (FTA) in the post-Brexit period. This evidence indicates that the UK seeks to extend its influence with ASEAN through Thailand as one of the most important ASEAN countries. Arguably, the UK government has outlined the 'Global Britain' concept in the Indo-Pacific region within the narrative of empire. There is sufficient evidence from existing research and more recent studies to show that the concept of 'Global Britain', viewed in terms of the 'narrative of empire', is the motivation for UK foreign policy (Turner, 2019), and this can be used to engage with new international partners post-Brexit.

However, although the studies mentioned above demonstrate how the concept of 'Global Britain' has influenced plans for UK foreign policy after Brexit, its meaning has not been precisely defined by the UK government and lacks supporting evidence. It remains unclear whether it is more than a slogan (Blair, 2017). Some (Johnson, 2016; Rees-Mogg, 2018) have argued that the potential for 'Global Britain' is that it would renew the island nation's vocation and achieve greatness and independence in world affairs. It would unite British history, values and identities with the UK's international role in the world, which EU membership failed to do. Thus, the 'Global Britain' concept is emerging as an essential foundation of an ambitious vision for UK domestic policy in the post-Brexit period. Nevertheless, the question which arises is how it is beginning to influence policy in the UK's bilateral and multilateral relations.

In conclusion, Brexit represents a change in British foreign policy and its place in the world. Over the last four decades, Britain's foreign policy has been centred on its relationship with the EU, which was considered critical to its economy and security. It has also attempted, with varied success, to build a position as the US's most significant partner within the EU. However, Eurosceptics have consistently challenged the extent to which EU membership has been in the UK's interest, questioning its economic value and the loss of sovereign independence associated

with membership (Elision and Saunders, 2016). The vote to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum could be the most significant challenge to the UK's world role since the Suez Crisis in 1956. It is evident that the UK has consistently focused on its global approach and influences since the EU referendum. Although the UK has departed the EU, this does not indicate that the UK will be withdrawing from the international stage. The UK government has continued to emphasise British influence globally in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods (Glencross and McCourt, 2018). The 'Global Britain' concept is highlighted as the UK's ambition to be a successful 'global player' in foreign policy and to expand its 'global role' (Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 2016; Glencross, 2018; Turner, 2019; Smidak, 2021). Notably, the Integrated Review emphasises Britain's interest in seizing the Indo-Pacific region's expanding military and economic potential. According to a statement released by former Foreign Secretary Liz Truss (2022) in the House of Commons, the UK government intends to reinforce its foreign policy by establishing a network of economic and security partnerships and global alliances. The UK government has thus adopted a British foreign policy framework which reflects past imperial and global approaches. Access to the Indo-Pacific region, in particular, is a new policy for boosting British interests in the post-Brexit future. Because of the desire to become more global, the UK government is attempting to strengthen links with the East, even though the rise of China may threaten Britain's position in the world.

Many studies, and speeches by the UK government have attempted to explain the 'Global Britain' concept (Dent, 2021; Smidak, 2021; Balls et al., 2021). They have focused particularly on the British imperial legacy, and on the background of the 'Global Britain' narrative being both historically embedded and contemporary. These perspectives help explain the emergence of the 'Global Britain' concept in the twentieth-first century. Gildea's (2019) analysis of British foreign policy suggests that, ever since the Suez crisis of 1956, the UK government has sought to rediscover its lost empire, culminating in the referendum of 2016. Britain has ambitions to be global, particularly to become global through its imperial legacy. The government would like to re-imagine the UK's relationships with the Anglosphere, the Commonwealth and its former colonies. This implies rediscovering elements of the British foreign policy of the imperial period, which is linked to the concept of 'taking back control' (May, 2016; Gamble, 2018; Glencross and McCourt, 2018; Storey, 2019).

The majority of studies which indicate support for Brexit base their views on imperial nostalgia and the idea of 'Empire 2.0'. Many have highlighted that the new vision of British foreign policy after the EU referendum focuses on the UK government's plans to announce new trading agreements and foreign policy with the Commonwealth, Anglosphere and former colonies, again implying 'Empire 2.0'. Some argue that the 'Global Britain' concept is not just a slogan, but a foreign policy incorporating a narrative of empire designed to regenerate Britain's great power in many countries after leaving the EU (e.g. Calhoun, 2017; Olusoga, 2017; Boffey, 2018; Virdee and McGeever, 2018; El Enany, 2018; Dorling and Tomlinson, 2019; Sykes, 2020). However, it is difficult to accept this view, as the UK is not in a position to build another empire as in nineteenth-century colonialism. Therefore, some of those seeking to typify 'Global Britain' as 'Empire 2.0' could be seen as over-exaggerating.

However, there could be a rediscovery of the 'informal empire' concept in British foreign policy post-Brexit. The idea of an 'informal empire' is also linked to the empire narrative but could be utilised to reassert Britain's global influence through economic dependency and mutually advantageous relationships among elites. As many scholars (Osterhammel, 1986; Darwin, 1997; Thompson, 1999) have indicated, Britain often preferred to employ an informal empire for political and economic expansion, rather than formal rule. However, the existing literature on British foreign policy after Brexit pays less attention to the idea of an 'informal empire'. Barton (2014) affirms that in analysing the process of interconnectivity known as 'globalism', the concept of 'informal empire' has been consistently neglected within the transformation model. Thus, it would be interesting to explore foreign relations between the UK and Thailand/Siam within the context of the argument for a nostalgic and ambitious approach to the concept of an 'informal empire'. Some argue that the UK government may use this global approach on the basis of its past successes in trading networks.

Conclusion

The frameworks of British foreign policy in three phases of historical and contemporary development reflect how the British government has continually sustained its influence in its former colonies and dominions as an approach to global politics through dependent relationships. The British Empire practised its foreign policy within the framework of a 'formal empire'; however, the formation of dependent connections between the British Empire and its colonies

also emphasised the notion of an 'informal empire'. This notion is focused on the formation of dependent connections between the British Empire and peripheral states, particularly through elite networks. After the Second World War, Britain declined in terms of its military and trade relations. Therefore, joining the EEC/EU helped the UK's government to stay relevant as a global power.

However, the UK never fully embraced or accepted the terms of membership. It can be seen that Britain's membership of the EU was a commitment to reconstructing British state power within global, rather than European, interdependencies. In other words, Britain primarily joined the EEC as a platform to reconfigure and maintain its power in the rest of the world. Thus, the emergence of *Eurosceptic* movements, particularly from the 1980s, reflects the fact that many in the UK still sought to maintain the country's power in the periphery through a global approach. After the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government claimed that Britain could be afforded more benefits outside the EU, like those which it had enjoyed in the imperial period. Arguably, the 'Global Britain' of the twenty-first century could fit the idea of an 'informal empire', which focuses on political-economic dominance and cultural imperialism to preserve its influence and power. This approach to the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept would incorporate imperial legacy thinking. To explore this idea, this thesis will investigate Thailand/Siam as a case study. Thailand was part of Britain's informal empire in the imperial period and an ongoing relationship between the two states remains. Most recently, there have been plans for Britain and Thailand to develop new projects after Brexit. Thus, the UK government could utilise the 'informal empire' model as a pattern for future relations with Thailand. The next chapter will examine Thai-UK relations within the 'Global Britain' narrative up until the EU referendum in 2016. Then, based on the integration of Britain's informal empire into the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept, the 'dependent development' approach (Evans, 1973) will be used as an analytical framework to analyse the changing foreign policy ties between the UK and Thailand as Britain departs the EU.

Chapter 4

Thai-UK Relationships within the ‘Global Britain’ Narrative

Introduction

The chapter is to explore the relationship between the UK and Thailand within the ‘Global Britain’ narrative. With reference to definitions of dependent relationships (see Chapter 2), the chapter uses case studies to show how Britain exerted control over Siam as a semi-peripheral state in the global capitalist system. It is argued that the model of ‘informal empire’ was the pattern for Anglo-Siamese relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Britain’s domination had ensured that Siam signed a Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the two countries, known as the Bowring Treaty, in 1855. At the same time, Britain had influenced social and economic development through local elites in Siam. After Second World War, Britain’s military and commercial supremacy decreased notably with the 1956 Suez Crisis. Thai-UK relations suffered setbacks after the Thai government declared war on the Allies, as well as the Japanese government’s establishment of military bases on Thai territory to attack British colonies in the Malay States and Burma (Tate, 1974; Lertsatiti, 2016). However, with the signing of the Anglo-Thai Peace Treaty and the creation of elite networks between the UK and Thailand in 1946, relations between the UK and Thailand were reconfigured. It is apparent that these elites maintained a relationship throughout the post-war period. Then, the role that UK-Thailand ties play in the EU/EEC, it has been more clear that UK-Thailand relations are partially meant to contribute to the growth of cooperation through EU laws and regulations, with the UK as a member of the European Union. As a result, the UK supported Thailand in the international order, mutual prosperity and progress, and regional stability under EU standards, such as free trade agreements, military cooperation, democracy, and human rights issues.

Since the EU referendum in 2016, the UK and Thailand have been exploring new ways to strengthen trade and investment relations, such as forming the Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) and exploring the possibility of forming a free trade agreement (FTA)

(Department for International Trade, 2021; Royal Thai Embassy in London, 2021; Bonura, 2021). Meanwhile, Thailand has more extensive economic policies with numerous 'great powers,' including the United States, China, Germany, and Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 2021). Despite collaborating with other major countries, the Thai government has relied on the UK, but to a smaller degree. Considering the British government's announcement of the 'Global Britain' concept for seeking new partners, the UK may lose its status as a major power in Thailand after UK's departure the EU. Arguably, the concept of 'Global Britain' may be evidence of the continuation of British decline.

The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part explores the history of the Britain's informal empire in Siam. The next part then investigates Britain's relationship with Thailand in the post-war period. The final section explores the UK's membership in the EU with Thailand until the EU referendum in 2016.

4.1 The British Empire and Siam

4.1.1 Siam as part of Britain's 'informal empire'

This section analyses how British imperialism influenced Siam as an 'informal empire' between 1855 and 1925. The year 1855, when King Rama IV (1851-1868) signed the Bowring Treaty, is chosen as the starting point of this section and the start of Britain's informal empire in Thailand. The year 1925 is selected as the endpoint of Britain's informal empire in Thailand because of the ending of the British Royal Forestry Department (RFD) in northern Thailand, which was the main mechanism of Britain's informal empire in Thailand. In addition, much of the literature on British imperialism (e.g., Wannamethee, 1990; Morson, 1999; Sasiwuttivat, 2011; Pombejra, 2014; Chochirdsin, 2015) argues that because of the global economic depression and political resistance in colonial areas, British imperialism declined after the 1920s. As its objectives shifted away from imperial development, Britain focused on economic and political stability in its direct colonial states and own nations. The framework of this analysis is constructed by key aspects of Britain's informal empire, integrated into Thailand's historical manifestation of the 'Global Britain' narrative. This section employs the term 'Siam', which was the previous name of Thailand before 1939, as it refers to Siam in the pre-1939 period.

Literature on the British and Western industrial revolutions has provided the rationale for Britain's expansion of its influence in Siam. According to Tate (1970), Western countries demanded the creation of new markets in Southeast Asia in order to establish manufacturing centres and explore natural resources. Many historians have argued that Siam was a gateway to the South China Sea. Therefore, European traders were interested in installing the free trade system in Siam (e.g., Chochirdsin, 2015; Wannamethee, 2014; Pombejra, 2014; Farrington and Pombejra, 2014). Furthermore, Jamsai's (1970) study of Asian economic growth during the imperial period confirms the role of the Siamese state as a trading centre. In comparison to other Asian countries such as Cambodia, Japan, India and China, Siam had the highest level of economic success and foreign investment. As a result, about forty nationalities of businesspeople established economic relations with Siam in this period. Notably, several studies argue that Siam became a strategic location for commerce in Asia to access natural resources such as teak, tin and copper (Chochirdsin, 2015; Pombejra, 2014; Morson, 1999; Wannamethee, 1990). Similarly, Jamsai (1970) points out that Siam was a mainland country in Asia, and traders were seeking ports to establish commercial relations with other Asian countries, including Singapore, Malaysia, Japan and China. Considering all this evidence, it was inevitable that many European traders would visit Siam during the imperial period because of its geography and natural resources, which formed the basis of the Siamese state's commercial position in the centre of Asia.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between Britain and Siam in the imperial period. Since the seventeenth century, Britain had established formal trade agreements through the British East India Company (Farrington and Pombejra, 2014; Chochirdsin, 2015). A significant analysis and argument for the justification for Britain's informal empire in Siam is presented by Webster (1988). Britain sought to maintain its influence through an informal empire because it would allow British commercial and financial interests to control their objectives in the Siamese state under the most favourable conditions. Therefore, the British government succeeded in advancing its own national economic prosperity, and strengthening the economies of other British colonial possessions in India and Burma by providing cheap food and raw materials such as rice and teak from Siam.

Drawing further on the concept of imperialism, Robinson and Gallagher (1953) argue that due to the costs of direct colonialism increasing, Britain changed its policy to a more informal approach through the nineteenth century. The costs of this strategy were reduced because the British government did not actively influence politics in the country concerned. Instead, the government forced the ruling elites to open their economies to free trade, or so-called free trade imperialism. This view is supported by Barton (2010); he argues that Britain allowed Thailand to remain nominally independent because Britain could maintain an informal empire without the burdens and costs of directly running Siam or waging war with France, which is why Britain established a buffer state in Thailand to protect against France's expansion in Southeast Asia. Notably, Thai and British trading relations were in danger of being overwhelmed by the French expansion in Southeast Asia.

Thus, in the nineteenth century, the British government shifted its strategy to one of threatening Siam in order to maintain dominance of the teak trade and keep France away from Asian borders, particularly in Burma and India (Pluvier, 1974). In the same vein, Barton (2020) and Webster (1988) highlight that British Foreign Office officials were trying to create a 'buffer state' in Siam to keep the French in Indochina from bordering directly onto India. Arguably, Britain maintained continuous diplomatic, security and defence, and economic influences in Siam as a means of providing cheap security for British Burma and the eastern frontier of India. Also, it ensured that British interests in the Malay Peninsula would remain free of Siamese resistance or interference. Britain then rapidly expanded its influence to explore new trading markets and resources in Siam. As a result, it became part of Britain's informal empire after the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855 (Webster, 1988; Jackson, 2004; Barton and Bennett, 2010; Barton, 2014; Sasiwuttiwat, 2011; Lertsatit, 2014).

Despite the Siamese state never being directly or officially colonised by the British Empire, Siam was controlled by British imperialism through the Bowring Treaty, which provided political and economic benefits for the British government. Sasiwuttiwat (2011) argues that Siam was threatened by British imperialism in 1855 and then forced to sign an unequal agreement in the Bowring Treaty. Its conditions included the right of extraterritorial privileges, the establishment of consul courts in parts of northern Siam, and the right to internal trade using British commercial and capital systems (Lertsatit, 2016; Barton, 2014; Sasiwuttiwat, 2011; Dixon, 1999;

Webster; 1998). Gildea (2019) supports this argument, which defines the situation as an ‘Empire of Trade’. He argues that trade was typically imposed by force on reluctant non-European empires or their vessels in the informal empire, using gunboats when required and forcing unequal treaties that cemented European privileges. In this context, British imperialism had compelled Siam to establish a free-trade system. Specifically, Britain employed ‘gentlemanly capitalism’, which refers to the supremacy of the landed elite’s business interests and those of the expanding service industry and financial professions, to drive the British economy in the imperial period. The Siamese economy was dominated by this gentlemanly capitalism, allowing Britain to expand its economic dominance (Cain and Hopkins, 1988). In this respect, this study analyses the characteristics of British expansion in Siam within the concept of an informal empire. It will also evaluate growth in broader British or international settings, and acknowledge the ability of independent peripheral transformations to shape dependent relations.

For instance, Britain modernised the taxation system through the free trade arrangement with Western countries (Lertsatit, 2016), establishing a network of financial advisers to accommodate the demands of Britain’s informal empire in Siam (Webster, 1998). Britain also established its own international currency management and credit system, subordinating Siamese economic policy to the City of London through the gentlemanly capitalist dynamics of British imperialism (Cain and Hopkins, 1980; Webster, 1998).

The emergence of capitalist elites had become the source of a substantial portion of the local elites’ incomes in Siam (Webster, 1988). As a result, the economy of Siam rapidly adjusted to its incorporation into international commerce. The opening market in Thailand brought significant changes to Britain and Siam’s relationship in terms of economy and social culture. The Siamese economic system was changed from subsistence agriculture by peasantry to international production for export, and this change supported Britain’s commercial and financial interests (Webster, 1988). For example, Siam became a significant rice supplier for British-colonised countries in Asia, such as British India, Burma and the Malay states. (Webster, 1998; Barton, 2016; Jamsai, 1978), while Siam imported manufactured goods from Britain (Dixon, 1999; Sasiwuttiwat, 2011). Moreover, Siam was a valuable source for British exports, notably cotton textiles, tin and teak (Lertsatit, 2016; Sasiwuttiwat, 2011; Webster, 1998). Notably, Britain established the Royal Forestry Department (RFD) in northern Thailand to supply the dominant

British-based teak-trading companies, the Borneo Company Limited (BCL) and the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation (BBTC) (Barton, 2010; Webster, 1998). Specifically, Siam had exported 81,800 tons of teak by 1895, and virtually all of it was felled and transported by British companies (Webster, 1988; Barton, 2014). The dominance of British trading firms in Siam led to a British monopoly over the teak industry. Thus, the teak trade in northern Siam was controlled by British companies between the 1890s and early 1900s.

In short, the transformation of Siam from a traditional society into a peripheral capitalist one in terms of political, economic and social structures occurred in the late nineteenth century. To achieve the demands of Britain's informal empire, the Siamese government rapidly accommodated the expansion of export-oriented primary production demanded by British imperialism by modernising the state's economic and administrative systems in accordance with British imperial ideas (Webster, 1998). However, a weakness of this historical account is the lack of explanation of the way in which British imperialism influenced Siam. Some recent literature has suggested that the Siamese state was forced to modernise its administration and legislation within Western standards (Lertsatit, 2014; Sasiwuttiwat, 2011; Lysa, 2004). In contrast, other academics have argued that the monarchs or local elites in Siam worked with British imperialism to restructure the state, in order to maintain their authority (Webster, 1998; Jackson, 2004; Sturm, 2006; Barton, 2014). This argument is a vital feature of the investigation into the formation of elite networks between the UK and Thailand since colonial expansion.

The existing literature on British imperialism in Siam is focused particularly on these elite networks. In a comprehensive study of the informal empire's alliances through subordinate elite networks, Webster (1998) found a special relationship between Britain and the Bangkok elites, maintaining their mutual interests through a collaborative network founded on the monarchy, royal family, oligarchy and local aristocrats. Pasuk and Baker's (1995) explanation of King Rama IV's rationale for signing the Bowring Treaty in 1855 further highlights the importance of elite networks in relations between Britain and Siam. Before King Rama IV acceded to the throne, the Siamese commercial system with China had constituted the basis of its international commerce. However, due to the instability caused by the Opium Wars and the Taiping rebellion, Chinese trade was disrupted. Instead of China, Britain targeted Siam as a market for its Indian-grown opium. Thus, in 1851, King Rama IV ascended to the throne with the support of the

leading trading family in Siam, the Bunnag family. The Bunnags were closely allied with the British East India Company and the opium trade. King Rama IV then moved rapidly to legalise opium and the British trade, setting up an opium tax farm under Bunnag's direction. After that, the king signed the Bowring Treaty with the British in 1855, thus facilitating Siam's membership of Britain's informal empire.

Furthermore, the monarchy and associated royal families represented continuity between the two states, which aided the cultural and political dimensions of Britain's relations with Siam. For example, Britain's domination of concessions in northern Siam by establishing the Royal Forest Department (RFD) helped the Bangkok elites gain more control over the north, much akin to a form of internal colonisation (Barton, 2014). The feudal elites had become the political and social elites' instruments in managing Siam's peripheral capitalist relationship with the world economy (Webster, 1998). In addition, Barton (2014) notes the British special relationship with the Bangkok elites in the early twentieth century. This principle was a strategy for creating a collaborative network to serve both countries' interests. Britain could extend its control over the vast territories of northern Siam, while King Rama V established the principles of Siamese modernisation by using British models. The literature on Siamese modernisation reveals the process of Siam's development, and its modernisation assisted Siam in preserving its independence during colonial expansion (Tate, 1970). Tate also asserts that Siam was the best organised state in the Southeast Asian region under the Ayutthaya monarchy.

In addition, recent studies (Lersatit, 2014; Sasiwuttiwat, 2011) state that Siam received significant socio-economic benefits from Britain during modernisation, and the two countries maintained a friendly relationship. However, some scholars argue that King Rama V modernised the Siamese administration system following the British model in order to maintain his own authority over Siam, rather than developing the Siamese state (Webster, 1998; Jackson, 2004; Sturm, 2006; Barton, 2014). During the imperial period, Siam had a decentralised administrative structure, and between the nobility and the monarchy there existed an intra-elite conflict. As a result, King Rama V modernised the state to Western norms and earned authority as the great monarch defending the country throughout the colonial period.

Many historians have pointed out that the modernisation of the state administrative model by King Rama V was capable of satisfying the demands of Britain's informal empire, while the king

gained financial or network benefits from Britain (Wyatt, 1975; Kasian, 2001; Jackson, 2004; Sturm, 2006). As Tarling (1997) notes, British imperialism significantly impacted the Siamese central government and areas where powerful elites resided, because the local elites encouraged the British as an alliance. Furthermore, the British controlled most Western businesses (Suheiro, 1996). Sasiwuttawat (2011), who investigated the effects of British imperialism on the Siamese state, supports this argument. He asserts that the local elites responded to the threat of colonisation by maintaining their power within the context of systemic vulnerability. In an informal empire, the forces of dominating powers can collaborate with some local elite groups and as a result, these elites may modernise a state even if they only have indirect rule, because they may gain some benefits from the dominance. Thus, Sasiwuttawat (2011) suggests that the forces of dominating nations can represent both a threat and an ally to the local elite.

Notably, King Rama V visited Western Asian colonies including Singapore, Malaya, Burma and India. After visiting these formal colonies, he intended to modernise Siam by transforming the Siamese administration into an authoritarian and centralised auto-colonial state (Wyatt, 1975; Kasian, 2001). Moreover, Sturm (2006) affirms that Thai nationalism as an ideology originated in the mid-nineteenth century, and that the kings have actively embraced this nationalism to strengthen their power and bind the people's loyalty to their institution. Thus, Thai nationalism was originally monarchical and elitist; with the monarch himself embedded in the nation, and lacked a popular component. However, after the 1932 revolution, Thai nationalism was characterised by various conceptions of the 'national' by different ruling elite groups. In addition, Britain's informal empire in Siam could have helped the Bangkok elites, particularly the monarchy, by increasing their power to repress any resistance among local elites. This argument is supported by Webster (1998); during the British colonial expansion, King Rama V utilised British pressures in northern Siam to increase Bangkok's control. The teak forests in the north helped the Bangkok elites to gain more control over that region through internal colonisation (Webster, 1998).

In the same vein, Jackson (2004) argues that the Bangkok monarchy's reforms extended and cemented its dominance over the parts of the old Siamese empire that remained under its control. Because it gained financially from treaties with Western countries, the absolute monarchy had the resources to exert far more substantial control over the local populace than in the pre-colonial

period. This strategy might have helped the Bangkok monarchy strengthen its influence through the concept of an informal empire. It became a vital component of a local bi-power system that subjected the public to more intense state control, while presenting this as Western liberty rather than subjection to a new form of local tyranny. Moreover, others (Watananguhn, 1998; Na Pombjra, 2001; Lertsatit, 2015; Ruth, 2019) argue that King Rama V aimed to reform the Siamese educational system. The sending of royal family members to study in Britain was the main strategy to gain new knowledge and bring it back to Siam. For example, Prince Abhakara and Prince Vajiravudh were sent to acquire a Western military education (Ruth, 2019), while Prince Raphi Phatthanasak was educated in the Inner Temple and trained in English law in London (Kaneko, 2019). Prince Purachatra Jayakara studied engineering in Cambridge to develop the railway systems in the country (Ngambutsabongsophon, 2020). Thus, it is clear that the elites of Britain and Thailand have been linked in a cultural dimension, particularly in terms of what Jackson (2004) describes as the ‘Thai Regime of Images’.

The recent study by Barton and Bennett (2021) argues that Britain's informal empire in Siam declined in the 1920s due to the gradual nationalisation of teak leases. However, British firms and foreign offices remained dominant in the export industry. This argument can be investigated in terms of the continuation of Britain's ‘gentlemanly capitalism’ in Siam during the imperial period, specifically from accounts of the dominant elites. Nevertheless, the 1932 revolution in Siam changed its political system from royal absolutism to a constitutional monarchy (Klinfoong, 2016; Paribatra, 2003; Klein, 1998). As Siamese state authority changed from the monarchy to more democratic procedures and new state enterprises, new Thai elites emerged, including military, bureaucratic, business and political party elites (Glassman, 2000; Anderson, 2002).

To sum up, it is apparent that historical relations between Britain and Siam were those of a dependent relationship within Britain's informal empire. However, the Siamese state could develop the country, particularly in terms of trade and culture. It can be argued that the historical manifestation of the ‘Global Britain’ concept emerged through the ‘dependent development’ approach which was utilised between the two states, local elites and international markets. Nevertheless, Britain had used both hard and soft power to force Siam into signing the Bowring Treaty in 1855. At the same time, Britain influenced social development and soft diplomacy

through subordinate elites in Siam. Thus, dependency theory can be a critical approach to analysing Britain and Siam's relationship between 1855 and 1925. This study's exploration of the historical process in a developing country's political-economic setting (Dos Santos, 1970; Furtado, 1973; Frank, 1972) includes analysis the roles of internal controlling groups such as elites and the bourgeoisie (Dos Santos, 1976). The next section will further explain these elements, which are integrated into the concept of informal empire.

4.1.2 Emergence of capitalist elites in Siam

The literature review on Britain's historical relationship with Siam affirm that Britain had an influential role in Siam during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in economic terms. As previously discussed, Siam was a mainland country in Southeast Asia and thus, many European traders visited it during the imperial period because of its geography and natural resources, which formed the basis of the Siamese state's commercial position in the centre of Asia. As Siam became Britain's informal empire, it was ruled by Britain's economic dominance and political pressure. The Treaty of Friendship and Commerce between the two countries, known as the Bowring Treaty, was a key factor in opening up Siam's economy to British firms and encouraging Siam's modernisation through exposure to Western civilisation. The treaty led to Britain achieving a dominant position in the Siamese economy by establishing a commercial capitalist system in Siam, instead of a monopoly system. Khumsupa (2020) argues that the British replaced the former model of monopoly trade with the so-called new era of commercial capitalism. Likewise, Ghosh's (2019) study of the contemporary dependency theory also points out that British imperialism in the nineteenth century was based on the accumulation of capital, goods and resources from the colonies. In this case, during the informal empire phase, it was evident that the Bowring Treaty was an unequal agreement between Britain and Siam. A consequence of this was that Britain influenced Siam through economic dominance, cultural imperialism and governmental pressure during the imperial period. Within this framework of British dominance, Siamese capitalist development can be described as a 'dependent relationship', based on its foreign dependency and national development policy.

However, this dependent status has resulted in Siam's capitalist development becoming limited. As Sunkel (1975) explains, the form of the periphery's development was driven by the autonomous development process of the centre, and the effect of this would be significant in terms of the impact of foreign relations on national development policies. As a result, Siam was in a dependent relationship with the capitalist world. Although the Bowring Treaty was arguably unequal, the Bangkok elites welcomed and facilitated it because they could benefit from the capitalist system. This statement reflects mutually beneficial relations between Britain and Siamese local elites. However, while there are interest groups and sectors associated with foreign activities, there are also tendencies towards cultural and ideological alienation which can hinder the transformations implicit in any national development programme. Britain had opened up the Siamese market and established a network of elite-based transnational alliances that strengthened prospects for internationalised capital accumulation based on shared transnational class interests, rather than on 'national priorities' (Glassman, 1999). In other words, the growth of capitalist elites generated a significant share of the incomes of the elites that surrounded the monarchs in Siam. In short, as Siam's economy rapidly adapted to its engagement in international trade, Siam became a British partner in the imperial capitalist system as a result of the creation of a mutually beneficial relationship between Britain and the Siamese state, local elites and international corporations.

After signing the Bowring Treaty in 1855, Siam had become part of the colonial economic structure, producing and exporting primary products to the British colonies in the Southeast Asian region. These included the Malayan peninsula, Burma and Singapore (Dixon, cited in Supattanan, 2001). Nevertheless, according to extraterritorial rights, Siam was compelled to surrender its authority and law over British subjects in Siam, who were under the authority and laws of the British consulate instead. Some historians (e.g. Tarling, 1977; Jamsai, 1989; Morson, 1999) who have studied Siamese relations with Western hegemony argue that Britain impacted the Siamese transition through the economic system as a free-trading market, enabling it to rapidly export teak and tin, which were key resources in the Siamese state during the imperial period.

Britain was also obliged to demand political reforms, although it was in favour of Bangkok's ruling class. For example, trade growth and resource reallocation changed the balance of power

in favour of Siamese elite groups with land, trade and taxation interests. As a result, the Siamese government encouraged foreign traders and was eager to modernise the Siamese state to build the 'Regime of Image', the empirical character and logical form of Siamese power patterns, in order to avoid colonial expansion in the state. On the other hand, some scholars (e.g. Tarling, 1997; Lysa, 2004) argue that Siam was forced to modernise the state administration and its laws according to the Western standards of the Bowring treaty. From the point of view of this thesis, British imperialism dominated Asian regions such as India, Burma and the Malayan peninsula which surrounded Siam, and as a result, the Siamese state was pressured into facilitating Britain's development of a free-trading capitalist network in order to survive as an independent state during the colonial expansion period. In other words, while British political and economic influence on Siam increased steadily throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Siamese monarchy avoided becoming a formal colony by giving in to British demands. Thus, colonisation was unnecessary because Britain already enjoyed an advantageous position in Siam.

At the same time, the Siamese elites notably benefitted from and endorsed the capital accumulation process linking the two states. For example, the role of 'agency houses' emerged to facilitate imports and exports between Britain and Asia during the decline of the East India Company (Webster, 1988). This finding is consistent with previous research by Khunsupa (2020). In order to avoid British colonisation, the capital city Bangkok welcomed and gave privileges to British settlers in exchange for sovereignty.

Thus, Siam began to offer the country as a gateway for foreign traders and aimed to adopt their culture. Shared economic interests led to the establishment of links between international commerce and the governmental elites in Siam. In short, the Siamese local elites existed as an active social and dynamic force for capitalist economic development. Namanee (2020) states that when the British approached Burma, and France intended to colonise the counties in the Indo-China region in order to open the gateway to China, King Rama IV was ready to welcome foreign traders from within the globalised capitalist system. This was why, on April 18, 1855, the king signed the Bowring Treaty which established the 'open door policy' and led to the country's transformation into a capitalist state. It was clear that the relationship between Britain and Siam was a transnational alliance between the two states, local elites, and business enterprises which were mostly multinational corporations. In addition, the Bowring Treaty served as the model for

future treaties between other imperialists and the Siamese government. As Ingram (1979) characterises the key purposes of the treaty, notably in Articles 1 and 2, the Bowring Treaty integrated Siam into global markets through free trade rules. However, Britain and Siam pursued policies based on the concentration of income and benefits from free trade in Bangkok, to the social exclusion of the majority of the population. In other words, the development of the capitalist state in Siam was the result of a collaboration between Britain and local elites in Bangkok.

This study suggests that the consequence of this was the origin of economic problems in Thailand, in terms of inequality in income between small elite groups and ordinary Thai citizens. Due to the Bowring Treaty, Siam changed its economic system from a monopoly to commercial capitalism, and it can be argued that most of the elites in Bangkok were able to benefit from this capitalist development. Thus, they gave privileges to British subjects who resided in Bangkok in order to expand the free trade system in Siam through the import of technology, capital accumulation and penetration of local economies by foreign enterprises. This increased the number of wage earners, but also resulted in intensification of social divisions in labour.

Furthermore, the Siamese nobles who worked behind the king may have been among the important factors that allowed Britain to be more successful with the Bowring Treaty than with previous agreements such as the Burney Treaty, which King Rama III refused to sign. In the Bowring case, the Bunnags, a noble family who were the most powerful in the nineteenth century, benefited and were supported by some British colonial agents. However, these elites were sometimes reluctant to comply with British demands, such as changes to the traditional administration and governance, because they felt that British control would be embedded in them (Barton and Bennett, 2020). In short, the Bunnag aristocrats helped Britain's trade expansion in Siam, but they sought to gain all of the advantages for themselves. It was clear that the nobility utilised public resources and positions to elevate themselves and further their interests. This argument echoes Evans' (1971) and Cardoso and Faletto's (1981) 'dependent development' approach. They define a 'triple alliance' of the state, local capital and multinational businesses working together in trade and investment partnerships in order to share the benefits.

To conclude, Siamese local elites embraced the principles of the Bowring Treaty, even though it was an unequal treaty, and Siam became a state of dependent capitalist development within

Britain's informal empire framework. Local elites responded in this way to the threat of colonisation in order to maintain their power. For example, Britain opened Siam's market and modernised Siamese bureaucracy, then the Bangkok monarchy expanded its control over the Shan State, where valuable teak reserves flourished in northern Thailand. In other words, Siam was dependent on the British economy throughout the imperial period, and the Siamese elite encouraged and supported British trade in order to benefit themselves.

4.1.3 The modernisation process in Siam

After the successful establishment of a free trading market in Siam, British imperialism aimed to facilitate the movement of money, commodities and new knowledge throughout the global system's transitional regions. As a result, Britain needed to modernise the Siamese state, and sought to rationalise the Siamese political and legal underpinnings of global systems through its own development model. This point supports Evans (1975)' view that colonial imperialism can develop a state in some aspects, but this process is called 'dependent development'. Three aspects emerged in Siamese and British relations during the imperial period. The first involved transforming the country into an absolutist state. During Siam's modernisation, the country became an absolute monarchy within the ruling authority centralised in Bangkok under the king's control (Barton, 2014). Arguably, the rise of an absolute monarchy was influenced by the force of imperialism. Before 1855, the Siamese authorities were decentralised in many regions of the state, and thus the power was not concentrated in the king's hands. As a result, the British imperial elites contributed to placing pressure on the other governors and encouraged Siam to centralise control in the Bangkok monarchy. As Barton and Bennett (2010) highlight, the British Empire and its traders developed an interest in, and came to take resources from, Siam's northern border throughout the imperial period. Bangkok, the capital city of Siam, accepted responsibility for the enforcement of extraterritorial rights under the Bowring Treaty, so the Royal Commissioner was sent from Bangkok to Chiangmai. In other words, backed by imperial power, Bangkok began to consolidate its control over the northern states. This would have a positive impact on British trade strategies and policies in Siam because Britain needed to promote international markets in Bangkok, which served as the centre for British territories in Southeast Asia. Centralising Siamese power in Bangkok would enable British merchants to manage and be more flexible in the Southeast Asian region. This finding is consistent with Supathe's (2010)

view that the king took advantage of the state's reluctance towards colonisation, and instead allied with other agents of British imperialism by promising to pursue reform and comply with British economic demands. Therefore, it would be advisable to reconsider the Siamese modernisation process under King Rama V's reign. In this case, modernisation was a significant strategy for the king to centralise his power in Bangkok in order to acquire ultimate control of the state. Britain, at the same time, supported the transition of the Siamese administrative system to absolute monarchy because Britain could benefit from this modernisation, notably by establishing trade centres in Bangkok.

Secondly, after the success of the Bowring mission to Bangkok in 1855, the first British consulate was established in Bangkok to offer privileges for British subjects in Siam. According to the Bowring Treaty, British subjects could rent and own land and trade in all ports with a 3% import duty, and with only a few restrictions on extraterritoriality (Kumlertsakul and Patchimanon, 2019). Furthermore, local elites welcomed numerous foreigners residing in Bangkok in order to enhance the city's commercial growth. Trade brought a variety of economic activity to Bangkok, including rice mills, shipping, warehouses, banking, manufacturing production, and import and export distribution (Khumsupa, 2011). In the case of British subjects, they were allowed to settle in Bangkok because of the assistance of the Siamese elites. For example, in Bangkok, the British Legation, or Minister's Residence, was built in 1925. The government also authorised British citizens to relocate to the bank of the Chao Phraya River in the Ploenjit district.

Furthermore, Siam became a repressive state of dependent development as a result of the ruling classes' rapid growth programme, which emphasised low wages for the masses and capital accumulation in the hands of the few. Thus, industrialisation in Siam increased income inequality by raising the wealth of Bangkok elites while keeping workers' wages low. As a result, while Siam experienced economic development with foreigners, the modernisation had a negative impact on the existing social and economic problems of the majority. It enabled the Siamese state to keep this depressed majority under control while maintaining a favourable climate for foreign investment and welcoming the West to Siam. It is argued here that the Siamese modernisation contributed to Thailand's economic disparity and developmental problems. This was because the state modernised all elements exclusively in Bangkok, and the

monarchs intended to centralise their authority as the absolute system, while Britain needed to live in the city centre and establish commercial ports. In short, Bangkok's aristocracy made it possible for British subjects to live in Bangkok for their own purposes. This may have resulted in Siamese cultural aspects being incorporated into British culture and norms, similar to how Siamese elites employed Western-derived cultural capital as status symbols during colonial expansion.

The third aspect was the role of British subjects in the Siamese bureaucratic system. The Siamese government engaged a large number of prominent British officers, while British officials seemed to regard Siam and its government as a territory. For example, by 1906, the number of British officials in the Siamese bureaucracy had increased to 126 out of 250 foreign employees. Nonetheless, British officials in Siam maintained the appearance of cooperation by presenting their demands as being in Siam's best interests..

Notably, Webster (1998) argues that to achieve the demands of Britain's informal empire in Siam, Britain established a network of financial advisors. The Siamese government had three successive British Financial Advisers between 1896 and 1925 (Jamsai. 1986). Additionally, Britain established the City's international currency management and credit system, subordinating Siamese economic policy to that of London through the 'gentlemanly capitalist' dynamics of British imperialism (Cain and Hopkins, 1980; Webster, 1998). As previously mentioned, this 'gentlemanly capitalism' refers to how the relationship between Britain and independent non-Western nations emerged in the 1890s. Cain and Hopkins argue that London played a crucial role in creating the modern British Empire, which focused on the rise of the British financial industry in London. In other words, the growth of the financial and service sectors in London increasingly demanded investment opportunities abroad. There was a coalition of individuals both inside and outside the British government who promoted British financial investment in the non-Western world. To some extent, therefore, the relationship between Britain and Siam was based on mutual advantage. For example, in terms of modernity, the Siamese government allowed Britain to construct railways, reflecting a technological transfer from Britain to Siam. This was a strategy of integrating the periphery into the capitalist process of expansion. Nonetheless, the demand for British capital and expertise pushed Siam into a closer and more dependent relationship with Britain. Significantly, in 1895, Bangkok elites and the British

cooperated to establish the Royal Forest Department (RFD), which officially claimed the forests of northern chiefs as property of the Siamese government in Bangkok (Barton and Bennett, 2010). The establishment of the RFD economically benefited the British in their domination of the forest teak trade, while politically benefiting the centralisation of Bangkok's power over areas and resources. As Suehiro stated in 1989:

‘[In terms of] the average annual export value of the teak industry from 1920-1924...the Thai government obtained annually 3.3 million baht as state revenue in the forms of royalties and various kinds of duties from the whole forest industry. Meanwhile, the six major European trading houses...earn[ed] profits totalling over 3 million baht alone in and around 1920’ (Suehiro, 1989:41).

According to this account, the benefits were shared between British business and Bangkok elites as partners, rather than governmental taxation being imposed on British economic activities. In other words, the advantages were shared by British business and the Bangkok aristocracy.

4.1.4 The formation of an elite network

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Britain maintained a large informal empire in Siam because of its position at the centre of the imperial network (Barton, 2014). In this case, Britain employed ‘soft power’ to keep its dominance among local elites, while the king exercised authority by sending princes and nobles close to the monarchy to study overseas. This was an excellent opportunity for Britain to strengthen its influence in Siam by sharing technological skills, as well as trade and consumption patterns, with Siam's elites. It demonstrates that the British government maintained its influence in Siam through cultural domination. In other words, there was an aspect of Britain's informal empire that focused on cultural dominance, rather than just economic influence. The Siamese royal family, for example, was educated in Britain, and the princes who graduated became ministers, department heads, upper civil bureaucracy and military power structure officials, and provincial administrators. The influence of their education meant that they employed the British model to modernise Siam during the informal empire phase. Notably, in 1907, King Rama V was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Cambridge (Office of Art and Culture Chulalongkorn University, 2021).

In addition, the Siamese government granted scholarships to prominent officials, nobles and aristocrats to study in Britain. As a result, throughout King Rama V's reign, the majority of young princes and noblemen were educated in England (Jamsai, 1987). In this respect, bureaucratic modernisation contributed to the development of elite networks in Siam. The King agreed that modern bureaucracy should be established through education, which required literacy, and that recruitment should be based on ability rather than purely on family. Thus, the sons of the royal family and those of other high-class aristocratic families were sent to Britain to learn fundamental civil and military services such as law, politics and governance. This illustrates that education was a key mechanism in establishing Britain's imperial network in Siam. Britain maintained its influence in Siam during the informal empire phase, while Siam modernised the state to Western standards. It seems to indicate that, despite Siam's dependent relationship with Britain, it was a 'dependent development' within the context of modernity and Western civilisation. Arguably, therefore, Britain's informal empire in Siam succeeded in sustaining an imperial network, and continued to exert influence through elite networks focusing on cultural and social domination.

It is thus difficult to accept Nkrumah's (1965) theory of neo-colonialism in the twentieth century. Nkrumah argues that the capital from developed countries was used for the exploitation, rather than for the development, of the less-developed parts of the world. In contrast, this chapter illustrates that the formation of elites between Britain and Siam was the key mechanism to achieving mutual benefits within the dependent development. Thailand's economic development is still dependent on foreign investment because Thai elites need to keep markets open for international traders and investors, but these Thai and global traders can achieve benefits for themselves, rather than for Thai society. This argument is also consistent with the concept of internationalisation of the state, proposed by Glassman (1999). This is a process by which the state apparatus becomes increasingly oriented towards facilitating capital accumulation for most international investors, regardless of their nationality.

4.2 Britain's relationship with Thailand in the post-war period.

This section explores setbacks in the relationship between Britain and Thailand during the Second World War, as the power of the British declined. However, Britain sought to retain their influence by sustaining their prestige in Thailand. It focuses on British foreign policy in Thailand following the Phibun's administration declaration of war on the Allies, and the Japanese government's establishment of military bases on Thai territory to attack British colonies in the Malay States and Burma (Tate, 1974; Lertsatiti, 2016). As a result, the British government were initially 'willing to believe that the Siamese Government as a whole had acted under duress', and simply issued a notification that Siam was regarded as enemy-occupied. Additionally, this study examines the reconfiguration of British-Thai relations following the signing of the Anglo-Thai Peace Treaty in 1946, and the establishment of elite networks between the UK and Thailand. It argues that these elites have kept the connection going in the post-war era.

From the late 1950s, the Thai political economy shifted into a new stage. The power was re-centralised under the authoritarian military regime of Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat. The government was committed to economic growth and privately-led industrialisation, and established new economic organisations as state interventions or enterprises, such as the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) and the Board of Investment (BOI). The shift in government commitment to economic growth and industrialisation was driven by the US campaign against communism. Sarit required support from the US, and therefore the goals are attributable to US influence rather than to internal agents.

The British approach to Thailand after the war was not completely successful, notably during the regime of Phibul Songkram. It was difficult to determine Britain's Thailand policy in order to reconcile its demands with the imperatives of the European empire in Asia. The European empire was re-established in the face of indigenous nationalism, Chinese aggression, and American anti-imperialism as a consequence of post-war Asian demands (Tarling, 1978). For example, the work of British trading and financial advisers to the Thai government became more difficult because Phibu's administration promoted economic nationalism and anti-Western attitudes. Therefore, foreign-owned businesses were heavily taxed and state subsidies were offered to Thai-owned enterprises (Library of Congress, 2007). In the same vein, Barton and Bennett (2021) highlight that British firms in Thailand lost access to their leases and equipment

after the Japanese invasion of Thailand in 1941. It can be identified that British and Thai relations were suspended during the Second World War (Lertsatit, 2016); this was due to the fact that Thailand was a Japanese ally. Phibul signed a mutual defence pact with Japan and declared war against Britain and the United States (Library of Congress, 2007). Thus, the relationship between Thailand and Britain declined during Phibu's government (Wilson, 2000). Although some members of the Thai government established the "Free Thai Movement" or the "Seri Thai", claiming that Thailand was never at war with the Western powers and the declaration of war had been imposed on it by the Japanese government, Britain refused to accept this interpretation. As a result, Thailand was a British enemy throughout the Second World War. After the Japanese arrived, British business in Thailand was forced to finish in December 1941 (Lertsatit, 2014). However, Lertsatit (2016) also comments on the establishment of a particular link between the British and Thai elites inside the "Free Thai Movement".² This movement was successfully established by Queen Rambai Barni, its nominal leader, and Thai civilians in Britain. Therefore, it can be argued that Britain and Thailand maintained their relations through elite networks during the Second World War.

The relationship between the two states demonstrates that Britain used its influence and power in Thailand to maintain commercial and financial interests. Many scholars have argued that Britain re-established its influence as a dominant country in Thailand after signing the Anglo-Thai Peace Treaty in 1946 (Pluvier, 1974; Tarling, 1978; Mahmud, 1988; Kenatompar, 2017; Lertsatit, 2014). Indeed, Britain became increasingly dominant in Thailand through the peace treaty (Tarling, 1977) and as a result, Thailand was required to deliver 1.5 million tons of rice for free to the British colonies in Asia, including Malaya, Singapore, Burma and India. Moreover, Stentiford (2006) indicates that Thailand was forced to promise not to build a canal across the Isthmus of Kra without British government permission. Also, the Thai government could not export rubber, tin or teak at rates that were not internationally agreed upon (Tate, 1974).

In the same vein, Wilson (2000) examined British power in Thailand after the Second World War. He identified the British demands, which included free delivery of Thailand's surplus rice

² A Free Thai Movement or Seri Thai was formed to coordinate underground resistance to Japan. Queen 'Rambai Barni' lived in the UK and also became a leading member of this movement (Peter, 2013).

and preferential commercial treatment, full restitution for British property losses, the right to station troops in Thailand, and the right to reorganise Thailand's armed forces. Although Prid's government maintained military and economic relations with Britain, the British government dramatically reduced economic and other assistance in the post-war era. However, after signing the Anglo-Thai Peace Treaty in 1946, Britain and the United States restored diplomatic relations with Thailand. They supported Thailand's bid to join the United Nations (UN) and it became a member in December 1946. Although the Thai government successfully renegotiated all unequal treaties by which Western powers had gained extraterritorial and economic privileges, Britain maintained its dominance in Thailand's banking, rice-milling, rubber, tin and timber industries (Brown and Louis, 2000). Thus, Britain arguably continued to dominate economic and financial interests in Thailand during and after the Second World War.

The relationship between Britain and Thailand could have been rebuilt through Prid's government. As Wilson (2000) notes, Prid's speech pointed out that the Thai forces had resisted the Japanese invasion of their country and that the subsequent declaration of war on Britain and the United States had been contrary to the will of the Thai people. However, confidence in Prid's administration rapidly declined after the death of King Rama VIII (1934-1946), and Pridi resigned and left the country (Wilson, 2000; Library of Congress, 2007). After that, a coup in 1947 ousted the civilian leaders, and Phibun (1948-1957) took over as prime minister in his second government. Thai foreign policy had become more international and focused on the West. Thus, the US supported Phibun's government and became a tradition of US-backed military regimes in Thailand. Then, the regimes of Field Marshall Sarit Thanarat and General Thanom Kittikachorn were strongly supported by the US in terms of military. Thailand had formally become a US ally in 1954 with the formation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in opposition to the communist regime. In 1955, Thailand was offered the United States the use of Thai military bases as the headquarters of SEATO.

In a comprehensive study of post-war economic relations between Britain and Thailand, Barton and Bennett (2021) found that bilateral negotiations between the Thai government and British firms resulted in restoring logs and leases, but the Thai government did not extend long-term leases. Between 1950 and 1959, Britain's military and commercial influence in Thailand declined rapidly, and British companies lost their dominance of Southeast Asia's teak trade within a

decade. Barton and Bennett further contend that when the formal British Empire in India and Burma fell, the informal empire in Thailand completely collapsed, as Thailand became free from British authority. In other words, the informal empire had expanded over the borders of British-controlled lands, and fell along with the empire itself as the British Empire receded in Southeast Asia. Therefore, Thailand strengthened its sovereignty and control over its forestry in the post-war era (Barton and Bennett, 2021; Stockwell, 2018). In addition, Stockwell (2018) investigated British prominence after the Second World War. She identifies elements of British imperial exceptionalism, rather than the focus on liberal imperialism which was claimed to be at the centre of the world's largest empire. As a result, Britain maintained a semblance of great power status, which influenced British relations with the US, and an ongoing ambition to exercise imperial influence globally. This might also be related to Britain's decision to join the EEC in 1973, following the decline of the British Empire in the 1960s.

The link between Britain and Thailand has been reconstructed through the Thai and British Royal families, despite their politics and economic relations deteriorating rapidly between 1950 and 1959. After King Rama IX or King Bhumibol (r. 1946-2016) and Queen Sirikit of Thailand's visits to the UK in 1960, Britain and Thailand reconfigured their relationship as part of a more significant Thailand-UK cooperation including diplomatic, political and cultural relations (Barton and Bennett, 2021). As Watanangura (2012) notes, the world was entering the Cold War period so Thailand and the UK developed their relations within this context. Even though Britain had dominated Thailand during the colonial expansion period, Thailand and Britain maintained their relationship through the royal family network under state visiting principles. To better understand the background to this strategy and its effects, Tingsabadn (2000) and Wasinondh (2021) give the example of King Chulalongkorn's visit to Britain in 1897. During the time of colonial expansion, King Chulalongkorn was inspired to develop a state visit policy in order to establish Siam as a legitimate sovereign nation. It was viewed as an opportunity for Siam to survive amid the Western colonies. Sartraproong (2011), on the other hand, emphasises the importance of British perspectives in the king's journey to Britain. This approach may have expanded interest in new commercial prospects and rivalry between merchants and local governments in the two states. It supported Britain's initiative to strengthen its influence in Thailand and Southeast Asia. In the same vein, when Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee commemorating sixty years on the throne, Siam was represented in the

celebrations by Prince Vajiravudh (later King Rama VI), who was studying in Britain in 1893. He was the first Siamese king to be educated abroad (Vella, 1978).

These studies indicate that Britain was enormously important for Siam in terms of colonial expansionism through royal family networks. In addition, many published studies describe the relations between two constitutional monarchies, the UK and Thailand, after the Second World War. Britain was the first European country to be recognised internationally by the Thai monarchy in their state visit of 1960 (Watanangura, 2012). Similarly, the British Royal Family, Queen Elizabeth, the Duke of Edinburgh and Princess Anne, visited Thailand in 1972 and 1996. It can be seen that in British foreign policy after decolonisation, the government continued to collaborate with the Thai Royal family. Drawing further on the concept of elite networks, in 2012, Yingluck Shinawatra, Thai Prime Minister between 2011 and 2014, was granted an audience with Queen Elizabeth II. Yingluck was the first Thai government leader for several decades to privately visit the British royal family, even though Thailand was suffering from political instability after ending the Thaksin administration (Nelson, 2006). All the studies reviewed support the argument that Thai and British elites have kept the connection going in the post-war era.

Meanwhile, British foreign policy switched to prioritising soft power through British institutions in Thailand, including the British Embassy, the British Council and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). On April 27, 1941, the first Thai-language programme was broadcast from BB's Broadcasting House. The British Embassy in Thailand was founded in 1947. It has supported the strong relationship between the two countries in trade, consular services and cultural exchanges. In terms of cultural links and educational opportunities, the British government aimed to contribute to the countries' relations through the British Council, which was formed in Thailand in 1952 and developed links through the English language, education, science and the arts (British Council Thailand, 2022). These institutions are part of Britain's use of soft power to maintain British-Thai ties and this thesis contends that establishing such institutions has strengthened relations between the countries since the Second World War.

At the end of the Second World War, Britain had lost many of its colonies, and its financial and military weaknesses had destroyed its role in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and African countries, as symbolised by the Suez Crisis in 1956 (Brown and Louis, 2000; Darwin, 2011).

Many British colonies in Southeast Asia, such as Burma, Malaya and Singapore, gained independence between 1947 and 1959 (Brown and Louis, 2000), while Thailand asserted its sovereignty more insistently at home. Barton and Bennett (2021) argue that the collapse of the formal British Empire in Asia and Southeast Asia brought about a related collapse of the informal empire as Thailand also liberated itself from British domination. Notably, Thai elites organised a shift from foreign management to domestic management over UK companies. The British informal empire in Thailand thus deteriorated throughout the decolonisation period.

4.3 The UK's membership in the EU with Thailand until the EU referendum in 2016

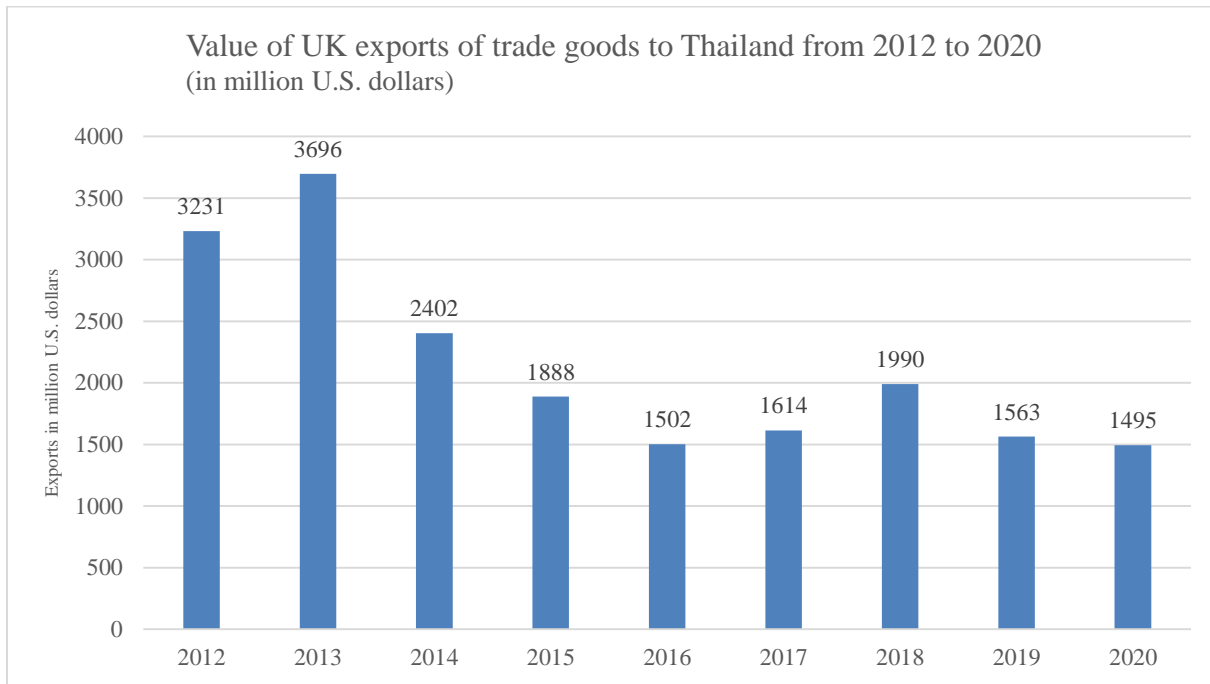
The British government adapt its domestic and international policies. It shifted its role to become closer to Europe and the US. Although Britain's post-war imperial and global dominance had economic and political goals that differed considerably from those of Europe, Britain joined the European Community (EEC) in 1973 (Oliver and Williams, 2016). As a result, the UK has come to be viewed as an 'awkward partner' with the EU (Lee, 1996), and the Conservative government has come to accept Euroscepticism (Schütze, 2022).

In terms of the UK's relationship with the EU in Thailand, British foreign policy has been centred on a close ties with the US and a strong commitment to European cooperation in Thailand (Niblett, 2007). Notably, Thailand is a strategic location for balancing the influence of the UK and EU in Asia. According to Kiatpongsan (2011), the UK's entry to the EEC in 1973 represented the beginning of formal EU-ASEAN collaboration. It was because ASEAN nations who were Commonwealth members were concerned about losing economic benefits and market access to the UK market following its accession. In the same vein, British dominance in the Southeast Asian region through the Commonwealth was an important factor that discouraged the EU as a major part of its international networks. The UK was a part of the EU membership that has provided cooperation assistance to Thailand. As Park and Jung Seo (2007), the UK was one of the EU's 'big three'; the UK, Germany, and France, in a thorough analysis of the EU's position in Asia. This can be seen in various cases, for example, UK accession led to the creation of European Political Cooperation (EPC) during the 1970s. Furthermore, literature on UK trading relations in ASEAN has highlighted that ASEAN countries were more dependent on markets in the UK, rather than the common European market. Moreover, since the 1990s, Thailand's part of the Department for International Development (DFDI) regional initiatives

received around £2 million in funding from the UK between 2000 and 2001, with continued assistance. Notably, the UK as a leading EU power to maintain close military relations has maintained with the Royal Thai Armed Forces (Pratoomtip, 2018). In this respect, the UK facilitated and carried out arms deals worth around US\$10.1 billion in Thailand and other developing countries between 2003 and 2006 (Barnett, 2002). Similarly, in 2002, the Thai government and the British government's BAS system signed the Economic Compensation Agreement. During 2000-2012, Thailand rapidly became a key consumer of light tanks, reconnaissance vehicles, artillery, and aircraft from the UK (Ministry of Defence, 2016).

In terms of commerce, the UK was critical to the state's ability to maximise gains from Thailand inside the framework of the EU (British Embassy Bangkok, 2013). Before leaving the EU, the UK was Thailand's 21st-largest trading partner and the EU's second-largest after Germany. As Table 4.1 shows that from 2012 to 2016, the value of trade goods shipped from the UK to Thailand was around 12.72 billion US dollars.

Table 4.1: Value of UK exports of Trade goods to Thailand from 2021 to 2020 (in million U.S. dollars)



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/478685/united-kingdom-uk-exports-value-trade-goods-to-thailand/>

Similarly, UK goods exports to Thailand more than tripled between 2007 and 2011, reaching GBP 22 billion in 2012. This can be seen that Thailand received major benefits from inward investment, notably from the UK, as well as Thai businesses coming to and investing in the UK. As a result, with 28 nations, the UK is one of the world's most open economies, and it favours greater opening of EU markets to Thai firms as part of an ambitious FTA. This could be taken to mean, despite Britain's decline in the post-war era, the UK could continue its military and economic dominance in Thailand throughout the framework of the EU.

Although the UK left the EU in 2016, 27 European countries will remain important allies (Wright, 2017). The UK intends to engage with the international system to build a new UK role. The 'Global Britain' concept has been promoted as a new British foreign strategy post-Brexit. Following the launch of the UK's 'Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review' in 2021, the relationship between the UK and Asian nations could be identified as the new pivot

of the UK government throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit eras. Notably, the UK could be interested in learning more about Thailand's contribution to resisting China's rise. Thailand serves as the continent's gateway between ASEAN and the rest of Asia.

Over the last four decades of Britain's EU membership, UK's foreign policy has often centred on its relationship with the EU, viewed as key to its economy and security. It has also, with varying success, sought to carve out a role as the US's most important ally inside the EU. The EU standards on the rule of law, human rights and democratic ideals obliged the government to act in recognition of a state of democratic instability in the Thai government. Thailand has a longstanding problem of disunity among elites (Glassman, 2016; Anderson, 2002; Burton and Higley, 2000). From the late 1980s to the mid-1990s, the Thai government promoted the interests of foreign investors and Thai elites rather than the interests of the majority of Thai citizens (Dixon, 1999; Glassman, 2000). This created significant conflict between the military, royalist elites and the emerging middle-class forces favouring democratisation in Thailand (Glassman, 2016). Thus, elite disunity and political instability have impacted Thailand's economic and political development, bringing back authoritarianism, particularly with the military dictatorship in 2014. As Lertsatit (2014) notes, in response to the 2014 coup d'état, the British government was required to postpone the signing or negotiating of treaties and agreements with Thailand due to EU concerns. Most recently, Thailand is still seeking further export duty reductions in separate trade negotiations with both the EU and the UK. In 2022, the EU and Thailand are relaunching negotiations on a free trade deal. The Thai government then signs a comprehensive partnership and cooperation agreement (PCA) with the EU in 2023. The cooperation under the PCA will serve as a basis for and create an environment conducive to the resumption of Thai-EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations. The EU aims to expand its international markets in Asia, where it already has FTA with Vietnam and Singapore (Kijewski, 2023). That seems to be Thailand's primary goal in any global trade agreement with the EU. The EU's economic power and international significance have simply grown. As a result, it is clear that something will happen to the UK's existing Thai-EU relationship. As a first step in laying the foundations for a potential FTA between the EU and Thailand, the UK was excluded from the PCA partnership. After leaving the EU, the UK can be discover itself in a less powerful position in Thailand.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore the literature on foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand within the 'Global Britain' narrative up until the EU referendum in 2016. It can be concluded that British foreign policy has always sought to influence Thailand, even when it was a member of the EEC/EU. The model of Britain's informal empire was a key mechanism of the 'Global Britain' narrative in Siam, particularly the cementing of British and local. During the post-war period, Britain's military and economic dominance decreased notably with the 1956 Suez Crisis. The UK could continue its influence in Thailand through the framework of the EEC/EU. The role of UK-Thailand relationships in the EEC/EU has become apparent, with the UK as a leading member of the EEC/EU, that UK-Thailand relations are partially aimed at contributing to the expansion of cooperation through EEC/EU rules and regulations. As a result, the UK supported Thailand in the international order, mutual prosperity and progress, and regional stability under European standards, such as free trade agreements, military cooperation, democracy, and human rights issues.

After the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government has continued supporting Thailand within the 'Global Britain' concept. For example, the UK displays a desire in negotiating agreements with Thailand, notably in the areas of commerce, security, and defense, in which Britain had previous hegemony during the imperial period. Meanwhile, Thailand has more extensive economic policies with the 'Great Powers,' including the US, China, Germany, and Japan (Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 2021). This may result in the Thai government having depended on the UK but on a smaller level. The fact that the EU is making the PCA the first foundation for a free trade agreement (FTA) in Thailand is particularly relevant. The UK is no longer part of the EU's global reach, and it is losing global influence as a result of its exit from the EU. Arguably, the concept of 'Global Britain' could be evidence of the continuation of British decline in the Brexit and post-Brexit period.

Chapter 5

Research Methodology

Introduction

The previous chapters reviewed theoretical framework and existing literature review to provide a thorough background of the underlying principles of core and peripheral relationships. The research methodology chapter aims to present the research design of the study, allowing the research problems to be investigated. Selecting the appropriate research methodology is essential to achieve the research findings. This chapter discusses and identifies philosophical perspectives, qualitative research design, data collection methods, data analysis, credibility, and ethical issues. The purpose of the study is to explore the foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand within the context of the ‘Global Britain’ narrative, which is both historically embedded and contemporarily relevant and asks the questions: 1) How global is ‘Global Britain’: what is the shape of the relationship between the UK and Thailand? 2) What is new about ‘Global Britain’ in terms of the strength of the connection between the UK and Thailand?

5.1 Research Design

5.1.1 Philosophical perspectives

This section considers the philosophical assumptions that shape the research questions and underpin the choice of research methods (Melnikovas, 2018). Many scholars affirm that philosophical principles are crucial to design an approach to political phenomena in achieving research findings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002; Saunder et al., 2009; Halperin and Heath, 2017). Notably, it can help researchers understand the nature of human behavior and choose the appropriate methods for investigating and explaining the social world (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

The theoretical perspective of this study adopts an interpretivist approach. This approach involves an understanding of the world of human experience, suggesting that reality is socially

constructed. Interpretivists believe that individuals seek to understand the world they live and work in and develop subjectively varied and multiple meanings, leading the researcher to look for the complexity of views rather than narrowing meanings into a few categories or ideas (Cohen and Manion, 1994). Therefore, interpretivists seek to understand human behaviour by interpreting the meanings, beliefs, and ideas that explain people's actions. Moreover, Lincoln and Guba (1994) argue that the variable and personal nature of social constructions suggest that individual perspectives, beliefs, and ideas can be elicited and refined only through interaction between investigators and respondents. These varying constructions are interpreted using conventional interpretive or hermeneutical techniques and contrasted through a dialectical interchange.

The interpretivist approach refers to theories and methods used to interpret texts of all kinds in political research. These texts include written documents or any object or practice that can be treated as a text and can be the subject of interpretation (Halperin and Heath, 2017). This study examines political phenomena which are socially or discursively constructed. Framing of the research within the context of the 'Global Britain' narrative is historically embedded and contemporarily relevant. 'Global Britain' as a discourse draws on the ideas of social constructivism. According to Daddow (2019), the success of Global Britain will depend on whether it is relevant to international stakeholders. This study employs the interpretivist approach to examine Thai-UK relations through the perspectives of Thai stakeholders who have specific knowledge and/or expertise regarding the relationship between two states.

The rationale for the interpretivist approach is to allow me to explore how stakeholders provide the perspectives on the concept of 'Global Britain', which may change their perceptions of and reactions to British foreign policy in Thailand. Furthermore, this approach allows for the examination of subjective meanings through the analysis of state behaviours as texts or political discourses (Wendt, 1992). In other words, the investigation of interactions between the British and Thai administrations can be conducted using an interpretivist method to examine the 'Global Britain' concept. The data was gathered from primary and secondary literature on TH-UK relations covering over four hundred years to capture political behaviour of states.

I believe that the phenomenon under investigation has multiple realities based on relative ontology. Those realities may be examined, and meaning can be formed or reconstructed through human interactions between the researcher, the research subjects, and the participants. This study explores the foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand within the ‘Global Britain’ narrative. The blended historical and contemporary approach seeks to establish that the principles of foreign policy relations between both countries are changing due to the UK departed the EU in terms of society, economy, and culture. I explored the nature of reality through the subjective experiences of participants’ views characterised by expertise and knowledge of UK-Thai relations. They work in institutions that lead UK foreign policy as elites or stakeholders in Thailand. The interviewees discussed the ‘Global Britain’ narrative in Thailand which showed the nature of British influences in shaping their views and experiences. In terms of epistemological stances, the researcher interprets the meaning of data through participants’ perspectives and cognitive processing of data informed by their interactions. According to Kivunja and Kuyini (2017), the interpretivist approach can explain social reality through human behaviour that is socially constructed. In this study, I conducted data through thirty-four in-depth interviews with elites and experts in Thailand as the interactions between researcher and participants by using purposive selection and snowball sampling techniques to understand participants’ perspectives, experiences, and knowledge in Thai-UK relations within the ‘Global Britain’ narrative.

5.1.2 Qualitative research design

This study employed qualitative research to gain information that statistics cannot explain (Halperin and Heath, 2017). This research aimed to explore experiences, meanings, understandings, interactions, practices, and influences in the political phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives. Thus, quantitative research would not explain much of the ‘Global Britain’ narrative in Thailand; it typically works with numerical data analysis and variable measurement. Qualitative research can provide in-depth knowledge of the phenomena from the viewpoints of the participant. Notably, this study values the views and experiences of participants, which are relevant to the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand. Furthermore, I have conducted in-depth interviews with elites and experts in Thailand to understand how they

perceive ‘Global Britain’ and how this concept has influenced the relationship between the UK and Thailand during the Brexit post-Brexit periods. As a quantitative study, elites and professional experts do not respond to survey questionnaires because of their status and professional skills; they exerted considerable authority and power in institutions. As a result, qualitative research is essential to determine the authority of the elites and experts through in-depth interviews. However, the researcher’s gender, age, and position are important factors to consider, as certain complications may arise throughout the interview procedure (Odendahl and Shaw, 2001).

Risks associated with elite interviewing in this study include the researcher's positionality, subjectivity, and power imbalance. There are three ways for navigating the early stages of fieldwork, according to Liu and Buckingham (2022). To begin, select a suitable strategy for making initial contact. In the absence of an insider introduction, extra trust-building strategies were required in this study to alleviate early questions and ensure the cooperation of individuals as participants. Individuals may need to refer to me as an outsider during the early stage of communication. 'Who introduced you to us?' or 'Do you know any of our colleagues here?' have been questions from several elites or their secretariats. I then responded with the greatest transparency, providing evidence of my identity and rationale for my attendance by drawing on prepared official documents. Before beginning the interview sections, I would sometimes invite them to coffee and then encourage them a talk about their personal and professional life in person. Notably, the researcher's outsider status was advantageous when people inquired about the researcher's study abroad experience. Furthermore, all participants were concerned about the reciprocal gesture I had incurred as a result of the participant's contributions to the fieldwork. In the study, the majority of participants sought an information exchange with a focus on topics related to post-Brexit British foreign policy in Thailand and establishing the concept of ‘Global Britain.’ In this respect, I responded to the need for reciprocity that was defined in terms meaningful to the participants.

In terms of managing the power imbalance between the researcher and the elites, this study design and the researcher's more junior academic status in political topics became points of contention in some cases during the recruitment stage, when I was challenged with questions such as ‘How long have you been a lecturer?’ or ‘Have you studied in the UK before?’

Interestingly, several participants are unable to understand what 'Global Britain' means. Despite having worked in the UK or at British institutions, they had never heard of the concept. They thus refused to answer queries about 'Global Britain,' but they could explain Thai-UK relationships.

Individual academics adopted a supervisory position and advised the researcher on the methodology, techniques, and quality of the issue in the more usual manner. Despite my embarrassment, I tried to combine the cultural need of showing respect to academics with the requirement to defend the study design in an objective and professional manner. This encounter drove me to devise new ways of explaining the topic's explanation and research methodologies that highlighted the advantages of an outsider's perspective. Notably, Thai society is primarily patriarchal in terms of the role of gender in the interview. Women are rarely in positions of power. In this case, I established myself as an international researcher with 5-6 years of experience in global politics. I have published articles on Thailand and Great Power relations with the US, Russia, and ASEAN states. However, the young girl appeared in reaction to loss of trust in my ability to carry out the fieldwork as planned. Thus, prior to conducting an interview, I objectively analysed the relative security issues of each stage of the fieldwork plan and strategically employed my inner voice to critically go against the outside voices. Moreover, I informed participants of the need for discussing complex issues and requested permission before addressing them. In addition, some elites and experts are highly skilled at responding to interviews and may give the researcher a glossy picture of their views on a given topic or situation. I have asked more in-depth alternative questions called 'content mini questions' or 'amplificatory probes' to provide their thoughts in more detail (Lui, 2018).

5.2 Data Collection Methods

5.2.1 Interview

According to Seldman (2006), an interview procedure and techniques in social science provides insight into participants' experiences, explanations for how things came to be the way they are, and descriptions of existing problems and aspirations. In political research, the interview is an essential method for collecting data to provide participants with a vivid picture of the research topic (Mack et al., 2011; Halperin and Heath, 2017). This method can provide a detailed

description and in-depth responses of the political phenomena when the results are used to develop a conceptual framework for future research or when concepts are tested (Gaskell, 2003; Mack et al., 2011; Mosley, 2013).

This study aims to understand the meaning of the ‘Global Britain’ concept and its implementation to understand the foreign policy relations between Thailand and the UK from the interviewees’ perspectives and experiences. Daddow (2019) suggested that the success of ‘Global Britain’ would depend on whether it is meaningful to international stakeholders. Therefore, the interview method was conducted through stakeholders in Thailand who have specific knowledge and expertise regarding Thai-UK relations. The interview method can access explicit and implicit information through participants’ perspectives responding to British foreign policy in Thailand through their expertise, experiences, beliefs, and knowledge which underline the interpretive approach of this qualitative research.

Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain participants’ perspectives and experiences. Based on Halperin and Heath’s idea (2017) of a semi-structured interview, the researcher would often probe, rather like asking leading questions, to induce the participants to open up and discuss something relevant to the research question. Furthermore, participants can respond to questions using their own experiences and address new issues in the phenomenon (Legard et al., 2003). In terms of elites and experts interviewing, they prefer to articulate their perspectives and experiences in the phenomenon or events (Aberbach and Rockman, 2002). In this study, the semi-structured technique allowed me to be more flexible in organising questions throughout interview sessions. I obtained specific knowledge from individuals to understand British foreign policy in Thailand within the ‘Global Britain’ concept.

In addition, four Sub-Research Questions (SRQ) will be considered in order to achieve more information from the interviewees, including, 1) *what does ‘Global Britain’ mean to Thailand? /How may Thailand profit from the “Global Britain” concept?* This question explores how the concept of “Global Britain” can be used in Thailand to help strengthen Thai-UK relations. The analysis seeks to define the meaning of the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand; 2) *how is the concept of ‘Global Britain’ being developed in Thailand about British foreign policy during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods?* This question examines the implementation of the ‘Global Britain’ concept following the EU referendum in 2016. It aims to investigate how the UK

government has changed its foreign policy in the context of the ‘Global Britain’ concept as well as to gain an understanding of the meaning of the ‘Global Britain’ concept in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods from the policymakers, scholar, senior executives, and stakeholders’ perspectives;

3) *How do elites and experts in Thailand understand and experience British soft power? How is this changing during the Brexit period?* This question attempts to determine British soft power in Thailand as part of British foreign policy within the ‘Global Britain’ concept. The analysis seeks to investigate the history of British influences in Thailand, particularly the concept of soft power. According to the relevant literature, soft power has impacted Thailand since the imperialist period. As a result, this inquiry will examine the emergence of the ‘Global Britain’ narrative as part of British soft power in Thailand;

4) *How has the relationship between the UK and countries in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly Southeast Asian countries, changed? What does it mean in terms of Thai-UK relations?* This question focuses on examining Britain’s position following the launch of the ‘Integrated Review: Global Britain in a Competitive Age’ in March 2021 to explain British foreign policy through the ‘Global Britain’ plan on Thai foreign policy relations. It aims to investigate how the UK government developed these policy initiatives in response to China’s rise and acquire an understanding of the rationales and constraints of these policy implementations from the perspective of stakeholders in Thailand.

Interviews in this study were conducted with stakeholders in Thailand who having specific knowledge and expertise in Thai-UK relations. They are prominent or in senior roles regarding Thai-British institutions or organisations. Also, they have privileged access to particular groups of individuals or decision-making processes in their positions related to Thai-UK relations. Data was collected through thirty-four elites and experts. They are senior government officials responsible for departments, such as Economic and Financial Affairs, International Trade Promotion, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Digital Economy and Society, Chief Community Officer, and persons well-known for their academic activities directly involved in Thai-UK relations. In addition, the interviews were conducted by expert participants who were chosen for their position or expertise including; newspaper editors, journalists, non-governmental organisation (NGO) leaders, and top-level executives. The participants were selected based on the context of their roles or expertise in five key dimensions of Thai-UK relations. They are 1) political issues, security and defence; 2) business, financial and foreign investment; 3) cultural

and social issues; 4) education; 5) development aid: technology and digital contents as an analytical framework for data analysis.

To clarify the research setting was divided into five groups of participants.

No.	Thai-UK Relations	Position of interviewees	Number of interviews
1.	Politics, Security and Defense, Public Policy	1.1 Political Ambassadors	2
		1.2 Directors	2
		1.3 Politician	1
2.	Economics, Business, Investment	2.1 Executive Director	2
		2.2 Chairman of community	1
3.	Cultural and Social issues	3.1 Directors	4
		3.2 Newspaper Editors and Journalists	2
4.	Research and Education	4.1 President of Community	1
		4.2 Alumni	5
		4.3 Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Researchers	10
5.	Technology and Digital Contents	5.1 President and Vice- Presidents	3
			1
		5.2 Director	
Total numbers of participants			34

Table 5.1: Selection of Research participants

The purposes of interviewing elites and experts in this study were to gain new information that they may know about the phenomenon. The specific information might not otherwise be available to a researcher in the documentary sources. Nevertheless, there has been a very limited

published work in Thai-UK relations during the Brexit period. Elites and experts explored their perspectives and experiences, which explained more specific contents in terms of Thai-UK relations after the UK departed the EU. Secondly, the interviews can confirm the accuracy of the previously collected information from documentary sources. Tansey (2007) states that interviews with elites and experts contribute to the research purpose of triangulation, where collected data are cross-checked through multiple sources to increase the robustness of the finding (Tansey, 2007; cited in Halperin and Heath, 2017). Interviews with elites can corroborate the initial results as part of the data triangulation process. Finally, interviewing elites and experts can enable a researcher to make inferences about the beliefs or actions of a broader population in Thailand because there are few elites and experts who have expertise regarding Thai-UK relations. Therefore, the research findings can be generalised to the broader group of stakeholders in Thailand to explore the implementation of the 'Global Britain' concept.

The interviews were conducted using individual face-to-face, telephone, and email (Halperin and Heath, 2017). The interview guide included questions about participants' understanding of the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand and its impact on the UK-Thailand relationship during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. Each participant was interviewed once for 30-90 minutes. In-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with open-ended research questions to elicit additional information from participants and gain a deeper understanding of their viewpoints, interpretations of events, and experiences (Kvale and Brinkman, 2009). The interview questions started with general questions about the interviewee's role and responsibilities before moving on to the specific questions regarding Thai-UK relations. As mentioned in the relevant literature review, there are five key dimensions of Thai-UK relationships. Therefore, I used five sets of questions that drew on participants' expertise in Thai-UK relations.

This study was carried out through interviews, which I had prior experience with in academic fieldwork. According to Lui (2018), there is a considerable risk of subjective bias in data collection when a study investigates fieldwork that the researcher has already experienced (Lui, 2018). This was my first formal interview with Thai elites and professionals. As a result, these interviews required my accessing and persuading them to respond to my study questions. First, I explained and discussed my prior experiences as a student work placement at the Thai Royal Embassy in Moscow and as a master's degree student at the School of World Politics at Ural

Federal University in the Russian Federation. These experiences inspired my research interest and research topic. In addition, my professional responsibilities included studying Thai government and politics as well as foreign policy relations with other countries before temporarily leaving my current position as a lecturer in politics and public administration in Thailand to study for a doctoral degree in the UK. I had the opportunity to design and teach modules regarding Thailand, ASEAN relations, and Western countries for over four years. As a result of these experiences, I have published academic papers on Thai foreign policy relations with Russia, ASEAN, and European countries. These experiences inspired my academic interest in Thai and British foreign policy relations, as both nations share a constitutional monarchy system of governments. Since Thailand and the UK have maintained links over the last four hundred years, both administrations are familiar with political, economic, and cultural systems. Finally, my field of interest was qualitative research. The technique of qualitative data collection methods through interviews and focus groups is my academic background.

Interview procedure

After the interview questions were designed (Appendix A), the first stage was to recruit participants in the interview sessions. Qualitative sampling aims to identify specific samples and phenomena that outline detailed data and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic (Plaiphan, 2019). The research issue is to determine the concept of ‘Global Britain’ in Thailand to establish how the dynamics of Thai-UK relations are changing after the UK left the EU. The research participants were elites and experts with specific knowledge and expertise regarding Thai-UK relations (Appendix B). They work in institutes and organisations that lead UK foreign policy in Thailand. They are senior government officials, Chief Community Officers, and persons well-known for their academic activities directly involved in Thai-UK relations. In addition, the interview sections were conducted by expert participants who were chosen for their position or expertise, such as newspaper editors, journalists, non-governmental organisation (NGO) leaders, and top-level executives. These interviewees were recruited by purposive selection and snowball sampling techniques because this research focuses on an in-depth understanding of the individuals who have experience in their positions related to Thai-UK relations. Their roles and experiences were connected to research issues on British foreign policy in Thailand. In addition, these interviewees may have a strong network among Thai-UK

expertise, so a good rapport was established with a particular participant regarding snowball sampling techniques during the interview session. Therefore, I asked this participant to suggest or identify specialists and experts who have significant knowledge regarding Thai-UK relations.

The second stage was to arrange the interview schedules with the interviewees. Because of the executive levels of the participants and original Thai culture, the interview appointment was challenged in the process of access to interviewees. According to Gubrium and Holstein (2001), researchers should have extensive preparation to obtain permission to interview elites and experts. It would have been inappropriate to contact elites directly. Elites prefer that researchers inform the recipients or secretariats to arrange their schedules. I contacted the participants' recipients and sent initial letters explaining a few reasons why elites and experts should agree to an interview. The significance of research and potential contribution to knowledge were included in the letter. Also, it pointed out elite' positions and status, obligating them to agree to interviews. Finally, I highlighted their opportunities to reflect on the policies, politics, or institutions associated with them. Then, the interview appointments were arranged. The official invitation letters were sent to the recipients or secretariats by post and email. They included an information sheet, a consent form, my background, and a response form distributed to the heads of institutions approved by the Valaya Alongkorn University, who contributed to the research funding for this doctoral study and a supporting letter from my supervisors (Appendix C). Because of the Thai bureaucratic system, any official letter was written to a senior government official or a director of an institution must be authorised and signed by the secretary or a representative from their department. After accepting the response forms from the invited interviews, I confirmed the interview appointments with their recipients before conducting the data. The interview sessions were conducted through thirty-four participants from August to December 2019.

The elites and experts interviewed were managed in the final stage. According to Lui (2017), researchers should explain their research perspectives to acquire high-quality data from respondents during interviewing elites. Before starting an interview session, I explored the background of the participants and their roles in the institutions or organisations. Moreover, I examined the current policy and the institutional background including; history, vision, funding, and strategies. I focused on their projects related to Thai-UK relations. This information was

found on the institutional or organisation websites and the UK and Thailand governments' official reports in Thai or English languages. These documents helped me understand interviewees' essential background linked to British foreign policy in Thailand through their institutions, organisations, and collaboration.

The interviews were conducted in the interviewees' native languages: Thai and English. This strategy can help me have the flow of communication with the interviewees. I used semi-structured interview questions to obtain in-depth information from the participants allowing for flexibility in the interview questions. However, the outline of key research questions was noted in the notebook to avoid losing essential interview issues. In addition, I paid great attention to the location of the interviews. Each one took place in a private room, which the interviewees arranged at a time and place of their convenience. Participants allowed me to do the recordings of the interviews and took notes during the interview to gain significant issues that emerged in the interview. When the interview ended, the recorded data were reviewed and transcribed. After collecting the data, I have maintained a positive network with interviewees to develop further research. All interview data collected from participants during this research and any identifying material has been kept secure, including tape recordings, typed transcripts of tape recordings, and the interviewer's notes. All information disclosed within the interview has been kept confidential and only accessible to the researcher and her supervisor, mentioned in the previously approved SREP application.

5.2.2 Documentary research

Documentary research is a method to analyse documents containing the phenomenon being studied, which helps investigate and categorise data sources (Bailay, 1994; Ahmed, 2010). Many social researchers define types of document sources, including government publications, institutional memoranda and reports, official data, diaries, and visual and pictorial materials in various formats as categories of documentary sources. In addition, Flick (2018) suggests several factors to select documents that concern authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and meaning of the sources.

In this thesis, the rationale for the documentary research method was used to justify the background of research and its area of interest, theories, and approaches through reviewing

relevant literature. Dependency theory, the notion of ‘informal empire’, the concept of power, the ‘Global Britain’ narrative, and historical and contemporary relations between the UK and Thailand were reviewed as the key contexts of the research. The data was reviewed through primary sources, the UK and Thailand government’s official reports, ministerial speeches, statements or announcements posted on Thai and British government websites within the context of UK foreign policy in Thailand. These websites were provided by the UK government I websites, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Thailand and the UK, the Thai Royal Embassy in London, the British Embassy in Bangkok, the British Council, and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Then, secondary literature was drawn upon, for example journals, articles, book chapters, abstracts, statistics, and indexes related to Thailand and the UK in the Thai and English languages. Secondly, the documentary sources were collected to identify the key issues of the research context to establish the context of the study and conceptual framework for collecting data. These examples reviewed the background of historical and contemporary relations between Britain and Thailand, a historical and contemporary manifestation of the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand, and the information about current situations regarding Thai-UK relations after the EU referendum in 2016.

In terms of the ‘Global Britain’ narrative in Thailand, the reviewed data were organised into three significant phases: the imperial period, the European Union, and the post-European Union phases. Moreover, British soft power was reviewed through several secondary sources. They focus on applying the UK’s soft power as the primary strategy to sustain British influences in Thailand. Additionally, the summary of critical British foreign policy in Thailand from the imperial to post-Brexit periods was reviewed to analyse the origins of foreign policy relations between two countries. This information demonstrated the important events, agreements, speech and statements related to British foreign policy, which facilitated an understanding of the historical and contemporary background of the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand.

Secondary resources were used as supporting evidence for key arguments, such as ‘Global Britain’ is not a new concept in British foreign policy. This idea has developed as a foreign policy until the UK departed the European Union since the imperial period. I argue that the ‘Global Britain’ concept has influenced Thailand since the imperial period when Thailand was part of Britain’s informal empire in 1867. Recently, the UK government announced the ‘Global

Britain' in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy in March 2020. The review addresses British foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific region following the UK's leaving the European Union. This strategy is likely to be linked to British foreign policy in Thailand throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit eras. For example, the British Embassy in Bangkok published an agreement in 2018 to strengthen the UK and Thai foreign policy as a strategic partnership; the British Council reported an increase in Thai students studying in higher education institutions in the UK between 2016 and 2020, and the meeting report between the UK and Thailand to negotiate the free trading agreement (FTA) after Brexit.

Furthermore, documentary sources were considered when providing evidence to support the research questions. There were related to the issues of British foreign policy in Thailand, the development of Thai-UK relations in several dimensions, such as politics, trade and investment, culture, education, technology and infrastructure, and the new projects to collaborations between two states. Notably, there were shown the statistical records Thai-UK presented the situations of their relations. For example, the increase of funding in foreign aid, business, investment, scholarship, and humanitarian in Thailand. Therefore, these sources were selected to accurately reflect the aim of this research, which focuses on an understanding the development of British foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand through policy documents, statistic records, and statements from the Thai-British governments.

This study used different forms of data collection; interviews and documentary research as Lui (2017) affirms that using various data collection methods can enhance the reliability and accuracy of qualitative research. In this study, official documents from Thai and UK governments were collected to avoid the study biases regarding British foreign policy in Thailand in the Thai and English languages. In addition, I categorised interviewing clusters who have experiences in two countries. These interviewees lived or studied in the UK and Thailand now they are working related to Thai-British institutions because the interviews data could then be compared and contrasted from the past to the current situation. Moreover, documentary sources can be used alongside interview transcripts to help me identify any biases, particularly in my case study research. In conclusion, using mixed methods for collecting data are required to avoid the prejudices between researchers and interviewees (Lui, 2017: Yin, 2013).

These strategies were used to avoid potential bias from my previous experience and help me consider the accuracy of the interview data from the participants.

5.3 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis and document analysis were used to analyse the data in this study, which were based on the types of transcription from the semi-structured interviews and the various documentary sources.

5.3.1 Thematic analysis

Many researchers affirm that thematic analysis can be used in qualitative analysis for producing trustworthy and insightful findings (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun and Clarke, 2006; Nowell et al., 2017). In this study, thematic analysis is a valuable method for understanding various interviewees' perspectives, exploring similarities and differences, and generating unanticipated insights. This qualitative study analysed data themes that emerged from elite and expert interviews. Thematic analysis leads to the development of an expanded theory that explains UK-Thailand foreign policy relations within the context of the 'Global Britain' narrative. According to Creswell (2013), an inductive data collection process begins with gathering information, asking open-ended questions to participants, analysing data to identify themes, searching for broad patterns, generalisations, or theories from themes, and finally presenting generalisations or theories from previous experiences and literature. In this respect, I used this method to identify common themes among elites and experts in Thailand's diverse perspectives and experiences on Thai-UK relations within the concept of 'Global Britain'.

Furthermore, this study investigates the influence of the 'Global Britain' narrative in Thailand. Thus, thematic analysis can examine patterns in personal and social meaning surrounding a topic and ask questions regarding the concept's implications (Braun and Clarke, 2017). In addition, I employed an inductive approach to understanding the participants' experiences and perspectives on the UK-Thailand foreign policy relations. This method is a fundamental stage in the data analysis process. It can assist me in gaining access to a wide range of knowledge about the phenomenon to identify key themes of the research questions and explicit meaning from the interview data.

This study used this analytic strategy to generate themes by coding from transcribed data related to the research questions. The six steps of thematic analysis guided the analysis: familiarising and transcribing data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Before starting the thematic analysis process, I transcribed data from the audio recording of each interview in Thai and English languages. However, the translation from Thai to English can sometimes be problematic. This study had a well-considered careful translation in terms of the political meanings. Thus, I was concerned about the loss of information when translating in specific terms and phrases, using and translating a word or phrase to ensure that the meaning did not get lost in translation (Filep, 2009). Each transcription contained the participants' identification, including name, position and institution. According to Ellersgaard et al. (2017), elites are frequently embedded in complex power relations. The promise of anonymity may lead to decontextualisation of their views to the point where the reader cannot access the validity of the interview material. Notably, anonymity might be difficult to keep fully, which can lead to conflicts between interviewees and researchers over the results of the interviews. The participants in this study were ultra-elites and professional experts as defined by authorities. While using the promised anonymity, referring to them as a number or name and blurred personal data may be unnecessary. This is because these elites and experts would be recognisable in their positions and authority in the workplace.

Then, the deductive approach of thematic analysis was used to generate coding and search for themes. They were presented through previous literature and the theoretical lens of the study as a more theory-driven coding approach. For example, when coding British imperialism in Thailand, there were relevant ideas and issues in the interview transcripts, such as British influences regarding political and commercial dimensions through the concept of 'Informal empire' in Thailand. Secondly, coding the 'Global Britain' concept in the data interviews revealed the meaning of 'Global Britain' after the EU referendum in 2016 as a reconfiguring policy after the UK left the EU. In addition, based on the literature reviews, British foreign policy in Thailand was related to the concept of soft power. The key contexts of these issues were British soft power as an essential tool for expanding British influences in Thailand through norms, values, and culture. After defining and labelling initial codes, the excerpts from each interview were rearranged into categories in themes. These themes emerged from collating the codes that

responded to the research problem. For example, the theme of the UK's position in Thailand and ASEAN was linked to a new principle of British foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' concept in the post-European Union. UK government would encourage its influences in ASEAN countries and the Indo-Pacific region through Thailand as a gateway. Finally, coding, subthemes, and themes were selected to present the research theories and confirm the responses to the research questions.

5.3.2 Document analysis

Document analysis was employed to analyse data from the documentary sources. This analysis method requires repeated review, examination, and interpretation of the data to achieve meaning and empirical knowledge of the construct being studied. It is used as a complementary method to enhance the triangulation of the study through various types of documents, such as books, newspapers, articles, academic journal articles, and institutional reports (Morgan, 2021). Moreover, visual materials, photographs, videos, and films, can also be used for document analysis (Flick, 2018). As mentioned in section 5.2.3, this qualitative study focuses on how researchers interpret their interviewee's experiences and construct a society by looking for latent and explicit meaning in the data. This study used document analysis to triangulate findings gathered from interview transcripts. It can expand on findings across other data sources, which help me to provide evidence against the bias (Bowen, 2009; Frey, 2018). In addition, this method allows researchers to achieve insights and awareness of interviewees' descriptions during interview sessions (Mogan, 2021).

This thesis used pre-existing textual sources for triangulation and increased the study's trustworthiness. The rationales for using pre-existing sources are to access credible and reliable sources of the available data for completing the study. This research analysed the context of the 'Global Britain' narrative in the imperial period through documents and archival government publications. The document analysis method was used to explore the historical phenomena between Britain and Thailand over the last four hundred years in both Thai and English languages. I reviewed the data through primary sources, including the UK and Thailand government's official reports, ministerial speeches, government reviews about UK foreign policy in Thailand, historical newspapers regarding Thai-UK relations, and official photographs from the British and Thai governments. These documents were obtained from several official

academic resources in Thailand and the UK including; the National Archives of Thailand, the National Library of Thailand, Thammasat University Library, Chulalongkorn University Library, The British Library, and The British National Archives. Then, secondary literature was consulted, such as journals, articles, book chapters, abstracts, statistics, and indexes related to Thailand and the UK. These sources can be beneficial to the stability of the data from the interview data. Similarly, the interview can confirm the accuracy of the previously collected information from documentary sources. However, I was concerned about the authenticity of historical documents because these documents provided data for over four hundred years and some sources remained anonymous. I rechecked the data to identify similarities, differences, and patterns from many documentary sources.

Secondly, pre-existing documents help me reduce the ethical concerns associated with public documents. These sources are generally aware that anyone will read the content, such as public records, newspapers, and journals (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). However, the public documents were shaped by the authors who produced them and their principles. For example, political newspapers may be motivated to publish content to express a political perspective rather than reporting facts. Therefore, I conducted these sources from the official academic resources to ensure the authenticity and credibility of the data. This study analysed the historical and contemporary relations between the UK and Thailand through key documents by searching for specific issues, official agreements, and events regarding the 'Global Britain' narrative in different periods within the texts. They were produced by Thai and British governments and analysed how their meaning developed their relations. The analysis could indicate that the British government has sustained its influences in Thailand throughout a core-peripheral relationship within the 'Global Britain' concept.

Additionally, I reviewed policy or strategic documents of the Thai-British institutions, such as the British Council, the BBC, the Thai and British governments, the agenda of NGOs before interviewing with participants. The analysis allowed me to overview the institutional or organisational contexts and outline the current strategies within the lens of the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand. This information helped me understand the specific issues the interviewees regarding the relationship between the UK and Thailand. Notably, these documents helped me design and ask related questions regarding the critical issues for the participants related to my

central research questions. In terms of the analysis procedure, the key concepts from documentary sources were checked and rechecked to identify similarities, differences, and patterns. The number of documents analysed depends on the research questions and other aspects of the research process. I finished searching for more documents to identify various themes in this study. This is because analysing more data was unlikely to help me develop a new theme or idea.

5.4 Credibility of the Research

Qualitative research needs to identify validity and reliability to determine the quality and potential of the study. Validity refers to specific procedures to assess the accuracy of the research findings (Gibbs, 2007). It is one of the strengths of qualitative research and focuses on determining whether the findings are accurate from the researcher's and participant's perspectives (Creswell, 2000). In this study, I employed validity strategies to examine the quality of the research findings. The process of triangulation was performed to validate the findings through documentary analysis and interviews. Documents were used to assess the data from sources and provide a cohesive justification for themes. If themes were established based on participants' perspectives which overlapped in the interviews, it can then be claimed to add to the validity of this study. For example, together with the interviews, document analysis of British and Thai official government documents, such as reports, speeches, and statements, was undertaken to confirm data in the research. This procedure allowed me to check the policy and principles' implementations mentioned by the interviewees against those stated in the statements, speeches and policies of the British and Thai governments. Furthermore, taking the final report or themes back to participants and determining whether they feel these findings are accurate. The procedure was explained in the consent form prior to the interview session. I took back parts of the significant finding and the themes to the participants to a follow-up interview with the participants and gained their comments on the findings.

In addition, the research findings were described by using a detailed description to determine the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2020). This strategy included in-depth perspectives on the themes and key passages from each interview. They were categorised and organised into a theme by quotations to support the findings. For example, British soft power in terms of higher education systems in Thailand is a theme that identifies the development of foreign policy

relations between Thailand and the UK. I provided the discussion with an element of experiences and used direct quotations to convey and add the validity of the findings. Moreover, to ensure the credibility of this study, the researcher should avoid bias and be aware of reflexivity to identify their gender, culture, history, and socioeconomic origin (Creswell, 2000). I explained self-reflection in this study to explore how my background shaped my interpretation of the findings. My research involves elites and experts with specific expertise and knowledge regarding Thai-UK relations for generalising qualitative findings. It is emphasised that the research findings may be applicable to other case studies. According to Creswell (2000), qualitative case study results can be applied to some broader theory. The generalisation occurs when qualitative researchers study additional cases and generalise finding to the new cases. This study explores the relationship between the UK and Thailand within the 'Global Britain' narrative. The initial finding demonstrates that the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand has been influenced by the underlying principles of core and peripheral relationships. In this respect, the 'Global Britain' concept can be tested as the new case study in other countries, as a truly 'Global Britain', to replicate the findings, similar to the replication logic used in experimental research. Also, reliability means the researcher's approach is consistent across different researchers and projects. In this study, I checked transcripts and coding to ensure that they did not contain apparent mistakes made during transcription. I wrote memos about the codes and their definitions to compare data with codes.

The research's limitations include the scarcity of historical resources on Thai-UK ties. I attempted to access numerous internet resources in order to get the context of Thai-UK evolution since the nineteenth century. It was difficult to get background regarding the kings and royalty who had worked or had connections with the British Empire. It was because certain topics were sensitive and could not be criticised in terms of the king's role in Thailand. Furthermore, several publications that had been translated into English could not be downloaded as whole sheets of paper. It was due to a lack of published concerns or because they were out of date.

In terms of the interview sections, I was unable to interview some diplomats and secretaries involved in Thai-UK ties. It was because a diplomat is unable to express his or her views. These may be sensitive to the country's stability. As a result, they should exercise caution when answering inquiries that can only be answered by the State. Furthermore, some interviewees

avoided telling me about post-Brexit relations between the UK and Thailand, such as one of the journalists working in London, who gave me some reasons why Brexit was uncertain, but he could not answer these questions precisely until the UK government launched a new plan. However, he encouraged me to share historical records related to the post-war evolution of Thai-UK ties.

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are an essential issue to identify the transparency of the research. The researcher must maintain the rights, needs, values, and desires of key informants (Creswell, 2014). In this study, the interviews with elites and professional experts were concerned about their consent regarding some revealed sensitive information. Participants were sent an information sheet and consent letter to acknowledge their rights to confidentiality and data protection. These documents identified several factors relevant to the research, including the research aim and objectives, the research process and distribution, benefits, risks, and disadvantages, token for participation, participants rights to withdraw from the research, issues of confidentiality, and participants' authorisation (Creswell, 2014).

This study involved interviews with elites and experts at institutions related to Thai-UK relations. An invitation letter and a consent form were sent to the head of the institution and the secretaries of the department for authorisation. Then, the head of each institution either agreed or assigned a suitable informant to participate in the interview. Participants were given the informed consent form to sign individually on the day of the interview. In addition, on the day of the interview, I allowed the participants to decide whether they would like to read the transcriptions or further discuss the issues. If they requested to do so, they could email me directly. Participants were, however, provided an informed consent form. The participants had the option of agreeing to use their full names, positions, and workplaces in the research. It is because some interviewees in this study were ultra-elite and professional experts as defined by authorities. Referring to them as a number or using blurred personal data, as promised for anonymity, may be ineffective. These elites and experts would be recognisable. In addition, they are frequently embedded in complex power relations. The promise of anonymity may lead to decontextualisation of their views to the point where the reader cannot access the validity of the interview material. Some participants, on the other hand, may choose to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of

the record. The data collected will be identified by unique codes. Interview sessions take place face-to-face in a private room, telephone, and email. Only I and my supervisors can access the data.

Conclusion

This chapter presents the methodology for collecting data for this study. The interpretivist approach was used to understand the subjective perspectives and experiences of how ‘Global Britain’ has worked in Thailand since the imperial period until the EU referendum in 2016. Documentary methods and interviews with elites and experts who have specific knowledge and expertise regarding Thai-UK relations were used in the qualitative research. Thematic analysis and document analysis were used to develop relevant themes from interview data. Finally, the credibility of the finding and ethical considerations were identified. Chapters 6-7 present data analysis and findings, and Chapter 8 presents conclusions, discussion, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 6

The Emergence of the ‘Global Britain’ Concept in Thailand

Introduction

This chapter explores the ‘Global Britain’ concept in terms of the strength of the connection between the UK and Thailand. The chapter is divided into three sections to discuss the analysis of specific issues based on semi-structured interviews supported by the related literature review. The first section examines the meaning of the concept of ‘Global Britain’ in Thailand, as highlighted by Thai and British elites and experts. The second section explains, from the elites’ and experts’ perspectives, how the concept of ‘Global Britain’ can be used in Thailand in order to strengthen Thai-UK relations. Finally, the last section examines post-Brexit British foreign ambitions in Thailand within the ‘Global Britain’ concept.

The chapter explains that, in the view of Thai and British elites and experts, the ‘Global Britain’ narrative has been used in British foreign policy since the late-nineteenth century, through elite partnerships and alliances. Thus, it could be argued that the post-Brexit ‘Global Britain’ is not a new concept in Thailand. The concept incorporates components of the imperial historical pattern, most notably the notion of an ‘informal empire’. It could also be taken to mean that the UK is potentially re-packaging or re-configuring itself in response to the legacy of informal imperial thought. However, the UK government’s political and economic dominance has dramatically declined since the post-war era, and the current geopolitics have changed, particularly with the rise of China. Therefore, after the EU referendum of 2016, the UK government has sought to enhance its global influence by using ‘soft power’. The government’s Integrated Review sets the aim of making the UK a “Science and Technology superpower” by 2030 (Integrated Review, 2021:7). In Thailand, post-Brexit ‘Global Britain’ has been using elite networks to sustain and strengthen British influence within a dependent development relationship. However, the elite networks are employed to sustain a UK-Thailand connection which is centred on mutual benefits for these elites, rather than for the majority of Thais. It is evident that the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand is seen as a ‘nostalgic cultural power’, rather than there being any economic or security dependency between the two states in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

6.1 The 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand

This section will present British foreign policies and practices highlighted by Thai and British elites, in order to define the meaning of the concept of 'Global Britain' in Thailand. This context leads to an analysis of how British and Thai foreign policy relations are changing as the UK departs the EU. Thailand and the UK have recently agreed on strengthening bilateral cooperation and becoming a strategic partnership, notably in the areas of economic and regional cooperation, as well as global problems of mutual interest (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). The main argument of this thesis is that British foreign policy has consistently been characterised by a global approach, mainly due to its imperial legacy. In this case, Britain has sought to maintain its influence in Thailand since the nineteenth century, as Siam was part of Britain's informal empire during the imperial period. Following the EU referendum in 2016, the British government aimed to develop and maintain its influence in Thailand in terms of business, military and security, culture and social development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2016). However, because of changing global geopolitics, Thailand's current foreign policy emphasises equilibrium among great powers such as the US and China, based on the concepts of constructive engagement, mutual respect, mutual trust and mutual profit (Cheeppensook, 2022). The consequence of this is that Thailand's development has become less dependent on Britain, notably in terms of trade and security.

Since 2016, the UK has reduced its economic ties with Thailand, with a 1.4% market share in goods and services in 2021. This represents a 1.3 percentage point reduction from 2020 (British Embassy Bangkok, 2022) as well as only encouraging military and security through a co-relations framework, such as official visits between Thai and British leaders, offering to fund training, and supporting new technology for security and defence systems for elites' groups in Thailand. Therefore, the UK has sought to utilise elite networks instead to promote British soft power in Thailand, because it needs to maintain its global influence after leaving the EU. To put forward this argument, official Thai government documents and interviews with Thai elites and experts have been analysed. Although several participants in this study acknowledge the 'Global Britain' concept, and indicate that it has affected British foreign policy aspirations throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit periods, its meaning has not been precisely defined by the British government, and in this instance, it lacks supporting evidence in Thailand.

Several interviewees stated that it is still uncertain whether the 'Global Britain' concept is little more than a slogan, motto or hollow promise. For example, one of the directors of Department of European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bangkok, Thailand said:

The concept of 'Global Britain' is ambiguous in terms of its values and practices in Thailand. From my perspective, the concept is a platform or discourse to assist the UK in successfully leaving the EU...[T]he British position in Thailand within the context of 'Global Britain' is still uncertain following the EU referendum in 2016. However, the UK government has established strategic partnerships with Thailand and is looking forward to expanding policies in ASEAN countries. (Gov D)

Furthermore, a director of a university's Department of European Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand suggested that the concept of 'Global Britain' has been a fantasy or mythology throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. She stated:

During the Brexit and post-Brexit periods, the British power dynamic has been changing. I would emphasise that the UK's position in the global arena is still significant; just wait and see. However, the concept of 'Global Britain' is only a fiction or mythology employed to represent British ambitions for new strategies or policies following the UK's exit from the EU. (Scholar H)

These points of view suggest that the concept of 'Global Britain' has nothing to do with the development of Thai-UK relations in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. It was simply British political rhetoric during the 2016 Brexit campaign. However, after the UK had officially departed the EU, the UK government launched the Integrated Review in March 2021, which presented new British aspirations. Notably, the review attempts to demonstrate the principles of the 'Global Britain' concept in practice. It places trade at the core of 'Global Britain', but the UK government does not precisely define what 'Global Britain' means within the UK's strategy. As the review states, "What Global Britain means in practice is best defined by actions rather than words." (The Integrated Review, 2021: 16). In short, the concept of 'Global Britain' has proven thus far to be ill-defined; hence, this chapter will investigate how the UK government is applying its policies and practice in Thailand. This will lead to a better understanding of the meaning of 'Global Britain' in Thailand.

The first theme to emerge from this study's analysis of the meaning of 'Global Britain' is 'imperial nostalgia'. In the interviews, several participants said that 'Global Britain' is not a new concept in British foreign policy. It was employed in foreign policy in the imperial period. This point is consistent with Turner's (2019) and Gryazin's (2021) view that "Global Britain is a foreign policy narrative of empire." For instance, the British Political Counsellor Ambassador in Thailand noted:

Global Britain is not a new concept in British foreign policy. It is repackaging, re-energising and re-branding its foreign policy in the post-Brexit era. As a result, the UK government now seeks to build new relationships with other countries around the world. (Gov B)

A former researcher in Institution of Southeast Asian nations, Bangkok, Thailand, observes:

Global Britain means imperial nostalgia for when the UK successfully became the British Empire. Thus, after leaving the EU, the UK government is actively identifying its role as a global actor in the world, particularly as a global player outside the EU. (Scholar G)

After the EU referendum in 2016, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) launched a 2018 memorandum to the UK's House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee to identify the British government's intended meaning of 'Global Britain'. The concept of 'Global Britain' is for the UK to continue to be a successful global foreign policy player. This is to support the argument that 'Global Britain' reflects imperial nostalgia and that the UK government intends to maintain Britain's globally influence after Britain's decline. The FCO memorandum explained that:

Global Britain is intended to signal that the UK will continue to be open, inclusive and outward facing; free trading; assertive in standing up for British interests and values; and resolute in boosting our international standing and influence. It is a Britain with global presence, active in every region; global interests, working with our allies and partners to deliver the global security and prosperity that ensures our own; and global perspectives, engaging with the world in every area, influencing and being influenced (FCO, 2018).

In terms of UK-Thai relations, it could be argued that the historical 'Global Britain' narrative was delivered when Siam became part of Britain's informal empire (Barton, 2014; Barton and

Bennett, 2010). This was confirmed by several Thai experts and members of elites in this study, who emphasised that to build a sense of belonging at that stage, Britain had influenced Siam's economy, culture, norms and values in the imperial period. Notably, the notion of an 'informal empire' emerged in the interviews in relation to the pattern of Britain and Siam's foreign policy during the late nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Interestingly, many interviewees affirmed that the 'informal empire' concept is still relevant in post-Brexit British foreign policy regarding Thailand, as shown in the following excerpt:

Because Thailand was a part of Britain's informal empire, the relationship between the two countries could continue and be more flexible during the Brexit era, notably in terms of trade and investment in Thailand. I believe that the impact of British imperialism is still relevant to the growth of Thailand's economy and culture in the Brexit and post-Brexit period... [T]he Sun Never Sets on the British Empire, and these words continue to resonate with the British people. Thus, once the UK has left the EU, the government will focus on network development and new alliances in order to reap the same benefits and resources as in the imperial era. (UK Alumnus A)

According to this viewpoint, the British 'informal empire' pattern could potentially be utilised to expand Thai-UK relationships during and after Brexit, although it differs in significant ways. This finding is reflected in Sasiwuttiwat's (2011) argument that there is the colonial legacy on the Thai state that has persisted and influenced the Thai development. In terms of power and control, the UK currently falls behind. As a result, the government is encouraged by its culture as global British soft power. Moreover, the development of Thai politics, economics and culture was mentioned by other interviewees as the effect of British imperial policy implementation, both historically and, potentially, after Brexit. For example, the director of the International Programme in International Relations, Faculty of Political Science, at Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand commented:

Thailand became part of Britain's informal empire during the imperial period after the signing of the Burney and Bowring treaties with Britain. As a result, Thailand was affected by British norms and beliefs notably open free-trade liberalism... [Because] of their common historical ties, Brexit provides an excellent chance, rather than a constraint, to strengthen relations between the two countries post-Brexit. Their relations will develop

and deepen in the future, notably in terms of politics, economics and culture for the governments of the UK and Thailand. (Scholar B)

From the statement above, it seems that the notion of an ‘informal empire’ is essential to sustaining British policy in practice following the EU referendum of 2016. In the context of Thailand’s development, Siam was dependent on British standards and principles during the imperial period and the Siamese state was modernised through British norms and values. The historical links between the UK and Thailand have grown through the years into the strong and friendly partnership that exists today. This could lead to Thai-UK relations becoming more flexible after the UK departing the EU. This point was mentioned by several scholars. For instance, one researcher in economics and politics explained:

Thailand was an informal empire of Britain in the nineteenth century. As a result, British norms, culture and values were built into Thailand's modernisation process in terms of the bureaucratic system, legislation, culture, standards, institutions, values and traditions. Most recently, the Thai government aims to make a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the UK. The government hopes that the process may be flexible because both governments are familiar with when Thailand was a part of Britain’s informal empire in the imperial period. (Scholar I)

These perspectives demonstrate that several participants were thinking about Britain’s ‘informal empire’ during the imperial period. Arguably, therefore, the concept of ‘Global Britain’ in Thailand is understood to be informed by the legacy of informal imperial thinking. This has the possibility of having a significant influence on Thailand's social and economic development, if it continues to be dependent on the UK after Brexit. Based on the ‘dependent development’ approach provided by Evans (1975), this could be considered as a continuation of British imperial dominance in Thailand. However, there are several debates over the UK's post-Brexit global position. In comparison to China, the US and India, the British government presently lacks global economic and military power. On the other hand, the UK has elite influences and networks in terms of education, society, culture and norms. These characteristics have remained prevalent in British foreign policy since the nineteenth century.

In 2017, Alok Sharma, the then UK Minister for Asia and the Pacific, visited Thailand. He supported the continuation of Britain's informal empire in Thailand by utilising British foreign

aid as a fundamental strategy to build Thai and British relations within the 'Global Britain' concept. The purpose of this visit was to encourage new collaborations with Thailand in the post-Brexit era. Sharma stated that the UK aims to improve its relations with Thailand in terms of trade, investment, education, research and technology within the national strategy 'Thailand 4.0', an initiative designed to transition the country from a production-based to a service-based economy, shifting from commodities to new goods while supporting technology, creativity and innovation. This statement is consistent with the UK's ambitions which, as stated in the Integrated Review of 2021, aim to have secured Britain's status as a 'Science and Technology Superpower' by 2030. Therefore, the UK seeks to become a leader in global technology, new knowledge and innovation, and the government intends to support the 'Thailand 4.0' policy through the 'Global Britain' project in the post-Brexit period (Sharma, 2017).

Sharma's statements imply that the UK intends to promote Thailand's economic development and new knowledge in order to maintain Britain's influence following Brexit. In addition, they echo the theory of dependency, which explains the process of economic exploitation, technological and cultural domination between core and peripheral regions (Furtado, cited in Ghosh, 2019). The use of this strategy means that the relevance of dependency theory is still ongoing in Thailand. The UK government seeks to develop its role of economic dominance by supporting modern technology in Thailand. This could be interpreted to mean that the 'dependent development' approach identified by Evans (1975) and Cardoso and Faletto (1979) should be the main concept utilised in analysing foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand within 'Global Britain'. As 'dependent development' involves a 'triple alliance' of state, local elites and multinational corporations, Thailand, as a developing country, could experience further capitalist dependent development through elite ties. Particularly, technology transfer is a means of integrating developing countries with the capitalist of process growth (Ghosh, 2010). This point was also reported by Haacke and Breen's (2018). After the UK's withdrawal from the EU, the government has to decide whether it wants a formal partnership with Thailand. Notably, Daddow (2019) indicates that the success of 'Global Britain' will be determined by its relevance to international stakeholders. Therefore, interviewing members of Thai and British elites is beneficial in understanding how 'Global Britain' can operate in Thailand.

In attempting to define the meaning and significance of 'Global Britain' in Thailand, the second theme which emerged was 'discourse', as a means of maintaining the UK's relevance as a great power. For instance, one of the professors in international relations of International Programme, Faculty of Political Sciences, Thammasat University, Thailand mentioned that the 'Global Britain' discourse reveals a change in UK-EU relations prompted by rising political tensions over Brexit. He stated:

'Global Britain' depends on a transactional relationship between the UK and the EU that is characterised by animosity and unpredictability. British prosperity would be best served by leaving the EU and strengthening international organisations, particularly in terms of global commerce and stability. The UK government aspires to be a world leader in global issues and free-trade agreements, and the term 'Global Britain' might be employed in terms of cosmopolitanism and liberalism throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit eras. (Scholar B)

From the excerpt above, it is evident that some influential commentators in Thailand believe the UK government has employed the 'Global Britain' concept in order to maintain its global influence after departing the EU, particularly when referring to the UK's new role in international organisations. This point is consistent with Parnell's (2022) point that the UK government is 'writing into being' a particular version of British national identity rooted in international relationships through its discourse on 'Global Britain'. In terms of Thai-UK relationships, following the EU referendum in 2016, the UK launched a dialogue partnership with ASEAN in 2021 to expand its influence in Southeast Asian nations (Haacke and Breen, 2018). This dialogue serves as a mechanism to assess and supplement significant Thai-British bilateral cooperation in other areas, such as the UK-Thailand Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO), consular dialogue, memorandums of understanding, and regular ministerial and official visits. It could be interpreted as the UK establishing further collaboration with the Thai government after leaving the EU. Thus, the 'Global Britain' political rhetoric seeks to maintain British influence through international organisations. This result is in line with Hadfield and Whitman's (2023) studies that the UK government has sought to project British influence and to preserve the UK's status as an international actor.

To sum up, many of those interviewed believe the concept of 'Global Britain' in Thailand is shaped by imperial legacy thinking. They note it incorporates elements of the imperial historical pattern, most notably the notion of an 'informal empire'. Arguably, they see post-Brexit British foreign policy as repackaging or reconfiguring the concept of an 'informal empire' in Thailand. This argument, however, fails to explain what is distinctive about the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' principles that emerged after the UK left the EU. 'Global Britain' could be seen as a narrative for approaching a period of intense political conflict, but there is insufficient space in this case study to fully explore how it relates to what happened after the UK joined the EEC/EU in 1973. Therefore, the next section will focus primarily on how the concept of 'Global Britain' can be used in Thailand to strengthen Thai-UK relations.

6.2 The 'Global Britain' concept in practice in Thailand

The UK has continually sought global influence in the world, even during its period of membership of the EU. In discussing the 'Global Britain' narrative during the imperial period in Thailand, SarDesai (1977) draws attention to the issue of British political and economic influence on Siam throughout the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, about which some historians specialising in Thailand have said that "Thailand was a colony of Britain in all but name." (Ingram, 1971:173). Notably, SarDesai also points out that the British Empire needed to expand its influence in Siam in order to open new markets and gain resources, while the Siamese monarchy avoided formal colonisation by giving in to British demands. Therefore, British policymakers thought direct conquest was unnecessary as Britain already enjoyed an advantageous position in Siam. This led to the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855, and as a result, Siam was part of Britain's informal empire, an area over which Britain exercised predominant political and economic influence without outright conquest (SarDesai, 1977; Brown, 1978).

During the post-war period, however, Britain's foreign policy was characterised by narratives of exceptionalism and decline. Therefore, Britain shifted its political and economic balance of power to the US, EU and the Commonwealth. This could be taken to mean that the UK placed emphasis on the relationship between economic strength and diplomatic influence during the

post-war period, particularly by joining the EU in 1973. During the 1990s, Britain still held some dominance in the Southeast Asia region through the Commonwealth, and for some, this was a strong factor against the UK's reliance on the EU as the major part of its international network. In this respect, Britain was the leading European investor in Thailand (FCO, 1990) and, as one of the most open economies in the world, supported further opening up of EU markets to Thai firms (FCO, 1996). In addition, the UK maintained strong military ties with the Royal Thai Armed Forces (British Embassy Bangkok, 2013). Thus, it is evident that the UK had developed a leading power dynamic in Europe, as well as sustaining an active foreign policy towards Thailand. However, Eurosceptics argued that joining the EU had significantly undermined and constrained the country's global role and, following the EU referendum in 2016, the UK withdrew from the EU. Theresa May's administration first introduced the 'Global Britain' concept in the same year, 2016, a concept dedicated to ensuring that the UK's international and global visions are realised. In other words, even if it is no longer a member of the EU, the UK sees itself as being more comprehensive in terms of negotiating and strengthening relationships with the rest of the globe. However, no specific principles have been developed to describe how 'Global Britain' will operate in the post-Brexit era. Therefore, this research investigates whether the concept of 'Global Britain' can be a truly global strategy, using Thailand as a case study.

6.2.1 Maintaining Thailand's economic dependence on the UK

From the review of relevant literature, it is clear that Thailand's economic structure has been affected by the British capitalist model since the signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855. During the imperial period, Britain established a free-trade system in Siam to open its market to international traders and investors. As a result, Britain could benefit from its presence in Siam, while the local Siamese elites facilitated British agencies in establishing themselves and reaping certain benefits. It is argued that the relationship between Siam and the British Empire was mutually beneficial for Britain and the Siamese elites. As mentioned above, the British government continued to be the largest European investor in Thailand during the UK's EU membership. For example, in 1996, the government issued a brief statement aimed at summarising the depth and breadth of the Thai-UK relationship. The paper was released with information on Britain's attendance at the first Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Bangkok,

Thailand. To begin with, a message from the then UK Prime Minister John Major noted that developing a sense of economic linkage was a crucial approach for developing strong and pleasant relationships in other areas. The statement is quoted below:

In the economic field we have seen a surge in business between us: in the last twelve months, trade between our countries grew by over 17% to just over £2 billion... We are increasingly partners in regional matters: the UK has the honour to take over from Thailand the mantle of the Asia-European Meeting; the next summit will take place in London in 1988, following the notable success of the Bangkok summit...we hope [these summits] will form the bed-rock of our bilateral relationship into the next century. (Major, 1996:3)

The declaration of the UK Prime Minister supports the concept of economic development through multinational firms and states. This affirmation corresponds to the fundamental aspects of 'dependent development' as defined by Evans (1975), who emphasises the power dynamics of semi-peripheral countries that maintain links with industrialised countries through business elites. Furthermore, when the United Kingdom was a member of the European Union, the EU's economy in Thailand enjoyed a period of stable and steady expansion, as shown in Table 6.1. From 2012 to 2016, the EU progressively raised the number of imports and exports with Thailand from 8.8% to 9.8%. In contrast, following the EU vote in 2016, the EU continually reduced overall commerce with Thailand from 9.7% to 8.0%.

Table 6.1 Trade between Thailand and the EU (including the UK) as % of Thailand's total trade, exports and imports

Year	Total Trade	Export	Import
2012	8.77	9.49	8.11
2013	9.28	9.82	8.79
2014	9.41	10.28	8.55
2015	9.61	10.25	8.93
2016	9.80	10.24	9.32
2017	9.70	10.07	9.30
2018	9.45	9.91	8.97
2019	9.22	9.58	8.85
2020	8.69	8.96	8.39
2021	8.43	9.25	7.59
2022	8.00	9.35	6.73

Source: Ministry of Commerce ([http:// www.2.ops3.moc.go.th](http://www.2.ops3.moc.go.th))

According to the data above, it is evident that the UK was one of the members who sought to preserve the EU's ties with Thailand. As a result, following the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government sought to establish a trade and investment partnership with Thailand promptly. The interviews with elites and experts in this study indicate that most Thai policymakers in business and investment believe Thai and British economic relations are founded on a longstanding partnership. According to one of the professors of international relations, commercial links between the UK and Thailand have existed since imperial times. He believes that because the two countries have a long-standing connection, economic relations between them will be able to develop flexibly after the UK has left the EU. He said:

During the reigns of King Rama IV and V, Britain and Siam built links in various areas, including a free-trade system, diplomatic diplomacy and political alliances... [I] believe that during and after Brexit, the UK government wants to return to using the liberal trading system in order to explore its global trade influence... Thailand, in particular, has a new trade and investment project, the Eastern Economic Corridor, known as the 'EEC' project. As a result, both governments intend to strengthen trade and investment ties through Government-to-Government (G2G), Business-to-Business (B2B), Government-to-Business (G2B) and the Chamber of Commerce in Thailand. (Scholar B).

Furthermore, while Thai economic barriers have been considered, the UK intends to encourage trade and investment in Thailand during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. For instance, the Mr. Chris Thatcher, Chair of the British Chamber of Commerce in Thailand said:

The UK and Thailand have been trading for over four hundred years in different ways...[however], the Thai government now has some restrictions and trade barriers, such as legal requirements in terms of immigration... [T]he UK government need more trade in Thailand after the UK officially departs the EU. (Thatcher, 2019)

These perspectives echo the effects of imperialism and the continuing relevance of dependency theory today (Baran, 1979). Despite nominal independence, these approaches are still used to maintain control of former colonies through existing economic relationships. In this respect, it is clear that Thailand is still dependent on British commerce and investment, which is related to Sasiwuttiwat's (2011) statements that the Thai state has a colonial legacy that has affected Thailand's economic development.

Additionally, the emergence of China has influenced British domestic and international economic policy, with the UK seeking stronger commercial ties with Thailand after leaving the EU. The UK and Thailand launched the first Joint Economic and Trade Committee meeting (JETCO) on June 21, 2022, to support Thailand's economic development with the UK. This agreement creates substantial new potential for bilateral commerce by removing trade restrictions that impact economic activity in both countries (Department for International Trade, 2022). Most significantly, the governments of the UK and Thailand planned to sign a Free Trade

Agreement (FTA) when the UK formally exited the European Union and accordingly, Thailand was the first ASEAN country to sign an online Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the UK following its withdrawal from the EU (The Bangkok Post, 2021). Although the UK and Thailand's free trade agreement is still being negotiated at time of writing, both governments have agreed to establish an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) in the future. This agreement might be the first step in establishing the groundwork for a future FTA (Department for International Trade, 2022). One of the Directors of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce Thailand, discussed the importance of the development of UK trade policy in Thailand after the EU referendum in 2016. He mentioned a new economic framework between the UK and Thailand:

In the post-Brexit era, the UK-Thailand commercial partnership will be more active. According to their long-standing commercial and investment relationship, the Thai government always welcomes further help from the UK, notably the signing of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the UK. However, although Thailand is not the first country to establish commercial ties with the UK following Brexit, I believe Thailand will be able to sign a Free Trade Agreement with the UK in the future. This is because the UK government sees trade and investment opportunities in Thailand's EEC project. Notably, the UK government is collaborating with Thailand on the 'Trade Policy Review' report (TPR). This analysis focuses on the future vision for signing FTAs in Thailand. (Gov. F)

This perspective implies that both governments have agreed on strengthening bilateral relations after Brexit, and the UK is likely to focus further on Thailand within the 'Global Britain' project. Notably, British companies are still finding ways to benefit from Thailand. Most recently, the UK increased funding to support investments by the UK private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in all areas of the EEC project³ in Thailand. The director's viewpoint is also consistent with Evans' concept of 'dependent development' (1987). Thailand can achieve development from the dominant state, but it is a dependent development. This means

³ The Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) development lies at the heart of the Thailand 4.0 scheme. The project is an area-based development initiative, aiming to revitalize the well-known Eastern Seaboard where, for thirty years, numerous business developers have experienced a rewarding investment journey and exceptional achievements.

a special instance of dependency, characterised by the association or alliance of international and local capital. The state also joins the alliance as an active partner, and the resulting triple alliance is a fundamental factor in the emergence of dependent development. For instance, the British Ambassador in Thailand affirmed that the UK government would continue to develop trade relations with British firms in Thailand during and after Brexit. He said:

Trade policy is an important element in the development of Thai-UK relations. Their economic connections will certainly strengthen to the amount of more than £2 billion. Although Thailand is not the top priority in British foreign policy, it is more significant in terms of free-trade zones than Japan and China. (Gov A)

However, it is difficult to accept the perspective that the UK would have significant economic influence through multinational corporations in Thailand, The UK is failing to expand trade relations with Thailand which considering the ambassador's assertion that the UK government would provide more than £2 billion in economic support. Moreover, China's economic and military strength is rising (Nicolas, 2019), and the UK government could have less economic impact in Thailand because it lacks the necessary resources and capacities. Also, Thai-UK trade has declined, as shown in Tables 6.2 and 6.3. This contradicts some elites' expectations that the UK will progressively build business connections with the Thai government after leaving the EU.

Table 6.2 Thailand's top 10 Export and Import partners (2012-2022)

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Japan	China	China	China	China	China	China	China	China	China	China
2	China	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	US
3	US	US	US	US	US	US	US	US	US	US	Japan
4	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia	Malaysia
5	Indonesia	UAE	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Vietnam	Vietnam	Vietnam	Singapore	Vietnam	Vietnam
6	Singapore	Singapore	Indonesia	Indonesia	Vietnam	Singapore	Indonesia	Singapore	Vietnam	Australia	UAE
7	UAE	Indonesia	UAE	Australia	Australia	Indonesia	Singapore	Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia	Indonesia
8	Australia	Australia	Australia	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Australia	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Singapore	Australia
9	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Hong Kong	Vietnam	South Korea	Australia	Hong Kong	Australia	Australia	South Korea	Singapore
10	Switzerland	South Korea	South Korea	UAE	Taiwan	South Korea	South Korea	South Korea	Taiwan	Taiwan	India
18-20	UK (19)	UK (19)	UK (18)	UK (19)	UK (20)	UK (18)	UK (20)	*Lower than the top 20	*Lower than the top 20	*Lower than the top 20	*Lower than the top 20

Source: Office of Permanent Secretary, Information Technology and Communication, the Ministry of Commerce Thailand, 2023

Table 6.3 Thailand's top 10 Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) partners (2013-2022)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
1	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	Japan	US	China	Japan	Japan	China
2	China	US	Singapore	Singapore	Singapore	Japan	Japan	China	China	Taiwan
3	Malaysia	Luxembourg	Indonesia	China	China	China	Hong Kong	US	Singapore	Japan
4	Singapore	Singapore	China	Netherlands	US	Singapore	Switzerland	Netherlands	US	US
5	Hong Kong	Netherlands	US	Hong Kong	Netherlands	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Taiwan	Hong Kong
6	US	China	Hong Kong	Australia	Taiwan	Malaysia	Singapore	Singapore	Austria	Singapore
7	Netherlands	Malaysia	Taiwan	US	Malaysia	Netherlands	US	Taiwan	Italy	South Korea
8	Luxembourg	Taiwan	South Korea	South Korea	Hong Kong	France	Netherlands	Switzerland	South Korea	Switzerland
9	Taiwan	Hong Kong	Netherlands	Taiwan	Indonesia	Indonesia	Australia	Germany	Hong Kong	Netherlands
10	India	UK	Malaysia	Indonesia	Australia	Taiwan	South Korea	Malaysia	Norway	Malaysia
	UK (11)		UK (13)	UK (11)	UK (14)	UK (11)	UK (17)	UK (17)	UK (22)	UK (14)

Source: Thailand Board of Investment (BOI), 2023

Furthermore, as shown in Table 6.4, the UK consistently decreased its trade with Thailand in terms of imports and exports between 1998 and 2019, from 2.9% to 1.3% of the value of Thai international commerce with other countries.

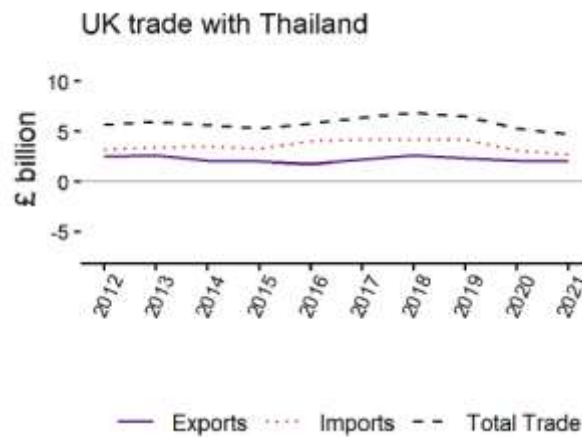
Table 6.4: Trade between Thailand and the UK (as % of Thailand's total trade, exports and imports)

Year	Total Trade	Export	Import	Year	Total Trade	Export	Import
1998	2.91	3.89	1.66	2009	1.75	2.12	1.32
1999	2.60	3.57	1.45	2010	1.48	1.89	1.04
2000	2.53	3.43	1.52	2011	1.29	1.75	0.85
2001	2.62	3.58	1.59	2012	1.38	1.66	1.12
2002	2.45	3.51	1.32	2013	1.48	1.66	1.32
2003	2.26	3.22	1.23	2014	1.49	1.76	1.22
2004	2.26	3.14	1.35	2015	1.53	1.78	1.26
2005	1.78	2.53	1.08	2016	1.43	1.79	1.04
2006	1.82	2.62	1.02	2017	1.53	1.72	1.32
2007	1.75	2.35	1.08	2018	1.40	1.61	1.20
2008	1.62	2.23	1.01	2019	1.30	1.58	1.01

Source: Ministry of Commerce (<http://www.2.ops3.moc.go.th>)

According to the data above, it is evident that the UK is not the largest trader or investor in Thailand, particularly when compared to Japan, China and the US. However, the Department for International Trade in the UK has presented the latest statistics on trade and investment in Thailand, and these data show that although the UK does not have significant economic dominance in Thailand, the two states have maintained economic relations, particularly since the EU referendum in 2016. At the end of 2022, Thailand was the UK's 43rd largest trading partner. Overall, the UK's export of goods to Thailand increased by 21.5% in the twelve months to October 2022 compared to the same period the previous year, while the UK's

import of goods from Thailand increased by 16.3% over the same period. In other words, the UK and Thailand have slightly increased their trading ties compared to those with other countries. The charts below present a time series for trade between the UK and Thailand for each year between 2012 and 2021:



The data that are presented in the charts above are given in the table below in £ billion:

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Value of total trade	5.7	6.0	5.6	5.3	5.8	6.4	6.9	6.5	5.3	4.7
Value of exports	2.5	2.6	2.1	2.0	1.8	2.2	2.6	2.3	2.1	2.0
Value of imports	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.3	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.1	2.7
Trade balance	-0.7	-0.8	-1.4	-1.3	-2.2	-2.0	-1.6	-1.9	-1.0	-0.8

Source: ONS, UK trade in goods and services, 2022.

On June 20, 2018, Thailand's Prime Minister, Prayut Chan-o-cha, met with then UK Prime Minister, Theresa May, indicating that the UK government aimed to be more encouraging of trade and investment in Thailand. As a result, the UK boosted financial support for the UK Export Finance (UKEF) programme by 4.5 billion pounds to promote investments by the UK private sector and SMEs in all areas of the EEC initiative (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand, 2018). In the same vein, several of the elite participants stated that the UK government would also support Thai industrial economic systems within the 'Global Britain' project. In particular, the UK has indicated its intention to support innovation, knowledge and technology in Thailand. This affirmation corresponds to the key

characteristics of development aid, based on Evans' (1979) analysis of dependent development in developing countries. For example, Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, the former Prime Minister of Thailand, discussed new British foreign policy in Thailand. He mentioned that the UK was the largest European investor in Thailand, and had established many companies to gain benefits and create business elite networks, such as Tesco, Boots, BP and Thames Water. The most recent estimate is that investments by these companies could increase Thailand's exports value by over £2 billion (Vejjajiva, 2019). Moreover, a researcher at the Southeast Asian Institute affirmed that the UK and Thai economic relations would be increased by more funding and the establishment of new collaborations. He said:

I believe that the UK and Thai governments will encourage liberal free trade in international markets. Therefore, after the UK has left the EU, UK trading will be more flexible in order to seek new partnerships with the rest of the world. With Thailand, the UK will support the 'Thailand 4.0' policy through UK funding, such as the UK export finance (UKEF) and the Newton Funds. These funds work for the UK private sector and SMEs in Thailand, which is related to the EEC project... [Moreover], both governments established Thai-UK Business Leadership Council (TUBLC) in 2016. (Scholar I)

These points suggest that the continuing preservation of British economic dominance in Thailand will be achieved through elite partnerships, rather than through the British government's current economic strategy. The rationale supporting this argument is that the Thai-UK Business Leadership Council (TUBLC) is a business agency that invites only senior leaders from Thailand and the UK to build new alliances and persuade the governments of both countries to boost trade and investment in both markets. This agency's mission is to help a small number of business elites. As the President of TUBLC states, "We believe that the Council should be small enough to allow genuine discussion, senior enough to carry authority, and focused enough to deliver something of value," indicating that its agenda should be led by business, not the government. This affirmation corresponds to the key features of Britain's informal empire in Siam, based on Barton's (2014) explanation of the sharing of benefits between state and local elites in a global economy. Furthermore, these viewpoints are based on neo-liberalism within Galtung's (1971) centre-periphery model of the international system. However, Thailand has suffered under an unconsolidated democracy due to disunity among Thai elites. The formation of corporate elite networks between

Thailand and the UK may result in an increasing gap between these elites as the two states seek to maintain their ties (Hewison, 1997; Anderson, 1998).

6.2.2 Encouraging UK soft power in Thailand

From the perspectives of this study's participants, since the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government has consistently employed a global approach and shown a desire to be flexible in seeking new partnerships. In the interviews, scholars and policymakers who are experts in the area of Thai-UK relations, and who work in British agencies or institutions in Thailand, identified their understanding of the meaning of the 'Global Britain' concept. For instance, an Associate Dean of the School of International Relations, Thammasat University, Thailand said:

...the 'Global Britain' concept is the way that the UK government desires to preserve its 'great power' status in international affairs after leaving the European Union. In particular, the UK aims to stay relevant to its influences as one of the 'great powers' in terms of international politics and liberal economy during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. (Scholar A)

Furthermore, Mr. Chris Thatcher, the Chair of the British Chamber of Commerce noted:

Global Britain means we want to encourage everyone, everywhere, every country to trade with the UK... [W]e will trade with everybody if we can. (Thatcher, 2019)

It was to support these ambitions that the UK launched the 'Integrated Review: Global Britain in Competitive Age' in March 2021, which focuses on new British foreign policy ambitions after departing the EU within the 'Global Britain' concept. One of the key principles is that the UK aspires to become a soft power superpower by expanding British influence in the rest of the world, notably in science and technology (Integrated Review, 2021). In this respect, Thailand is identified as being of interest to contemporary British foreign policy in terms of commerce, financial services, culture, and new technology and science (Royal Thai Embassy of London, 2020).

With regard to how this British global policy would work in Thailand, most experts and members of Thai elites in this study pointed out that 'Global Britain' would involve expanding the UK's soft power in the country; this confirms Daddow's (2019) view that the UK after Brexit would aim to develop British values and interests in every part of the world.

In addition, According to MacDonald (2021), Senior Policy Advisor at the British Council, there is logic to the UK government's pursuit of the opportunities available from closer ties with Asia and Pacific states that will be important economic and strategic partners in the years ahead. These points are connected to several interviewees who stated that the concept of 'Global Britain' in Thailand could be realised through the use of UK soft power. For example, a Dean of Pridi Banomyong International College, Thammasat University noted:

'Global Britain' has been working in Thailand and around the world through 'soft power' in terms of education, drama and music. (Scholar D)

The Director of Thai Social Enterprise office (TESO), Thailand stated:

'Global Britain' means British influences in terms of ideas and culture. It can be worked through the British Council and the British Embassy in Thailand in order to support scholarship and training for Thai students. (Policymaker B)

In addition, Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva, the former Prime Minister of Thailand described the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand as a political discourse designed to maintain the UK's influence through cultural and social issues, as shown in the following excerpt:

'Global Britain' is a discourse that the Conservative Party announced after the EU referendum in 2016 in order to identify British foreign policy in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. It means that the UK still has a relevant role in international affairs... 'Global Britain' is not a new thing. It was used over twenty years ago in Blair's administration, which focused on education, modern culture and entertainment. (Vejjajiva, 2019)

His perspective implies that the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand is both historically embedded and of contemporary relevance to the country's foreign policy relations. Sharing new knowledge and encouraging new collaborations are part of the UK's soft power elements in Thailand. This argument is supported by a report published in 2021 by the British Council, 'Global Britain: the UK's Soft Power Advantage', which discusses strategies for maintaining and expanding the UK's soft power in an increasingly competitive international context. The report maintains that soft power is critical to a country's security and economy, playing an important role in areas such as international trade and influence (British Council, 2021).

It is, therefore, apparent that the British government has been actively promoting soft power projects since the EU referendum in 2016. In this case study, many participants also said that

increasing the UK's soft power within the 'Global Britain' concept is likely to employ the framework of education partnerships as a priority for British foreign policy in Thailand. In interviews with policymakers working in British institutions in Thailand, and with professors in Thai universities, the issue of education was mentioned by all respondents when asked about 'Global Britain' in Thailand. For instance, one of the professors in international relations stated that the relationship between the UK and Thailand has focused on the higher education system, alumni networks and scholarship. She said:

Most recently, the UK and Thailand have collaborated on a Higher Transnational Education project, networking University alumni, such as Thai-Cambridge alumni, and the Chevening Scholarship... [Also], the UK government is focusing on the ASEAN university networks in Malaysia and Singapore. In my view, the UK education policy in Thailand is likely to be the main principle for expanding British soft power in practice. In other words, the UK is employing education to sustain its influence in Thailand. (Scholar A)

This participant's point of view reflects cultural dependency through education, which explains the process of expansion of cultural hegemony without proportional reciprocation (Agba, 2002). Nonetheless, from this perspective, British cultural dominance in Thailand can be developed and maintained through elite networks, because sustaining British cultural influences can be worked through education. Short-term initiatives, including university and alumni networks, are being established. Furthermore, data from the interviews indicate that the Chevening Scholarship and its alumni network serve as the primary educational framework between the UK and Thailand. According to Dr Kanate Wangpaichitr, the president of the Chevening Alumni Association, Thailand,

The relationship between the UK and Thailand has developed through longstanding relations within the Chevening Scholarship over the last twenty years. The UK's government offers fully-funded Master's degrees for leaders, influencers and decision-makers in Thailand, other developing countries and its former colonies. The main purpose of this funding is to develop a relationship with the UK that will grow throughout Chevening scholars' careers. (Wangpaichitr, 2019)

Similarly, other elite participants who were former Chevening scholars from 2000 to 2019 stated that they had improved professionally and academically, networked extensively, experienced British culture and built long-lasting beneficial relationships with the UK while

studying in Britain for a year. Their arguments confirm that the Chevening Scholarships are a core mechanism used by the British government to sustain its global cultural influence. These scholars also contribute to British public diplomacy both abroad and at home, which can assist in fostering strong relationships with the UK across the world. All this suggests that the UK government will maintain its cultural hegemony through the Chevening Scholarships. At the same time, the UK is expanding its cultural influence among global elites who are leaders in their countries. For example, one former Chevening scholar stated that the scholarships demonstrate the UK's ongoing commitment to developing the leaders in Thailand. Up until now, the British government is still running the Chevening network's activities. She said:

The UK government supports the establishment of the Chevening Alumni network, which is sponsored by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). From my perspective, the UK is shaping global leadership by granting the scholarships, in order to maintain the UK's influence and create 'British education branding' as a result of the UK's emphasis on its education business reaping greater benefits, particularly since the UK left the EU. I was asked to participate in the Chevening events organised by the British Embassy in Bangkok, and all activities were provided for the maintenance of their scholarly and elite networks, in order to build more connections in the future. (UK Alumnus A)

All Chevening candidates are required to demonstrate four attributes, which include 1) becoming leaders or influencers in their country; 2) establishing strong professional relationships, developing skills and engaging with the Chevening community; 3) having some work experience and degree-level education; and 4) having a clear post-study career path. All these characteristics represent the formation of elite networks between the UK and developing countries through education collaboration. As a result, a framework for the process of British cultural dominance in Thailand has emerged.

Furthermore, this has important implications for future British economic policy in Thailand. As Ghosh (2019) notes, education serves as a foundation for cultural hegemony. Once this dependency is established, such governments can engage in any sort of economic exploitation. According to a former Chevening scholar, "Chevening is seeking for leaders who work in business, society and politics, such as members of parliament, lawyers, government officials, media leaders..." Following their graduation, the British Embassy and the Chevening Alumni Association invite all former Chevening scholars to participate in

informal meetings, such as dinner talks, interviews and discussions about social concerns (UK Alumnus E). Likewise, a Chevening scholar from 2019 stated that the scholarship allows leaders in developing countries in Africa and Asia to maintain global British influence through elite networks. Notably, all the scholars studied 'British values' as part of their degree, and they may expand or apply these British ideals in their own countries (UK Alumnus F). This implies that Chevening scholars appear to be helping the UK exercise its soft power in the rest of the world.

Furthermore, many of the elite participants pointed out that 'Global Britain' in Thailand works through 'British culture and values'. For instance, one of the former Chevening scholars stated that the 'Global Britain' concept aims to promote British cultural values and identities:

The notion of 'Global Britain' is an instrument for the extension of British cultural values. The UK is currently focusing on democracy and human rights in Thailand. In my opinion, the UK is a democratic leader, which may be seen in British culture and beliefs. Notably, it continues to be the world's leading economic and political power. Thus, 'Global Britain' will present British policy issues that are connected to British values and influence, such as banking and financial sectors, democracy, gender equality, human rights and justice. (UK Alumnus B)

The director of an influential Thai-UK institution drew on similar themes in noting:

'Global Britain' refers to British cultural influences. For example, I attended a British Council-organised arts and design event in Thailand. It was organised by the British Council and the British Embassy in Bangkok. Many activities during the event reflected considerably expanded British cultural influences, such as providing funds for Thai academics and students, dubbed 'Training for the Trainers'. In my opinion, the UK government aims to integrate its foreign policy through culture in order to enhance and maintain long-standing Thai-UK relations, notably a new vision of the concept of 'Global Britain'. (Policymaker B)

These perspectives indicate that, in order to establish British cultural dominance in Thailand under the 'Global Britain' concept, the British government can collaborate with its agencies and institutions in Thailand. According to Cardoso (1978), once this dependency has been developed, all forms of economic exploitation might be presented in such countries. Extending academic collaboration and exchanging cultural values pave the way for further

relations within the dependence. In this sense, following the EU referendum in 2016, the Thai-UK Business Leadership Council (TUBLC) and the British Chamber of Commerce Thailand (BCCT) have already increased their presence in Thailand. All businesses are expected to invest in new products and knowledge to assist the 'Thailand 4.0' and 'EEC' programmes. These could serve as a growth engine in Thailand while maintaining the country's dependence. However, the UK and its businesses might also benefit from Thailand's increased productivity. In other words, the 'Global Britain' notion may be leveraged to retain Britain's economic dominance in Thailand through using soft power.

6.2.3 Cementing the British and Thai elite networks

A further implication of the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand is the expansion of Thai and British networks, including trade, education, cultural, technological and social networks, as a means to sustain British dominance over socio-economic development through Thai elites. This intention was mentioned by Brian Davidson, former British Ambassador to Thailand, who delivered the following speech in 2017:

To celebrate the relationship between the UK and Thailand which is now entering its fifth century... [t]hank you all for coming tonight and particular thanks also to our generous Thai and British company sponsors...Our theme this evening is 'Partnerships for a New Generation'...about a new wave of innovation, research, education, trade and investment, which will form the basis of a dynamic modern partnership between the UK and Thailand. ...Thai investment in the UK is on the increase. That sees many famous British brands already here – and represented tonight. And many more looking to use Thailand as their springboard into the ASEAN – attracted by the ambition of Thailand 4.0...which will further our strong collaboration on education and culture. (Davidson, 2017)

This statement demonstrates the current relationship between Thailand and the UK, which focuses on economy, culture and social development through elite partnerships and alliances.

Similarly, the professors participating in this study who were educated in the UK considered that the notion of 'Global Britain' is part of the UK's foreign policy to emphasise cultural aspects at the Thai elite level. The following statement demonstrates the opinion of a Dean of International Relations regarding the emergence of British culture among Thai elites.

'Global Britain' refers to a component of British foreign policy aimed at increasing the UK's influence through a global perspective. However, the notion is difficult to apply to Thais since, in my opinion, British culture favours the elite. As a result, Thais perceive 'Global Britain' as British culture preserved for Thai elites only. In short, in terms of culture, traditions and values, 'Global Britain' is difficult to achieve for the Thai people. Thais believe that British culture and values are delivered for Thai elites, in order to maintain the link with the UK. (Scholar D)

This perspective echoes the model of an informal empire as a process of cultural transformation that occurs among local elites or aristocracy (Barton, 2014). Expanding British culture among local elites can facilitate Britain's economic domination through indirect influence. The support from Thai elites, who gain benefits from Britain, will thus sustain British dominance in Thailand without the need for formal control. Moreover, data from other interviews indicate that Thailand is still economically dependent on the UK, which may be connected to Thai local elites who stand to benefit more than the majority of Thais.

Nevertheless, some interviewees stated that they believe the 'Global Britain' concept is a platform to encourage the Thai and British governments to expand their relations (Gov F). Without the EU's trade restrictions, the UK government has more flexibility in establishing trade deals with the rest of the globe. Arguably, Thailand is reliant on Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and its technology and, as a result, following the EU referendum in 2016, Thai and British business elites have rapidly developed commercial ties and established networks between the UK and local capitalists or aristocracy in Thailand. The theme of UK alumni emerged in the discussions with Thai academics as a means of retaining British influence in Thailand. From the elites' perspective, members of the UK alumni network act as key ambassadors building long-term relationships between the UK and Thailand. According to an interview with a Deans for Graduate Studies in Thailand, many UK alumni who graduated from high-ranking UK universities created the UK Alumni Association to deepen links with Thai students who have studied at UK higher education institutions. She said:

In my opinion, UK alumni in Thailand are a powerful network for expanding the UK's soft power. Thai Cambridge alumni, for example, provide scholarships and assistance to Thai students. Furthermore, several Thai university executives have formed UK

alumni relationships with their supervisors after studying at UK universities. These connections can enable present Thai academics to cooperate on future research projects between Thailand and the United Kingdom. Although the UK government is likely to give less financial support for international students after the EU referendum in 2016, alumni can assist in sustaining British soft power, particularly norms and values, in Thailand. (Scholar A)

Overall, the perspectives of the elites and experts in this study demonstrate that, following the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government has maintained its role and influence as a 'global' power in Thailand through the 'Global Britain' concept. 'Global Britain' is not a new concept in Thailand, but an imperial legacy in terms of economic, cultural and social dependency through elite networks. Its goal is to preserve the British influence. This result corroborate the arguments of Glassman (2004) and Sasiwuttiwat (2011), who suggested that the formation of the Siamese state was driven by British imperialism and local elite resistance. The Thai state's elite classes and their representatives have maintained their influence on Thailand's development. The next section will examine post-Brexit British foreign policy ambitions in Thailand within the 'Global Britain' concept.

6.3 British foreign policy ambitions in the post-Brexit period

Much of the current literature on British foreign policy after the EU referendum in 2016 is focused on enhancement of the UK's global influence and its interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Thailand is emerging as a regional logistics hub for multinational companies (Oruangke, 2018). The UK has announced plans to support Thailand, through much collaboration in aspects such as culture, education, science, innovation, economy and humanitarian aid, during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods (Parpart and Purod, 2020). At the same time, the Thai government is looking forward to improving trade deals and industrial relations with the UK as a way to develop its exports in international markets. This strategy is supported by the Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC) and the 'Thailand 4.0' industrial strategy, which aims to attract new foreign investors and thereby transform Thailand's economic development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand, 2018). Thus, this thesis argues that the British and Thai governments can maintain a mutually beneficial relationship in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods.

In order to emphasise this argument, this section examines commerce, investment and industrialisation, as well as new knowledge, infrastructure and education systems, as

manifestations of this. However, the argument has been highly influenced by the ‘dependent development’ approach, particularly by the views of Wallerstein (1974), who claims that:

...the more advanced exemplars of dependent development occupy their distinct position within the international system. They form the ‘semi-periphery’... Dependent development is dependence combined with development...particularly the dependent capitalist development includes the multinationals, the state, and the local industrial bourgeoisie (Wallerstein, 1974)

The use of this approach leads to an understanding that, in the alliances between the UK and Thailand, the elites have benefited mostly, to the exclusion of the country's wider population. This point is in line with Glassman's (2016) argument that Thai capitalists engaged in and through the state using Thailand's international relations in the post-Cold War period. As a result, Thailand formed new elite groups for more intensive labour exploitation, as did most of the peasants. The UK government has consistently maintained support for trade, investment, finance, education and culture in Thailand, as well as engaging royal family links, all of which implies that current British and Thai foreign policy is about cementing elite networks. These elites gain interest in their business, or new knowledge, technology and science, while the preservation of historical relationships maintains the UK's economic, cultural and social dominance in Thailand.

6.3.1 Increasing trade and financial services collaboration

After the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government planned discussions with Thai commercial ministers, business counterparts and trade leaders. Thailand continues to be one of the UK's largest trading partners in the Southeast Asian region, and the longstanding trading partnership between the countries was recognised by both sides (MFA, 2022). In addition, the British and Thai governments aimed to reinvigorate new agreements after the UK had officially departed the European Union. They agreed to prepare trade relations in the post-Brexit period, as the governments might be able to negotiate more flexibly without EU regulations. It was evident that the Thai government actively supported a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United Kingdom to maintain economic connections following the EU referendum of June 2016.

For instance, Thailand's Deputy Commerce Minister, Suwit Maisincee, visited the UK from July 11th - 14th, 2016, and stated that the UK and Thailand had agreed to step up negotiations

to enhance trade and investment. As part of this, he stated that they were discussing a new trade agreement to ensure that Brexit would not affect bilateral trade and economic cooperation. Following his visit, he was interviewed by the Thai newspaper 'The Nation' and made the following statement:

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) will help promote trade and investment growth between the two sides when the UK exits the EU. The UK is one of our major export markets among EU countries. Thailand will try to ensure market access under a bilateral trade pact with the UK after its exit from the European Union...I used this trip as an opportunity to encourage Rolls-Royce to move its production base to Thailand, where the government is promoting a range of incentives to woo businesses to boost the country's economic prospects. It is part of a new economic model called Thailand 4.0. (Maisincee, 2016)

The UK-Thailand discussions emphasised the importance of fostering closer business-to-business collaboration and undertaking trade promotion activities in areas of mutual interest. Furthermore, beyond the Free Trade Agreement, the UK and Thai governments agreed to establish the Thai-UK Business Leadership Council to strengthen collaboration between their private sectors and to support trade and investment growth. Interestingly, the meeting to set up the council was attended by UK Rolls-Royce's International Advisory Board and Tevin Vongvanich, Chief Executive Officer of Thailand's PTT Public Company Limited. The Thai minister's statement supported Thailand's continued reliance on British trade and investment in order to provide considerable prospects to Thai entrepreneurs following the UK's exit from the EU. This affirmation confirms that the key characteristics of Thailand's economic relations with the UK correspond to an international capitalist system based on 'dependent development' (Evans, 1978).

Thailand's development has been dependent on investment decisions made by a small set of leaders heavily influenced by internationalised companies and the major capitalist nations (Bello, Cunningham, and Li, 1998). In other words, Thailand's economic development has benefited the needs of foreign investors and Thai elites, rather than the majority of Thai citizens. Therefore, most of the Thai and British elites and experts in this study emphasised that it was necessary for the Thai government and businessmen to promote flexible new trade, investment and financial service policies, and to establish new trading networks with UK companies. The theme of new trade networks between the UK and Thailand emerged in

the interviews with Thai elite participants who work in British agencies in Thailand; they identified it as a main mechanism to develop Thai-UK relations in terms of technology, business and investment after the UK has left the EU. Notably, the UK can then expand its influence further to other ASEAN countries.

From the elites' and experts' perspectives, the UK's trade relations with Thailand can be improved through collaboration between Thai and British entrepreneurs or companies, rather than through direct support from their governments. In the interviews with policymakers who work in British agencies and institutions, the issue of trade networks was mentioned by several respondents when asked about British foreign policy in Thailand after the EU referendum in 2016. For instance, Mr. Chris Thatcher, the Chair of the British Chamber of Commerce in Thailand said:

The UK is a good friend of Thailand, but the Thai government does not facilitate British traders to do business flexibly and easily in Thailand. We are therefore trying to encourage British companies to invest and manufacture in Thailand as new trade networks, such as Triumph Motorcycles (Thailand) Limited Company, which is a 100% UK-owned company that currently operates three factories in Chonburi province, Thailand. (Thatcher, 2019).

In addition, to support the development of long-term, modern strategies between the UK and Thailand, the two governments established the first Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) in June 2022. This agreement offers a significant new opportunity to improve bilateral trade, particularly in terms of digital technology, in order to develop a digital trade network in Thailand and ASEAN countries (Department for International Trade of the United Kingdom, 2022).

In terms of financial services, the UK is working in partnership with Thailand's financial regulators to support the development of Fintech in Thailand's economy (MFA, 2022). The former president of the Fintech Association Thailand mentioned that the UK actively supported

financial technology, or the Fintech Club, in 2016, along with members of financial elites in Thailand such as Mr Korn Chatikavanij, the former investment banker and former finance minister. The UK hopes to enhance the visibility of Thai Fintech and promote the variety and strength of Thailand's Fintech industry. Notably, Thailand is a hub for Fintech in the Southeast Asian region because it can join or create collaboration networks with international

stakeholders in financial sectors. Most recently, the UK launched the ‘Fintech Ecosystem’ website and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on financial services cooperation in November, 2022.

I would like to say ‘thank you’ to the Bank of England and the British Embassy in Bangkok for supporting the development of the financial technology (Fintech) sector in Thailand. These agencies help facilitate greater access to finance and create business opportunities for the Thai financial industry. Crucially, the UK provides funds and scholarships in order to educate Thai people about expanding financial markets in ASEAN. Thus, the UK government is developing this relationship with Thailand as the dominant state in terms of financial services. (Weranond, 2019)

This perspective implies that, beyond trade dependency, Thailand has become more dependent on British technology and financial aid. Sharing knowledge and providing funds for Thai elites or government officials to be educated and trained in new financial technology knowledge are routes to further collaboration between the two states. In this respect, the UK government’s launch of the ‘Fintech Ecosystem’ website is intended to encourage more digital and finance networks with financial services regulators in Thailand. These include the Bank of Thailand, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Office of the Insurance Commission and the Electronic Transactions Development Agency, in partnership with the Thai Fintech Association and the Cambridge Centre for Alternative Finance (CCAF) (British Embassy Bangkok, 2022). Furthermore, the UK government and its agencies also offer research funding and fellowships in the financial and technology sectors. For example, in order to create significant opportunities for the Thai Fintech industry, the UK government provided research funding amounting to £600 million for KPMG, the largest financial services firm in Thailand, and invited the Fintech Association Thailand to visit the Fintech Ecosystem and Start up Centre in London. The key aims of these funds and activities are to disseminate knowledge and establish more networks in Thailand. This implies that while Thailand is nominally independent in all areas, the UK expects to be dominant in trade and finance terms. Britain clearly aims to preserve and potentially expand its influence in terms of trade and financial services in Thailand through their common history.

6.3.2 Establishing education partnerships in Thailand

The UK seeks to promote new knowledge through its educational programmes in Thailand by means of cooperation, information exchange and academic collaboration. Most recently, the

large and impressive community of UK university-educated Thais have made a huge contribution to Thai society (MFA, 2020). This implies that Thai and British elite networks are cemented through education. One dean of a Thai university discussed the relationship between UK and Thailand in terms of the exchange programme in her college. She has collaborated with SOAS, University of London, since 2016. In addition, she is a Chair of the Transnational Education 4.0 project, which is a new Thai-UK education collaboration framework established through the British Council in Thailand. She said:

Thailand and the UK have supported the student exchange programme for a long time. Most recently, both governments launched the Transnational Education 4.0 (TNE 4.0) project, which collaborates with the British Council in Thailand. In my view, the importance of education and training policies is a long-term industrial strategy. My programme is currently collaborating with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). We encourage Thai-UK internships and double degrees in terms of technology, science and education innovation. (Scholar D)

This perspective reflects how the education systems of Thailand are dependent on the British educational system. The Thai elite participants mentioned that this dependence on the British evaluation process and academic information can help Thai students to gain new knowledge and understanding of innovation. This can be viewed as a factor in the transformation of a peripheral country within a framework of cultural domination.

In short, the UK has recently had less economic influence in Thailand in comparison to the US and China. However, the UK preserves its cultural and social influences in Thailand through elite networks. The government is employing development aid, such as by supporting higher education, creating modern infrastructures, and thereby transforming civil society in Thailand. It is therefore evident that Thailand is still dependent on the UK, but in terms of cultural and social development rather than economic dependency.

Conclusion

In terms of its foreign policy within the new 'Global Britain' concept, the British government no longer has global economic influence, but it has elite influence in terms of social, educational and cultural norms. In other words, the 'Global Britain' concept in the post-European phase is more about social and cultural, rather than military and economic, dependency. Some scholars of dependency theory have criticised social and cultural

domination, suggesting that they create permanent dependency within peripheral states. In this case, the UK government is sustaining its cultural and social influences in Thailand, and Brexit is not affecting Thai and UK relations because of the two countries' elite networks. This study hypothesises that Thailand is still dependent on the West, particularly in terms of trade relations with the UK. This is because Thailand was part of Britain's informal empire during the imperial period.

However, the rise of China and the influence of the US have rapidly become dominant in Thailand, particularly in terms of international trade. Therefore, Since the EU referendum in 2016, the UK has been unable to sustain significant dominance in Thailand in terms of economic and military ties. However, the elite networks between the two states have focused on dependency in terms of social and cultural norms, which are still ongoing. This could be taken to mean that Thailand represents a model of an 'informal empire' in a different form, and this is a relationship which continues to have impact.

Chapter 7

The New Pragmatic Post-Brexit ‘Global Britain’ in Thailand

Introduction

This chapter examines the UK’s concept of 'Global Britain' following the 2016 EU referendum, and considers basic features of this concept that have emerged since the UK left the EU. Based on literature studies and interviewee perceptions, the chapter is divided into two sections to explore the features of the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand. The first part investigates how the British government has influenced Thailand during and after Brexit. The next section assesses perspectives from the literature review and interviews with respondents regarding the concept of 'Global Britain' in Thailand. The analytical framework will be used to investigate post-Brexit foreign policy within the context of 'Global Britain' in Thailand through five elements: economy, politics, the military, culture and social development. The UK government is seeking to use the 'Global Britain' concept to change the fundamentals of its foreign policy with other countries across the world, and in this respect, ‘Global Britain’ is new in that it prioritises the Asia-Pacific region rather than the Commonwealth.

The chapter argues that Global Britain’s relationship with Thailand is broadly the same as it was before the UK left the EU. There is nothing new in UK relations with Thailand within the post-Brexit ‘Global Britain’ concept. The use of Thailand as a case study, therefore, suggests that the UK no longer has global economic or political power, but it does have influence over elites, notably in terms of education, culture and social development. This could be taken to mean that the concept of ‘Global Britain’ is evidence of the continuity of Britain’s decline since the post-war period.

7.1 The UK-Thai current policy practices

This section examines Britain's foreign policy aspirations after the EU referendum in 2016. The literature on Thai-UK relations has highlighted several areas for developing policies and practices. Both states have looked to strengthen their strategic partnership through the UK-Thailand Strategic Dialogue (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2018). The aim of this is to create a high-level mechanism for regular meetings between the two countries on matters of bilateral partnership, and on regional and global issues of mutual interest. The aspects that the dialogue will focus on include improving relations, particularly in international trade, finance and investment, education, science and innovation, security and defence ties, political engagement and consular cooperation. This study's hypothesis is that post-Brexit British foreign policy within the context of the 'Global Britain' narrative is new in that it prioritises the Asia-Pacific region rather than the Commonwealth. To put forward this argument, official government documents and the perceptions of Thai elites and experts have been analysed. There is evidence that the relationship between the UK and ASEAN countries could be developed as a new British strategy after the EU referendum in 2016. The UK government could encourage this strategy through diplomatic defence and security networks, and economic frameworks (UK Foreign and Security Policy Working Group, 2016). According to Storey (2019), the UK government plans to strengthen political and economic relationships with Southeast Asian countries in the post-Brexit period. ASEAN nations have consistently built bilateral commercial relations with the UK, currently totalling £36 billion per year (Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). As a result, the UK intends to boost UK-ASEAN economic development to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2030 (OECD, 2019). In terms of Thai-UK relations, the strategic dialogue report in 2018 concludes that the main direction for developing British and Thai relations is the establishment of regional stability and bilateral free trade with ASEAN countries. Moreover, Thailand has emerged as a regional supply chain management and manufacturing hub in the region, so many foreign companies would find considerable opportunities in Thailand's logistics market (Hong Kong Trade Development Council, 2015). Thus, after leaving the EU, Thailand could potentially be more central to UK trade, investment and military interests in the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asian regions. To support this argument, the UK government's policy in Southeast Asia is to consolidate its existing partnerships and to develop new ones, according to Dominic Raab, the former UK Foreign Secretary, who visited

Thailand to attend the 52nd ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting (AMM) in 2019. This visit was the first overseas trip in his capacity as UK Foreign Secretary, which demonstrates the priority the UK Government attaches to Thailand and ASEAN, as well as being a clear attempt to implement the ‘Global Britain’ concept (Thai Embassy in London, 2020). Moreover, when interviewed in this study, the Thai Ambassador at the Royal Thai Embassy in London affirmed that the UK will develop its influence in ASEAN countries through Thailand as a mainland base in the Southeast Asia region. He stated:

Most recently, the UK has focused on the Southeast Asia region or formerly colonised countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and the ASEAN organisation. This implies that the UK is currently using elements of past British foreign policy... Thailand is one of the most important states in ASEAN; its geography means it is at the heart of ASEAN. We are the centre of connectivity of the mainland in Southeast Asia. Also, we can potentially help to cooperate with other ASEAN countries. Thailand has a developed economy and our politics are advanced in Southeast Asia. (Gov. B)

This meeting reflects the importance of Thailand’s role within the ASEAN framework to the UK government (Royal Thai Embassy London, 2019). The Thai and British governments believe that there are good opportunities for further trade, investment and shared international security in Thailand after Brexit (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, 2018). Interestingly, some interviewees mentioned that, after the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government could be encouraging its role in Southeast Asia because it has familiar relations with former colonial countries, such as Singapore and Malaysia. Thus, the UK is attempting to use its ex-imperial power to try to reassert itself. In this respect, although Thailand never became a formal British colony during the imperial period, the UK government is rapidly seeking new cooperative plans to strengthen Thai-UK relations. This implies that Thai elites could be more receptive to ‘Global Britain’ than countries which directly experienced British colonialism. For example, His Royal Highness the Duke of Gloucester visited Thailand in 2018. This visit demonstrated the continuity of economic links between the UK and Thailand. He visited British firms in Thailand, including the Triumph Motorcycles Factory and the Senior Aircraft Factory, one of Thailand's largest aerospace component manufacturers. In addition, this state visit demonstrates a close relationship between the Thai and British royal families. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn hosted a lunch for the duke (The Royal Family, 2018). This context represents a continuation of the concept of neo-colonialism in Thailand through royal families or local elites. This finding was also reported

by Sasiwuttiwat's (2011). Thailand's development was driven by the resistance of local elites. Specifically, the British have shifted manufacturing centres to Thailand during the Brexit and post-Brexit period. At the same time, the Thai government is welcoming British traders and investors, in order to gain capital investment and modern infrastructure. As Pramuanratkarn (2010) notes, Thailand's economic subordination to colonial power began in the mid-nineteenth century, and the country has continued to reinforce its economic dependency, particularly on industrial capitalist countries, up until now.

Furthermore, at the meeting in June 2018 between Theresa May and Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand, the TH-UK governments agreed on strengthening bilateral relations and strategic partnerships. They would develop economic and regional frameworks and global issues of mutual interest (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2018). Thailand and the UK hope to encourage relations to maintain their benefits in political and economic frameworks in the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. In addition, the director of the Interdisciplinary Department of European Studies mentioned that 'Thailand is the gateway to ASEAN and the UK is the gateway to the EU' (Scholar H). In the same vein, the Director General of the Department of European Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, discussed a new British foreign policy in ASEAN during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods. It would be worked through Thailand as a strategic location in Southeast Asia. He stated that.

The UK is focusing on a dialogue partnership with ASEAN. For instance, the visit of Dominic Raab to Thailand focused on security in ASEAN. In my view, the UK has encouraged Thailand to have the same vision as in the past. However, the government has recently focused on ASEAN, so the UK is continuing to support Thailand because it must keep its strategic location in Southeast Asia... [The] new British foreign policy will encourage ASEAN. (Policymaker D)

Similarly, a political advisor from the British Embassy in Bangkok commented on the new UK strategy in ASEAN. He affirmed that British foreign policy needs a closer relationship with ASEAN in order to open up its dealings with the Southeast Asian region in the post-Brexit period. He mentioned that:

In the Brexit and post-Brexit periods, British foreign policy has to deepen its relations with the ASEAN organisation as a framework for 'opening the globe' in the Southeast

Asian region... [M]ore involvement with ASEAN members in British foreign policy after Brexit could help the UK maintain its global influence. (Policymaker C)

The viewpoints of these interviewees are consistent with the UK's government statement in 2019, which explained the FCO's diplomatic plan after Brexit. It was planned that by the end of 2020, the UK would have 282 posts in 180 countries and territories, as well as membership of ten international organisations (Royal Thai Embassy, 2019). This could be taken to mean that the ASEAN organisation is one of the UK's aspirations for a new role in the Asian region after departing the EU. The British government's desire to strengthen connections with ASEAN nations derives from ASEAN's annual bilateral economic links with the UK, which together total £36 billion. As previously mentioned, the aim of its economic growth strategy is to become the world's fourth-largest economy by 2030 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, 2018). Thailand, as one of the most significant ASEAN nations, could be used by the UK to strengthen its influence with ASEAN after Brexit. This is because ASEAN fits within Thailand's future geostrategic framework, although a deeper rethink of ASEAN architecture is required to face current 'great power' issues, notably the power conflict between the US and China in the Indo-Pacific (Yuenyong and Chaipiboolwong, 2022).

In the same vein, the perspectives of Thai elites reflect current British foreign policy goals in terms of economic and military involvement in the Indo-Pacific region. If the UK's influence in the Asia-Pacific region grows, posing a challenge to China's rise, Thailand will actively promote ASEAN centrality in order to preserve its influence over major powers.

As a result, the UK has recently sought to further develop British values and national interests in Thailand. As Phisanu Suwannachot (2021), Thai Ambassador to the United Kingdom at the Royal Thai Embassy in London, highlighted, the new era of the Thailand-UK strategic partnership has been working within global megatrends, Brexit strategies, the 'Global Britain' project and the 'Integrated Review'. These agreements will support Thai and UK interests in engaging with the Indo-Pacific region. He also affirmed that Thailand's roadmap after the Covid-19 pandemic would strengthen, deepen and encourage UK businesses in many sectors, such as food, healthcare and digital industries (Royal Thai Embassy, London and The Anglo-Thai Society, 2021). Furthermore, Mr. Lever, a Political Counsellor at the British Embassy in Bangkok, indicated that the UK's future priorities would be more focused on the rest of the

the world, and there will be a significant shift in international relations. In terms of Thai-UK ties, the two countries' future relationship will be more engaged in terms of commerce, security, and youth engagement as the UK collaborates with Thailand (Global Relations Division, Mae Fah Luang University, 2018). It could therefore be considered that UK-Thai relations after the EU referendum have developed in several areas. Thailand could be central to UK interests in trade, security, politics and soft power in the Indo-Pacific and Southeast Asian regions. Notably, as a great power, the UK is tending to develop its network of relationships through subordination in Thailand, in order to ensure that the UK can achieve and keep its influence in Thailand and ASEAN countries without the EU.

This study's framework is constructed using key aspects of British foreign policy in Thailand after the EU referendum in 2016. The UK government is attempting to assert the benefits of innovative elements that could be more effective than its role in the EU. Therefore, Thailand has been incorporated into the UK's new pragmatic 'Global Britain' narrative, which includes trade and international investment, education, cultural diplomacy, and development assistance and modern infrastructure. These elements are used to analyse how the origins of foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand are changing as the UK departs the EU within the 'Global Britain' narrative.

7.2 Emergence of the new pragmatic 'Global Britain' following the EU referendum

In relation to the core-periphery dynamics of the world economy, the framework of the UK-Thailand relationship is an outcome of British foreign policy, but Thailand is no longer Britain's periphery. The UK has influenced Thailand over the last four hundred years in terms of business, political power and diplomatic ties (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Thailand, 2017). More recently, the UK established its position as one of the leading investors in Thailand, with UK companies operating across the Thai economy (Thailand Board of Investment, 2021). The UK exports manufactured goods and high-value products, and imports primary products and commodities from Thailand. This chapter follows a key dimension of developmental capitalism, which is the formation of a mutually beneficial relationship among a developing country's government, local elites and multinational corporations, drawing on Evans' dependency approach. This approach indicates that third world countries can achieve development, but that this is 'dependent development' (e.g. Evans, 1987; Keet, 2002; Tapen, 2003; Kvangraven, 2017; Naseemullah, 2022). This thesis explores the views of participants

who have specific knowledge and expertise regarding Thai-UK relations. The interview method can access explicit and implicit information through participants' perspectives on British foreign policy in Thailand. Their expertise, experience, beliefs and knowledge, which underline the interpretive approach of this qualitative research, are used to explore how the 'Global Britain' concept is perceived to have influenced the relationship between the UK and Thailand since the EU referendum in 2016.

7.2.1 Trade and international investment

Although Thailand is the second-largest economy in Southeast Asia, Thai-UK trade relations declined dramatically between 2016 and 2022 (Bangkok Post, 2022). According to statistics from UK trade with Thailand (see Chapter 6), the UK continually reduced its trade with Thailand in terms of imports and exports after the EU referendum in 2016. However, there is evidence to confirm that the two countries want to restart two-way business as soon as is feasible. For example, the establishment of the first Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) in 2022 creates a substantial new possibility for bilateral trade to improve. According to Jurin Laksanawisit, Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce, the two governments agreed to intensify their relationship in six areas, namely, digital, agricultural, food and drink, healthcare, financial services, and trade promotion and investment activities. As a result, the governments resolved to develop action plans to boost two-way commerce to seven billion dollars. Then, the Thai and UK governments agreed to develop an Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP), which focuses on policy cooperation, trade barriers, and business and trade activity, as a first step in laying the foundations for a Thai-UK free trade agreement (FTA) in the future. This point was mentioned by several interviewees. For instance, the Head of Department of International Trade Promotion, Ministry of Commerce, Thailand, mentioned that the two governments are attempting to build commercial cooperation to establish a free trade agreement (FTA) following the UK's departure from the EU. He stated that:

After the UK left the EU, I believe that the UK prioritised Thailand in terms of trade relationships. Most recently, the two nations have formed a working group on trade cooperation to build on the work of the recently concluded Trade Policy Review (TPR). The review focuses on potential prospects for the new UK in commercial relations with Thailand. This would indicate the presence of a free trade agreement

(FTA) between Britain and Thailand. As a result, I agree that the UK's trade policy in the framework of 'Global Britain' will help to remove trade obstacles and develop policy and trade cooperation initiatives in Thailand. (Gov. C).

Similarly, a minister in the Office of Economic and Financial Affairs at the Royal Thai Embassy in London suggested that after the UK referendum in 2016, Thailand and the UK should reinvigorate bilateral trading relations as quickly as possible, particularly by setting up a free trade agreement (FTA). She stated that:

UK-Thailand bilateral trade relations during the Brexit and post-Brexit periods remain unclear. However, I believe that a free trade agreement, or FTA, is essential for increasing business and investment between the United Kingdom and Thailand. Vietnam just decided to make an FTA with the EU. This has a significant impact on Thai economic strength in ASEAN. As a result, the two governments should form FTAs and seek new trading markets as quickly as possible to protect national interests. (Gov. A)

According to these excerpts, the participants expect that after the UK's departure from the EU, economic relations between the UK and Thailand can be more flexible within the 'Global Britain' concept. However, it is difficult to accept the perspective that the UK would have significant economic influence in Thailand in the post-Brexit period, particularly considering the recent sale of British businesses and properties to Thai entrepreneurs. Brian Davidson, a former British Ambassador to Bangkok, points out that the UK used to be the largest European investor in Thailand, with investments worth nine billion pounds in 2017. Thai investors including Sahaviriya Steel Industries, CP Foods and Thai Beverage Public Company have also sought to boost their capital investments in the UK (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2018). Many British brands and products have had manufacturing centres and companies in Thailand, such as Tesco, Boots, BP, Thames Water and Unilever, and for decades, these companies were successful in Thailand and brought prosperity to tens of thousands of Thai employees. In the 1990s, for example, the Tesco brand expanded across Southeast Asia. It held a dominant market position in Thailand, as well as supporting the development potential of a country undergoing rapid urbanisation. In the fiscal year 2019, Tesco had 1,967 shops in Thailand and employed over 60,000 employees, generating combined revenues of £4.9 billion and profits of £286 million, which accounted for almost one-fifth of Tesco's total global profits. However, Tesco decided to sell

its Thai shops, relinquishing two of its last remaining overseas companies. In 2020, the Thai Charoen Pokphand Group (CP) took over the shops from the British retailer Tesco. As a result, around 1,900 Tesco shops have closed in Thailand since 2021. Roberts (2019), an analyst at TCC Global Limited, affirmed that Tesco's commitment to a global footprint has appeared weak, as grocery companies worldwide sold off overseas aspects of their operations. The financial infusion from the sale of its Asian operations would be used to help the company to improve its profitability in the UK, where tough competition and the development of internet shopping meant that restructuring was required (Jolly, 2019). This indicates that the UK's economic domestic and international commerce in Asia has dropped since 2019. Similarly, the Bangkok Embassy was sold in 2019 to a joint venture group led by Hongkong Land, a member of the Jardine Matheson Group, and the Central Group for £420m. The UK's government stated that the money from the sale would be used to renovate other embassies across the world. According to a political advisor to the British Ambassador in Bangkok, moving the British Embassy Bangkok to a new building in the AIA Sathorn Tower in the central business district signals that the UK government intends to construct modern facilities for Thai people to efficiently offer all services. This viewpoint is similar to former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson's statement that the sale was intended to support the modernisation of other embassies across the world. He said:

Britain is a leading player in the global state and I am determined to ensure that our diplomats have all the necessary tools to do their job effectively. This includes working in modern, safe, fit-for-purpose premises not just in Bangkok but around the world (Johnson, 2016).

This decision has been criticised among Thai people, because the sale of the Bangkok embassy indicates that the British Foreign Office is struggling to find resources within the 'Global Britain' project. It may suggest that the UK's budget for its Department for International Development (DFID) is failing since the UK left the EU. According to one of the former students who were awarded the Chevening Scholarship, the selling of the British Embassy in Bangkok could have a detrimental influence on the UK government, notably the decline of Thai-UK relations. She said:

The UK's decision to sell the British Embassy in Bangkok shocked me. This problem can damage Thai-UK relations in the future. The UK government lacks the funds to maintain diplomatic engagement with Thailand. (UK Alumnus C)

In support of this viewpoint, former Foreign Secretary William Hague remarked in 2018 that “It would be an enormous error to pull back our presence when our message is 'Global Britain'.” Similarly, one former Conservative Foreign Office minister stated that this problem reflected the UK's weakness in responding to its global position, as well as the worldwide spread of prosperity (Wintour, 2018). In terms of Thai-UK relations, the sale of British brands and properties to local capitalists in Thailand reflects Thai development, and the changing roles of foreign capital, native competitors and Thai elites (Dixon, 1999). That reflex in bureaucratic authoritarian regimes, which are capitalist governments that protect the interests of the transnational elite, can promote development and capital accumulation to some extent. (Prompanjai, 2019). However, the sale of the Bangkok embassy could be seen as a decline in the British Foreign Office's representation of the UK around the world, and in its diplomacy in the post-Brexit era.

Nevertheless, the UK has plans to support best business practices through the promotion of two-way investments in the private sector (British Embassy Bangkok, 2017). To this end, Thai and UK companies joined together for a meeting of the Thai-UK Business Leadership Council (TUBLC) in 2017 to further strengthen economic relations through cooperation between private enterprises and to provide suggestions to the governments. The council's aim is to improve the business environment and facilitate trade and investment growth for both sides, such as the aviation industry in terms of the 'Thailand 4.0' policy, and a model to promote the high-technology industry (Bonura, 2018; Lhakard, 2020). Interestingly, the council will operate with a private business agenda rather than developing bilateral trade relations between the two governments. According to Mark Garnier, the former UK Prime Minister's Trade Envoy, and Virasakdi Futakul, the Thai Prime Minister's Special Envoy, the response from both countries' business agencies has been extremely positive. They stated:

There is a natural fit between the commercial and economic goals of Thailand and the UK. Thai companies are looking for technology and investment opportunities in areas where the UK offer is truly world-class. UK companies are eager to build new partnerships both in Thailand and with Thai companies in third countries. This underlines why now is the right time to launch this business leadership council...

[F]or our two kingdoms, ‘trade leads the flag’; our economic cooperation precedes and strengthens our diplomatic relations throughout history and we hope that it will continue so as we head into the fifth century of friendship. With the support of the Thailand-UK Business Leadership Council, the value of our trade and investment could be expanded greatly. Thailand pledges its full support to the council.

This statement emphasises the implementation of British government policies in Thailand through liberalisation and capitalist globalisation, and notably through the formation of elite networks. This is consistent with the argument of Bello, Cunningham and Li (1998) that Thailand’s development is dependent on investment decisions made by a small number of leaders who are heavily influenced by internationalised corporations and major capitalist states. Therefore, the study of economic capitalist development within the ‘Global Britain’ concept in Thailand is foreshadowed in the structuralist dependency theorists’ vision of the global economy. These theorists suggest that development is not just about economies, but also about politics. The possibilities of development are identified by the rulings of elites in third world countries. In this respect, Thailand has struggled under an unconsolidated democracy due to disunity among Thai elites, including military, bureaucratic, corporate and political party elites, which have promoted the interests of foreign investors such as foreign capitalists and agencies. This situation favours Thai elites over the interests of the majority of Thai citizens, which has created significant conflict between military and royalist elites and the emerging middle-class forces favouring democratisation in Thailand. It is evident that elite disunity and political instability have impacted Thai development and resulted in a return to authoritarianism, in particular the military dictatorship from 2014 to the present. This argument is consistent with Fernandes’ (1975) view that the dependent bourgeoisie has been forced to revise and redefine the utopian ideologies it had assimilated from the bourgeois-democratic experience of Europe and North America. Instead, it must support the hardening of bourgeoisie domination, and its transfiguration into a specifically authoritarian and totalitarian social force that is ‘bourgeois autocracy’. The consequence of this is that the relationship between the bourgeoisie and democratisation has been inconsistent across the history of democracy (Lertchoosakul, 2021). To interpret this using the ‘dependent development’ approach, these Thai elites support an international division of labour in which the global South produces primary products and imports industrial goods from the North. It is

also possible this will create a class structure in which there is potential for a ‘national industrial bourgeoisie’.

The existing literature indicates that it is difficult to accept traditional dependency theory (Frank, 1975; Santos, 1975), which argues that ‘if you were a poor country and depended on the capitalist West, you could only become poorer’, because Thailand has demonstrated the possibility of dependent development despite its integration into the capitalist Western world. Thailand is still a developing country and relies on foreign investment, but the main problems come from the conflict between elites as a social-political phenomenon. Thai elites strongly support foreign trade and investment to benefit themselves.

This point is linked to the emergence of transnational elites, as the world economy has experienced a sustained period of growth through new integrations and transnationally-oriented elites (Glassman, 2016). Robinson (2010) studied the emergence of transnational elites and global capitalism in the context of development studies. He affirms that globalisation was a new era in the evolution of world capitalism. Transnational capital and integration have rapidly developed to create a new global production and financial system. Thus, the national capitalist classes in third world countries have experienced ongoing integration across borders through emergent transnational elites on an international scale. For the purpose of this thesis, the Thai-UK collaboration could be analysed in terms of the elites’ engagement with the global capitalist economy through the ‘Global Britain’ concept, in order to maintain their own interests within the mutually advantageous framework of ‘dependent development’ (Evans, 1979).

To sum up, the existing research on post-Brexit British policy in Thailand contends that Brexit may have an impact on Thailand's future commercial connections with the UK. In support of this view, Thai experts from financial banks and services, who have studied Thailand's economic ties with the UK, highlighted that Brexit may push Thailand and the EU to renegotiate various trade accords, such as import quotas to the EU. Thailand, for example, sends chicken to the EU within a quota system; therefore, Thailand needs to renegotiate its export quota with the EU on processed chicken. Thailand could also have to negotiate another chicken export arrangement with the UK independently, following the UK's departure from the EU. Furthermore, British demand for Thai exports such as automobiles and parts, as well as processed chicken meat, could decrease (SCB Economic Intelligence Center, 2018). Trading relations between the UK and Thailand are arguably shifting over the

Brexit and post-Brexit periods. Though Thailand reached a new deal with the EU before the UK's formal departure from the EU in 2021, Thailand is still pursuing additional reductions in export duties in separate trade talks with the EU and the UK, given that Thai outbound shipments to the UK account for just 1.5% of overall Thai exports (Siam Commercial Bank, 2018). In terms of free trade agreements (FTAs), Brexit could complicate the Thai-EU free trade discussions but, regardless of the UK's position, Thailand planned to continue to negotiate the Thai-EU free trade agreement following the Thai general election (Department of Trade Negotiations, 2019). However, there are some positive prospects; Brexit may force UK investors to pay more attention to prospective markets beyond the EU border. Direct investment from the UK to Thailand is still minimal, accounting for approximately 3.5% of total foreign direct investment (Siam Commercial Bank, 2018), meaning that the UK is no longer in the lead among European nations' trade ties with Thailand after leaving the EU. It could therefore be considered that the post-Brexit negotiations need particular attention, since the conclusion could shape the UK's future political and economic relationships with the Thai government.

7.2.2 Defence and Security

The UK's security and defence prioritises shifts to the Indo-Pacific region after departing the EU. Thailand is an important Defence partner for the UK in Southeast Asia. The enhanced cooperation between the UK and Thailand is part of the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt outlined in the Integrated Review in 2021. In 2019, the UK government significantly increased its military and nuclear capabilities in order to be perceived as a great global power. For example the UK joined the 'AUKUS' security partnership with the US and Australia to provide Australia with nuclear-powered submarines in the Indo-Pacific region (Kuo, 2021, O'Brien, 2021; Kaidan, 2021; McGleenon, 2021). Arguably, these post-Brexit strategies can be thought of as an effort to re-establish the dominance in economic and military power which Britain enjoyed before the decline of its historic relationships with former colonies, the Anglosphere and the British Commonwealth (Wellings and Mycock, 2019).

Regarding the Thai and UK's relations, the British government continue to build the relationships through commerce, visits, education, and training of officials in each other's military schools (Ministry of Defence, 2022; Royal Thai Embassy, London, 2023). In 2017, the armies of Thailand and the UK launched a joint military exercise 'Panther Gold 2017'. According to H.E. Mr Thani Thongphakdi, Thailand's current Ambassador to the UK, Thai-

UK defence and security relations are intended to connect UK defence cooperation with ASEAN and the South East Asian region. In 2022, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on defence cooperation. In the interview data indicates that the UK's government has a continuation in the 'status quo' simply in Thailand after leaving the EU.

In contrast, the UK arms sales dramatically decrease after the UK's departure. The five largest arms exporters in 2017-2021 were the US, Russia, France, China, and Germany. The UK was the world's seventh largest arms exports in 2017-2021. As the Table 7.1, presents the 10 largest exporters of major arms during 2017-2021. It is evident that the UK lost global military linkages including arms sales, once it is no longer bound by any common EU policies (Pratoomip, 2018)

Table 7.1 The 10 largest exporters of major arms from 2017 to 2021

No	Exporter	Share of global arms exports (%)		Per cent change from 2021-16 to 2017-21
		2017-2021	2012-2016	
1	United States	39	32	14
2	Russia	19	24	-26
3	France	11	6.4	59
4	China	4.6	6.4	-31
5	Germany	4.5	5.4	-19
6	Italy	3.1	2.5	16
7	United Kingdom	2.9	4.7	-41
8	South Korea	2.8	1.0	177
9	Spain	2.5	2.2	10
10	Israel	2.4	2.5	

Source: Trends in International Arms Transfers, 2021 (D. Wezeman, Kuimova & T. Wezeman, 2022)

British deliveries related to a large deal with Saudi Arabia for combat aircraft ended in 2017, leading to a 41 per cent fall in British arms exports between 2012-2016 and 2017-2021 (Wezeman and Kuimova, 2022). In Thailand, the UK and Thailand signed a technology transfer agreement with the British Surface Fleet (BAE Systems Surface Ship) in 2009. This agreement helps to support and work alongside Bangkok Dock throughout the construction of the vessel to transfer design knowledge, technology, and skills (The BAE Systems, 2011). However, in 2019, the UK became a visibly less and less reliable partner in Thailand.

In terms of cooperation in law enforcement and expressed, the agreement on Combating Transnational Crime and Police Cooperation would be signed to provide strong internal law enforcement cooperation in combating organised transnational crime in 2022. Although the UK left the EU in 2020, the British government supports Thailand's rule of law, human rights, and democratic values. In a meeting with Thailand's Prime Minister, Prayut Chan-o-Cha, former UK Prime Minister Theresa May stated that the UK would help the general election in Thailand to produce the required legal enactment (May 2018). Even though Thailand has political instability, the UK government still wants to encourage relations with the Thai government.

7.2.3 Education and cultural diplomacy

The UK has encouraged the spread of its identity, norms and values through British institutions in Thailand. It has developed them through soft power, including culture, foreign aid, a liberal model and democratic political system, and in particular, education. The interview data reveal that British values have been proliferated through the education system as a priority policy in Thailand. For example, an Associate Dean for Graduate Studies and International Affairs, at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, stated that the relationship between the UK and Thailand has focused on education in terms of the higher education system, alumni, scholarships and double degrees. She pointed out that Thai-UK academic collaborations have developed in many aspects:

Most recently, the UK and Thailand relationships have collaborated in the Higher Transnational Education project (TNE), networking university alumni, Thai-Cambridge alumni and the Chevening Scholarship... [Also], the UK is focusing on ASEAN university networks in Malaysia and Singapore. The UK education policy is

the main means of soft diplomacy to maintain their relations... [Moreover], the UK is collaborating with the university in Thailand in terms of double degrees as a way of exercising soft power. (Scholar A)

Moreover, the Dean of the International College in Thailand discussed Thai-UK relations in terms of the exchange programme in her college. She has collaborated with SOAS, University of London since 2016. Also, she is a chair of the Transnational Education 4.0 project, which is a new Thai-UK education collaboration framework established through the British Council in Thailand. She pointed out that,

Thailand and the UK have supported the student exchange programme for a long time. Most recently, the governments have been working through the British Council in Transnational Education 4.0 (TNE 4.0). In my view, the UK is focusing on education as an industrial policy. In particular, my programme has collaborated with the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)... The UK government supports innovation and science in Thailand. Also, it will encourage internships and double degrees. (Scholar B).

These perspectives provide evidence that the UK encourages the use of education systems as a form of soft power in Thailand (Keohane and Nye 1998). It can sustain its influence through Thai-UK academic networks. Moreover, the UK government is expanding its educational systems in other ASEAN countries. The interview data also reveal that the British Council is the main institution used to promote British values and soft power in Thailand. One of the directors of the British Council in Thailand and Southeast Asia claimed that,

The UK supports the education system in Thailand through the British Council. It has been working in English language education, internationalised higher education, research, science and creative economy. The British Council has supported UK-Thai transnational education in terms of double degrees and joint degrees since 2016. We have twenty-one new partnerships.

The British Council has been supporting education, science, research and innovation in Thailand, in particular, setting up the Newton Funding in 2014, which is a partnership scholarship between Thailand and the UK... [The] Thai ministry of education wanted to improve English for staffs that work in British companies in Thailand. Also, the UK wants British universities to branch out and diversify into Thailand. (Policymaker B)

Moreover, one of the experts and researchers at the Southeast Asia Institute in Thailand discussed the UK's role in Thailand. He stated that the UK has promoted its values through foreign aid, the British Council, the Chevening scholarship, the BBC, the Newton Fund and diplomatic networks. The Director of the Interdisciplinary Department of European Studies also affirmed that the UK government has employed soft power in developing countries. The interview data reveal that the UK government has significantly developed British cultural values through British institutions in Thailand, and these policies and institutions have sustained British influence in Thailand as a strategic partnership. Thai-UK relations have developed in the context of the capitalist world system. The UK has historically encouraged a network of economic, trade, financial and soft power relations with other peripheral countries, among which Thailand was part of the UK's periphery. This point is consistent with Bell's (2016) argument that the UK keeps exercising power and influence while promoting national interests through its application of soft power. The UK's soft power is increasingly being exerted through large businesses that promote British economic and political goals through corporate imperialism, rather than through cultural diplomacy. Thus, the relationship between the UK and Thailand is a function of British foreign policy, but now works primarily as a mutual benefit.

The relationship with Thailand serves British interests, which will be of particular importance in the post-Brexit period. It would be good for the UK to negotiate new agreements, especially a free trade deal, with Thailand. At the same time, Thailand can develop its economic system in terms of the 'Thailand 4.0' strategy. In this respect, Thai-UK relations can be viewed as a mutually beneficial relationship within the 'dependent development' framework of governments, elite networks and multinational investors. However, the new British foreign policy in Thailand will be based on the 'Global Britain' project, and the UK government is leaning towards developing countries to find new economic partnerships after leaving the EU. It could therefore be considered that the 'dependent development' relationship between Thailand and the UK is a platform or strategy for developing British

power interests in Thailand in this period. As Prebisch (1950) argues, this kind of unequal exchange causes a flow of interests from peripheral regions to core regions.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the new British foreign policy in Thailand following the EU referendum in 2016. The discussion is based on Thai and British primary and secondary sources, official reports from the UK and Thai governments, ministerial speeches and government analyses of UK foreign policy in Thailand throughout the Brexit and post-Brexit eras. To summarise the views of the study's participants, the 'Global Britain' concept does not appear to be very novel or surprising, but the main issue is that the UK government has not defined what the concept of 'Global Britain' means beyond trade agreements. In Thailand, the concept of 'Global Britain' seems to refer to a continuance of what existed before the UK left the EU. There is nothing new going on in Thai-UK relations. However, the UK is clearly using 'soft power' rhetoric to sustain some degree of British power in Thailand, such as in education, culture and social development issues. Notably, the royal family relations between the two states are still relevant and continue. The children of Thai royalty and upper classes are sent to Britain for their education, which enables them to maintain the status of British expatriates within Thailand throughout their early years. Despite this, the findings indicate that the UK has no actual substantive power; without the EU, the UK has lost political and economic influence. As Pratoomtip (2018) suggests, the UK has also lost its global military links, including arms sales, since it is no longer bound by any common EU policies, and this has led to intra-European competition over arms exports to Thailand. The UK was able to dominate arm sale inside the EU but now is having to compete with the EU. As a result, the UK government is attempting to symbolise its influence through diplomatic initiatives, culture and soft power. In Thailand, 'Global Britain' is not seen to represent any real substantive strength, as in commercial or military power. In this respect, it could be said that 'Global Britain' is failing. It is not doing what the UK government needs it to do, which is to imply a radical shift or change in the terms of its relations with countries such as Thailand. It could therefore be argued that the 'Global Britain' concept is evidence of the continuity of British decline.

Chapter 8

Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings from Chapters 6 and 7 and concludes the main purpose of this thesis, which is to establish the extent to which the origins of foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand are historically located and realised in contemporary manifestations of concepts of informal empire. The findings are laid out according to the principle research questions, which are:

- 1) How global is ‘Global Britain’: what is the shape of the relationship between the UK and Thailand?
- 2) What is new about ‘Global Britain’ in terms of the strength of historical and contemporary connections between the UK and Thailand?

The thesis findings will contribute to a better understanding of how foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand are changing as the UK departs the European Union within the context of the ‘Global Britain’ narrative. The final parts of the chapter reflect on the research methods conducted in the study as well as personal development. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research.

8.1 Discussion of findings

8.1.1 How global is ‘Global Britain’: what is the shape of the relationship between the UK and Thailand?

Based on the rationale of this thesis, it is argued that the UK has continually sought to influence the world, even during its period of membership of the European Union. This research question explores how the concept of ‘Global Britain’ can be used in Thailand to help strengthen Thai-UK relations. The analysis seeks to determine what the term ‘Global Britain’ means in Thailand in both its historical and contemporary contexts. Analysis of the evolution of Thai-UK relations, tracing back to the historical relations between the British Empire and Siam, demonstrates that Britain was engaged in an ‘informal empire’ model of dominance in Siam, involving a situation of economic dependency implemented through subordinate elites after the signing of the ‘Bowring Treaty’ in 1855. Despite being part of

Britain's informal empire, Siam experienced a process of 'dependent development' (Evans, 1979) through a 'triple alliance' of the state, local capitalists and international markets. As a result, Siam established a free-trade economy and modernised its taxation and financial institutions. Being the trading centre of Southeast Asia, the Siamese economy transitioned from subsistence agriculture to international commerce and, notably, became a valuable market for British and European exporters. In other words, Siam was able to undergo capitalist development, but remained dependent on the British Empire. Furthermore, the historical manifestation of the concept of 'Global Britain' emerged during the Siamese modernisation. The country arguably benefited a great deal from this modernisation, but mainly among small groups of elites. To avoid becoming a formal British colony, and to maintain Siamese sovereignty during a period of colonial expansion, the monarchy acknowledged and welcomed the British to modernise traditional Thai values. It could therefore be argued that the transformation of Siam was determined by its transition from a traditional society into a peripheral capitalist state.

The findings also demonstrate that the mutually beneficial relationship between the empire and Thai elites augmented the local elites' incomes in Siam, particularly the establishment of the Royal Forest Department (RFD) in the north of Siam, which helped the monarchy and ruling elites to gain more control over the Shan States. As a result, the historical concept of 'Global Britain' refers to Siam's mutually advantageous relationship with Britain, which depended on elite networks. The British Empire could increase its global domination in Asia, while the Siamese elites could benefit themselves. However, the emergence of anti-colonialism accelerated self-government and independence from the British Empire. By the early 1960s, Britain had lost most of its colonies, and its financial and military strength had been destroyed in the Middle East and African countries (Darwin, 2011; Johnson, 2003). Britain's 'great power' status had diminished and was entering a period of post-imperial crisis. Therefore, Britain had to adapt its domestic and international policies to the decline of its global commitments. The British government thus provided valuable links between the developing and developed states of the world in order to continue its ability to significantly influence key international issues (Gamble, 1985; Johnson, 2003; Harvey, 2011). Notably, the US wanted the UK to join the European Economic Community in 1973 in order to promote its interests. As a result, the UK shifted from being an autonomous superpower to a dependent post-imperial power. The findings also demonstrate that the UK's role in Thailand then had to work within the EU/EEC framework. Clearly, relations between Thailand and the

UK as a member of the European Union were partially intended to contribute to the growth of cooperation with EU laws and regulations. As a result, the UK supported Thailand's role in the international order, encouraging mutual prosperity, progress and regional stability under EU standards, which included free trade agreements, military cooperation, democracy and human rights issues. This implies that the UK attempted to preserve its influence and authority in Thailand through the EU; however, the government was unable to do so, as seen by the reduction in commerce between Thailand and the UK after 1998.

The analysis in Chapter 6 has examined Britain's position following the Integrated Review in 2021, in an effort to explain British foreign policy within the 'Global Britain' context. This analysis has also explored the implementation of British foreign policies and practices following the EU referendum in 2016, including the rationales and constraints from the stakeholders' perspectives. The findings demonstrate that post-Brexit foreign policy in Thailand, in the context of the 'Global Britain' concept, focuses on economic, cultural and social connections that have been developed from their imperial legacy in order to maintain British dominance. The UK government thus continues to operate its trading and social-cultural ties through small groups of elites in Thailand.

The UK government is currently seeking to enhance its influence in Thailand through internal controlling groups that benefit from the Thai-UK relationship. One of the themes to emerge from the interviews is that of 'imperial nostalgia'. Many interviewees affirmed that the notion of an 'informal empire' is still relevant in post-Brexit foreign policy in Thailand, especially with regard to Thai economic and social development. Although the UK government may currently have fewer economic interests in Thailand, it continues to seek stronger commercial ties with the country, and is encouraging further industrialisation through the Thailand 4.0 and EEC projects.

Notably, the UK hopes to support innovation, knowledge and technology in Thailand. However, the UK aims to promote these policies with small elite groups as partnerships, rather than to establish new agreements between the governments. Most interestingly, the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' is now more focused on a soft power strategy. The UK aspires to become a 'soft power superpower' by 2030, indicating that the government is also trying to expand British soft power in the rest of the world. In the case of Thailand, the 'Global Britain' concept has involved the spread of British cultural and social influence through Thai-British institutions and networks. It can be concluded that Thailand is no longer economically

dependent on the UK, but on China, Japan and the US as well. Therefore, the UK government has changed its foreign policy in the context of the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand. The UK is now more focused on social and cultural connections than on military and economic policies. Arguably, the UK now has no global economic influence in Thailand, but it has employed its imperial legacy, through elite networks, to maintain its social, educational and cultural norms, as well as technological development projects. These aspects reflect a continued British dominance in Thailand from the nineteenth century until the present.

To sum up, the findings of this study indicate that, following its departure from the European Union, the UK is attempting to re-establish elements of imperial foreign policy within its post-Brexit policy in Thailand, which links back to the narrative of empire. The British could be repackaging or reconfiguring the notion of an 'informal empire'. Alternatively, it could just indicate that the UK government is looking back to the time before Britain joined the EEC/EU. Nonetheless, the UK is clearly aiming to maintain its influence or power after leaving the EU, and therefore 'Global Britain' can be seen as a 'nostalgic cultural power' operated through Thai-UK elite networks.

8.1.2 What is new about 'Global Britain' in terms of the strength of the connection between the UK and Thailand?

According to the Integrated Review in 2021, the UK government is doing more to adapt to major changes in the world's geopolitical and geo-economic structure, particularly in terms of the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific region. Therefore, the UK aims to cooperate more effectively with the region, especially with like-minded partners. In other words, the Indo-Pacific Region will become increasingly important to British prosperity and security in the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' narrative. Within the 'Global Britain' project, the UK plans to enhance and deepen economic connections with new partners in the Indo-Pacific Region. For example, the UK is seeking to work with regional associations, such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). Additionally, one of the principles of new British foreign policy is identified in the Integrated Review in 2021:

We will pursue deeper engagement in the Indo-Pacific in support of shared prosperity and regional stability, with stronger diplomatic and trading ties. This approach recognises the importance of powers in the region such as China, India and Japan, and also extends to others including South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia,

Thailand, Singapore and the Philippines. We will seek closer relations through existing institutions such as ASEAN and seek accession to the CPTPP. (Integrated Review, vii, p.22)

In order to answer the second research question, and to explain British foreign policy plans in relations to Thailand, it is important to examine Britain's position following the launch of the 'Integrated Review: Global Britain in a Competitive Age' in March 2021. The aim of this analysis is to investigate the extent to which the UK government has developed these policy initiatives in response to China's rise, and to acquire an understanding of the rationales and constraints of implementing these policies from the perspectives of stakeholders in Thailand. As shown in the review of relevant literature in Chapter 2, many historians have argued that as a mainland state in the Southeast Asian region, Siam was a gateway to the South China Sea. Now, Thailand has consolidated its position as the largest trading partner in ASEAN, with many foreign investors. Notably, the new security partnership between Australia, the UK and the US, known as 'AUKUS', has instantly become a matter of interest in the Indo-Pacific region. This implies that 'AUKUS' is likely to further alienate the UK from the EU, which has its own and more autonomous Indo-Pacific strategy.

In relation to Thailand as a case study, Thailand is also located in the Indo-Pacific region, where the UK government's post-Brexit foreign policy is seeking to encourage trade and investment, development aid, and wider security and defence relationships. Thai Ambassador, Pisanu Suvanajata, has affirmed that through post-Brexit 'Global Britain', the UK and Thailand will develop a deeper strategic partnership, in order to reinforce the potential for engaging the Indo-Pacific region. For example, the Thai-UK Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) have been created to encourage UK businesses to invest in Thailand's development. Moreover, one of the themes raised by interviewees was that the UK would be interested in engaging with Thailand because it has a strategic location in the Indo-Pacific region, and is therefore a gateway to ASEAN. A British political counsellor pointed out that:

Post-Brexit 'Global Britain' needs to engage with ASEAN through Thailand. This would help the UK to open new trading markets and gain more global influence in the Southeast Asian region... ASEAN is a strong global dynamic for new British foreign policy. (Policymaker II)

In sum, the new British strategy in the Indo-Pacific region could be to deepen its influence in Thailand, through trade, soft power and foreign aid, as a way of engaging with ASEAN, rather than focusing only on the Thai government as in the informal empire phase. The UK government is promoting the 'Global Britain' project to enhance international commerce, investment and soft power (Integrated Review, 2021). All of the data above demonstrate that the UK and Thailand are maintaining their foreign policy relations within the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept, but that these relations emphasise cultural and social dimensions over commercial ties. This thesis contends that this is due to Britain's relatively small amount of trade and investment in Thailand as compared to those of China, the United States and European countries. As a result, the British government needs its post-Brexit foreign policy in Thailand to highlight cultural and social elements such as education, development aid and new knowledge and technology. Therefore, it can be said that there is nothing new going on in Thai-UK relations within the post-Brexit 'Global Britain' concept. The interviewees in this study did not think of 'Global Britain' as something new or surprising. Furthermore, they viewed 'Global Britain' in the context of Thailand as being more about social and cultural connections than military or economic ties.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that Thailand is a useful case study to highlight the concept of an 'informal empire' in different forms. It is clear that British global influence has changed, and that Thailand is now less important to Britain as a trade centre. In contrast, British soft power is still relevant, and the UK government continues to exercise its soft power through Thai-UK institutions and networks which have been established since the imperial period.

8.2 Summary of research findings

Based on the analysis from Chapters 6 and 7, it is evident that foreign policy relations between the UK and Thailand have continually operated through elite networks on the basis of 'dependent development'. The results demonstrate that the UK has always sought global influence, even during its period of membership of the European Union. The analysis of the evolution of Thai-UK relations, tracing back to the historical relations between the British Empire and Siam, demonstrates that British global dominance was engaged in an 'informal empire' model in Siam. Economic dependency was achieved through subordinate elites after the signing of the 'Bowring Treaty' in 1855. Focusing on the 'Global Britain' narrative, the 'global' approach has been utilised in this study as an instrument to gain an understanding of British foreign policy in Thailand through its trading ties and the formation of elite networks

to expand British influence. To achieve its purpose of economic dominance, Britain opened up international markets and gained extraterritorial rights for British subjects in Thailand. Notably, Britain supported the process of Siamese modernisation by using British culture, norms and values as the key model for Thai development. Furthermore, Britain's global power in Thailand focused mainly on economic dominance with local elites as the facilitators. In other words, the 'Global Britain' narrative was framed to increase British influence in Thailand, while the assisting Thai elites could gain benefits and authority in the process of Thai development during the imperial period, which could be seen as a 'mutually beneficial relationship'.

From the perspectives of the study's participants, the 'global approach' in Britain's new foreign policy has maintained the historical links between the UK and Thailand in terms of trade, international investment, financial services and cultural power, in line with elite partnerships and alliances. Following its departure from the EU, the UK government is continuing to build economic and cultural cooperation in order to strengthen bilateral ties and develop a strategic partnership with Thailand. In accordance with the new vision of post-Brexit 'Global Britain', the UK government has attempted to claim some radical and possibly more successful developments than when the UK was a member of the EU, but there is little evidence of this so far. Many of the participants, for example, emphasised that the 'Global Britain' notion appears to operate within the same framework as usual. This is a broad sense of continuity from before the UK left the EU. As a result, it seems that 'Global Britain' is failing. It is not consistent with the government's ambition for a radical shift in relations with Thailand and other countries in the Asia-Pacific region. Furthermore, the concept of 'Global Britain' appears to be just a continuation of the concept of an 'informal empire', which is arguably the same approach the UK government has always wanted to adopt but could not achieve inside the EU, such as global commerce and security. Therefore, the notion of 'Global Britain' is shaped by informal imperial thinking. However, as indicated above, there is nothing new going on in Thai-UK relations, and the participants did not see 'Global Britain' as something new or surprising. The UK government is yet to define the concept and indicate how the 'Global Britain' notion extends beyond trade agreements.

Despite this, Thai and British elite networks have been employed to achieve 'Global Britain's' goals. The findings suggest that the 'Global Britain' concept can be used in Thailand to strengthen Thai and British relations through Western standards of culture, and social dependence. It is evident that in the period of the British Empire, an earlier version of

'Global Britain' was used in the process of Siamese modernisation. In that case, the Siamese elites enabled Britain to gain advantages in Siam in order to gain benefits themselves. Then, after WWII, when Britain collapsed and lost its colonies, becoming a member of the EEC/EU assisted the UK in maintaining global power. During the period of EU membership, Britain sought global influence in Thailand through the EU's political-economic rules and regulations, but in terms of bilateral relations, 'Global Britain' operated through network collaborations with the royal family, nobles and ruling elites.

After the EU referendum in 2016, the UK government emphasised a soft power rhetoric in order to maintain some degree of control. However, the strategy does not demonstrate any true substantive influence, such as trade or military hegemony, in the UK's global connections. The UK arguably lost its global influence after departing the EU. At the same time, the UK government does employ influence through its diplomatic initiatives, culture and soft power, such as the UK government's response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and its role in the G20 Summit and COP26.

In the same vein, the 'Global Britain' project in Thailand aims to increase trade relations by establishing new technology and bringing new knowledge to Thailand's development. Elite networks are still the key mechanism to dominance in Thailand. It is evident that the 'Global Britain' narrative in Thailand means cementing elite networks that have developed over the last four-hundred years as mutually beneficial relationships. These perspectives have dominated the 'Global Britain' concept, which focuses on the legacy of British imperialism being both historically rooted and currently relevant in Thailand. The result of these partnerships is described by Evans (1979) as 'dependent development' within neo-colonialism. These dynamics were characteristic of semi-peripheral nations that still had relations with dominant countries but were able to pursue and accomplish intensive industrial development through local elites. The elite partnerships were based on exclusionary politics that were in conflict with democracy and the active engagement of labour, but they did provide a way out of the early 'import substitution industrialisation' (ISI) trap of lesser value-added output. In sum, the relationship between the UK and Thailand through the lens of the 'Global Britain' narrative relies on mutually beneficial relationships among elites. The UK seeks global influence within its foreign policy, whereas the Thai elites seek to gain benefits for themselves. Notably these elites wish to maintain their image, within a 'regime of image', in order to present themselves as modern men, while at the same time the majority of Thai citizens remain unsophisticated. This is consistent with Tapen (2003)'s thesis that Thailand

has 'dependency syndrome', meaning a dependency on industrialisation and on developed states in the rest of the world.

In terms of the current situation, there is evidence that trading relations between the UK and Thailand have decreased since Brexit. The UK has lost trade power in Thailand, which contradicts the expectation of Thai commercial expert Supaawadee Yamgamol that Brexit would probably provide Thailand with a better opportunity to negotiate a free trade agreement with the UK without having to deal with the EU (National News Bureau of Thailand, 2018). Furthermore, there is an extent to which the focus of the idea of 'Global Britain' has evolved or changed since the interviews for this study were conducted. The UK government, led by Rishi Sunak, has clearly de-emphasized the resonance of 'Global Britain', both as a term to describe foreign policy in the aftermath of Brexit and to explain the so-called 'Indo-Pacific' tilt. Indeed, the new 'Integrated Review Refresh 2023' includes no clear reference to 'Global Britain'. This move reflects rising worries about the Ukraine war and European defence, and is driven by actual politics rather than the ideological narratives that drove Brexit. The shift could reflect the lack of success of the 'Global Britain' narrative and policy framework, but also the shifting attitude of the UK population to Brexit. It is noteworthy that the Labour party has begun to develop their own counter-narrative to 'Global Britain', naming this 'British Reconnection'. In short, the 'Global Britain' notion represents a strategy for addressing British problems through political discourse. According to some, the concept of 'Global Britain' represents the continuation of British decline.

8.3 Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study is the consideration of power relations in elite interviews. The difference between elite interviewees and other types of interviewees is based on insufficient and extensively criticised concepts of power (Smith, 2006; Wang and VanderWeele, 2011; Lui, 2018). Moreover, there are demographic factors such as gender and culture that can influence elite interviews procedure (Welch, 2012; Schofield, 2022). In this study, the limitations of the study are related to Thai values in terms of the role of gender in the interviews. Thailand has a very patriarchal and hierarchical system. Women and the lower levels of society are subservient, and younger people must pay respect to their elders. In this respect, I followed Thai values and always addressed the interviewees by the title of the position they held, such as president or chair. Even during phone calls and in letters, I was careful to respect their status and position. Additionally, during the interviews, I was

sometimes subordinated to the position of passive listener recording information, rather than engaging in a dialogue. However, after the interviews, some of the participants gave me some documents relating to the questions. These documents provided important background information on the very subjects I was trying to explore. Therefore, the interviews taught me patience and skill in relating to senior directors who use a traditional, hierarchical style of communication.

Notably, the research's limitations also include the lack of historical materials on Thai-UK relations within the document analysis. I attempted to access numerous internet resources in order to get the context of Thai-UK evolution since the nineteenth century. It was difficult to get background regarding the kings and royalty who had worked or had connections with the British Empire. It was because certain topics were sensitive and could not be criticised in terms of the king's role in Thailand. Furthermore, several publications that had been translated into English could not be downloaded as whole sheets of paper. It was due to a lack of published concerns or because they were out of date. The final limitation is some interviewees lacked understanding of the meaning of 'Global Britain'. This could have had some impact on the interpretation of my data. Some senior officials declined the invitation to participate in my interview. This appeared to be either because they had no relevant knowledge to share, or because they considered it a sensitive time because of the UK leaving the EU.

The strengths of this study are its access to research participants who represent British and Thai elites and experts, and my ability to conduct interviews with them in person. Due to a scarcity of literature on Thai-UK ties, semi-structured elite interviews could be helpful in gaining specific historical and current relationships between the two countries. In this case, I interviewed many senior government directors, senior lecturers and researchers who have significant knowledge regarding Thai-UK relations. These people are among the Thai elite and are used to directing large organisations involving thousands of people. Such elites are often difficult to access in comparison with other social groups (Cochrane, 1998; Desmond, cited in Lui, 2018). Nevertheless, interviewing individuals who have senior positions presents methodological challenges for the less experienced researcher because of imbalances of power that can exist between the interviewee and interviewer. In my case, I had no prior experience in conducting such interviews; however, before becoming a PhD candidate, I was a lecturer at a Thai university for four years. Thus, I started by interviewing two senior lecturers whom I already knew and was familiar with in the higher education system, in the

hope that this would improve my elite interviewing techniques. Both persons provided useful suggestions on my interviewing techniques, and helped me to refine the interview questions to be more specific and relevant. In addition, these interviewees have a strong network of contacts with Thai-UK expertise, so a good rapport was established with one particular participant regarding snowball sampling techniques during the interviews. Therefore, I asked them to suggest or identify specialists and experts with significant knowledge regarding Thai-UK relations.

In terms of senior government directors and officials, such as ambassadors and politicians, I found that most of them were willing to share their opinions and discuss the research topic. I organised my research questions in relation to the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand. These questions could encourage the interviewees to see themselves as problem solvers or policymakers. In this way, all the interview questions allowed problems to be built into the interview for the participants to discuss and give suggestions. Different interviewees thus often answered the same questions from different perspectives, which helped me to recognise the diversity of these senior positions and inspired me to listen to their differing ideas. Although all participants had expertise in Thai-UK ties,

Surprisingly, more than 90% of the participants were happy about being recorded, and several revealed that they used recorded interviews in their daily work. This is because many elite professionals are familiar with journalistic rules for the use of information gathered in interview settings. As a lecturer working at a Thai university, I was able to easily gain access to all prospective participants who worked in senior positions in Thai government bureaux and universities, or who were alumni. This implies that such professionals seek to establish networks of relations to gain assistance, whilst also recognising the possibility of future obligations. In this case, my work experience helped me access the interviewees because, to some extent, they would perceive me as having a connection or shared network base with them. Some of the interviewees personally introduced me to their colleagues who were senior directors in other departments, and asked me to have lunch after finishing the interviews. Moreover, although I needed to travel to the city centre in Bangkok, Thailand, I discovered that all the journeys were valuable in enabling me to visit large organisations and have face-to-face interviews with senior directors and professors. The visits also allowed me to survey several Thai-UK organisations and universities which collaborate with the British government. In conducting the face-to-face interviews, I found that this data collection method allowed me to collect rich information from elites and experts who can exert

influence through social networks, social capital and strategic positions within social structures (Harvey, 2011).

8.4 Recommendations for Future Research

An interesting finding was that participants expressed that they gain much of their understanding of the 'Global Britain' concept in Thailand from the legacy of empire, particularly trade, culture, and elite networks. These had influences on contemporary and modern British foreign policy in Thailand. From a review of literature, there appears to be limited research on the way British foreign policy is understood to inform by formal empire as a legacy in former colonies. Further research could employ the legacy of informal empire to understand contemporary policy, not just formal empire. It can be developed to explore British foreign policy to other countries after the UK's departure the EU. Notably, numerous countries are actively debating national identities, sovereignty, and international relations. Surprisingly, the concept of 'informal empire' and exploitation on the periphery is rarely discussed. These discussions or future research could utilise the concept of an 'informal empire' to examine the link between core and periphery governments through neo-colonialism.

Lastly, future studies could want to focus on Thai democracy and local elites who influence Thailand's modern development. This will be a qualitative investigation employing constructivist methodology - a social analysis technique that focuses on the role of human awareness in social existence. Interview questions could delve into how Thai citizens and local and foreign elites can be involved in Thailand's growth in order to change Thailand from authoritarian democracy to a democratic state.

8.5 Contribution to Knowledge

This study has made a significant contribution to the existing literature by applying dependence theory to cultural and social dependence in the Third World countries. This could be used to demonstrate how dependency theory and soft power are related to the connection between dominant and dependent countries. Furthermore, by demonstrating the legacy of the informal imperial approach as a model for Anglo-Thai foreign policy relationships, these findings have the potential to contribute to knowledge. In other words, the distinctive addition to knowledge is about the legacy of the empire, which has only been studied by a few academics, particularly in Thailand. As a result, there is an opportunity for further

research and literature on Thai-UK ties. This case study can be utilised to examine the UK's post-Brexit relationship with other countries, notably developing nations such as India, China, and ASEAN countries. It also demonstrates that I am capable of navigating the political realm to the cultural dimension in order to obtain interesting findings, which is also a methodological advantage as well.

8.6 Conclusion

This thesis argues that, regardless of whether they have achieved independence, or whether they experienced formal or informal rule, the influences of colonialism and its agents are still very much present in the lives of most former colonies as a neo-colonial concept. The dominant countries imposed their economic dominance and cultural power, excluding political issues. This study has contributed to existing literature in the application of dependency theory to cultural and social dependency in the third-world countries. In this example, this contribution identifies to characteristics of cultural and social dependence in Thailand as a result of British 'soft power' through elite networks. This study was able to conclude that amongst the participants, the relationship between the UK and Thailand is a 'mutually advantageous' one within the 'dependent development' context. In particular, the dominant Thai elites, who are now leaders in an authoritarian state, support foreign investment to increase free trade agreements and industrialisation, as in the Thailand 4.0 industrial policy and EEC. Most recently, the government and some local bourgeoisie, such as the Charoen Pokphand Group, have announced a plan to open up more Thai property investment options for foreigners and thus increase land tax revenue (Bangkok Post, 2022). In other words, the Thai cabinet has approved a draft ministerial regulation that, for the first time, allows foreigners to purchase land in Thailand as individuals, giving them direct land ownership (Jihong, 2023). This could make it impossible for Thailand to become an independent developed country, even if it continues to adopt long-term policies and strategies such as the National Strategy (2018-2037) and the National Economic and Social Development Plan (2023-2027) to develop the country's role in global capitalism.

This study has highlighted the Thai government should strengthen its national economy by reducing dependence on outside sources and aim at a self-sufficient economy. However, in reality, it would be hard to unpack the longstanding disunity between elites in Thailand in order to become a democratic state. It could be considered that the Thai dominant elites are a key mechanism to support and allow the settlement of multinationals in Thailand. That is,

arguably, why Britain and Thailand have maintained their relations through elite networks, even during decolonisation and until now. From the use of Thailand as a case study, it is evident that the UK has continually sought to maintain its global influence through elite networks who determine economic, political and social development policies. Although the UK no longer has economic influence, it still has elite networks, as a legacy of Empire, to preserve British influence in Thailand in terms of social, educational and cultural norms. These elites maintain Thailand's dependency on the UK. It could be said that Thailand represents the notion of an 'informal empire 2.0' in a different form. It is not economically dependent in the sense of an unequal relationship; however, it is socially dependent on Britain's elite culture, which in some ways is manifested in British foreign policy. It is interesting that when the UK government promotes 'Global Britain' in the context of Thailand, the focus is on social and cultural dependency, rather than military or economic power. This implies that the concept of 'Global Britain' is a 'development discourse' in Thailand, which is linked to the aspiration in the 'Integrated Review' that the UK will become a 'soft power superpower' by 2030. There is a potential for these findings to contribute to knowledge and practice by demonstrating the legacy of the informal imperial approach as a model for Anglo-Thai foreign policy relationships. The incorporation of informal imperial legacy and dependent development into the post-Brexit concept of 'Global Britain' will help Thai and British policymakers and stakeholders, as well as those from other developing nations, in their study and understanding of contemporary and modern British policy.

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APPENDIX A: Interview Questions

Interview topic guideline from Semi-Structured Interview

Research Questions: The central research questions are:

1. How global is ‘Global Britain’? what is the shape of the relationship between the UK and Thailand.

2. What is new about ‘Global Britain’ in terms of strength of connection between the UK and Thailand?

This study seeks to answer four principle questions:

1. What is the value of ‘Global Britain’ for Thailand? / How can Thailand benefit from the concept of ‘Global Britain’?
2. What is the different relationship between the UK and Thailand in terms of ‘Global Britain’ which can compare with the previous relationship? / Do you think that the relationship between the UK and Thailand has changed in the Brexit period in the context of ‘Global Britain’?
3. How has the relationship between the UK and countries in the Indo-Pacific region, particularly Southeast Asian countries changed? / Or do you think it has changed?
 - 3.1 What does it mean in terms of TH-UK relations?
4. How does ‘The Rise of China’ influence the British foreign policy in Thailand?
5. Do you have any other thoughts about these issues?

In case you have any concerns about the research, please feel free to contact my supervisor directly through the details; Dr Andy Mycock at a.j.mycock@hud.ac.uk or mobile at +44 (0)1484472816

Thank you

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APPENDIX B: List of Anonymous Names

Table B1: List of anonymous names

No.	Types of specialists/expertise	Position of interviewees	Name of interviewee
1.	Politics, Security and Defense, Public Policy	1.1 Ambassadors 1.2 Directors 1.3 Politician	Gov A, B Gov C, D Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva
2.	Economics, Business, Investment	2.1 Director 2.2 Chairman	Gov E, F Mr. Chris Thatcher
3.	Cultural and Social development issues	3.1 Director 3.2 Newspaper Editors and Journalists	Mr. Andrew Glass Policymaker B, C Journalist A
4.	Research and Education	4.1 President, Manager 4.2 Alumni 4.3 Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Researchers	Dr. Kanate Wangpaichitr, Stakeholder A Alumnus A, B, C, D, E,F, G Scholar A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I
5.	Technology and Digital Contents	5.1 President and Vice-Presidents 5.2 Director	Mr. Olarn Weranond, Policymaker B,C Gov G
Total numbers of participants			34

APPENDIX C: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM

Title of Research Project:

Historical and contemporary manifestation of 'Global Britain' concept: A case study of Thailand

It is important that you read, understand and sign the consent form. There is no obligation to participate in this study, if you require any further details please contact your researcher.

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this study as outlined in the information sheet version 1, dated 04/06/2019.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without any adverse consequences or penalty.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that no person other than the researchers and facilitators will have access to the information provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that this project has been reviewed by, and received ethics application through the University of Huddersfield University in School of Human and Health Sciences; School Research Ethics Panel (SREP).	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that the information collected will be in kept secure conditions for a period of PhD research at the University of Huddersfield. Also, all the data will be password protected for 10 years after submission and then destroyed.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how this research will be written up and published.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how to raise a concern or make a complaint.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I consent to being audio recorded.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand how audio recording will be used in research outputs.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that my full name will be used in the writing up of the research including possible publication.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understand that if I do not agree to my name being used I will remain anonymous in the writing up of the research including possible publication. I understand that readers may be able to	<input type="checkbox"/>

attribute comments to me.	
I would like to receive a copy of the transcript which I will be able to amend.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I agree to take part in the study	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you are satisfied that you understand the information and are happy to take part in this research, please put a tick in the box aligned to each sentence and print and sign below

<p>Signature of Participant:</p> <hr/> <p>Print:</p> <hr/> <p>Date:</p> <hr/>	<p>Signature of Researcher:</p> <hr/> <p>Print:</p> <p>Arunrat Jinda</p> <hr/> <p>Date:</p> <hr/>
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(one copy to be retained by Participant / one copy to be retained by Researcher)