A LESSON LEARNED FROM PIONEER OF GASTRODIPLOMACY: STRATEGIES OF UTILIZING NATION BRAND BY THE COUNTRY OF WHITE ELEPHANTS THROUGH THE GLOBAL THAI CAMPAIGN

Michelle[1]
International Relations Study Program[1]
Faculty of Humanities, President University[1]
tsmearetha@gmail.com

Riski M. Baskoro[2]
International Relations Study Program[2]
Faculty of Humanities, President University[2]
riskibaskoro@president.ac.id

Abstrak

Gastrodiplomasi adalah diplomasi budaya yang menggunakan makanan sebagai sarana untuk meningkatkan kesadaran terhadap merek sebuah negara. Gastrodiplomasi merupakan alat untuk menciptakan pemahaman lintas budaya dengan harapan dapat meningkatkan interaksi dan kerjasama secara internasional. Thailand merupakan negara pertama yang memahami tentang bagaimana menggunakan gastrodiplomasi dan kepentingannya. Pada tahun 2002, sebagai bentuk gastrodiplomasi, pemerintah Thailand meluncurkan program kampanye yang dikenal dengan 'Global Thai Campaign.' Kampanye ini merupakan salah satu strategi pemerintah Thailand untuk mengubah image negaranya, hal itu karena citra Thailand yang terkenal mempromosikan pekerja seks sebagai wisata di negaranya. Selain itu, kampanye ini bertujuan untuk meningkatkan jumlah restoran Thailand di seluruh dunia serta mengubah pandangan buruk masyarakat internasional terhadap Thailand. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan berbagai macam teknik berdasarkan data dari beberapa dokumen dan penulis. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk membuktikan adanya upaya national branding oleh pemerintah Thailand melalui praktik gastrodiplomasi sejak tahun 2002 dan menjadi topik utama di dunia internasional sehingga negara-negara lain dapat mengikuti cara yang telah dilakukan Thailand. Tidak hanya itu, penelitian ini juga akan melihat bagaimana gastrodiplomasi dapat berdampak pada sektor lain di beberapa negara terutama Thailand. Teori yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan teori gastrodiplomasi dan konsep nation brand. Hasil dari penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa melalui program gastrodiplomacy, pemerintah Thailand dapat menyebarkan restoran-restoran Thailand di berbagai negara dimana secara langsung mempromosikan makanan khas Thailand. Berdasarkan data yang di dapat, kampanye gastrodiplomacy Thailand memiliki pengaruh yang besar terhadap negara lain dalam hal kuliner serta terhadap Thailand sendiri, salah satunya adalah jumlah kunjungan wisatawan asing di Thailand meningkat dengan drastis.

Kata kunci: *Thailand, Gastrodiplomasi, Global Thai Campaign, Merek Bangsa*

Abstract

Gastrodiplomacy is cultural diplomacy that uses food as a means to increase brand awareness of a country. Gastrodiplomacy is a tool to create cross-cultural understanding with the hope of increasing international interaction and cooperation. Thailand is the first country to understand how to use gastrodiplomacy and its importance. In 2002, as a form of gastrodiplomacy, the Thai government launched a campaign program known as the 'Global Thai Campaign.' This campaign is one of the Thai government's strategies to change the country's image, this is because Thailand's image is famous for promoting sex workers as tourism in their country. In addition, the campaign aims to increase the number of Thai restaurants worldwide as well as to change the negative perspective of the international community towards Thailand. This study uses qualitative methods with various techniques based on data from several documents and authors. The purpose of this research is to prove the existence of a national rebranding effort by the Thai government through the practice of gastrodiplomacy which since 2002 has become a major topic in the international community so that other countries can follow the way that has been done by Thailand. Not only that, this study will also look at how gastrodiplomacy can have an impact on other sectors in several countries, especially Thailand. The theory used in this study uses the theory of gastrodiplomacy and the concept of the nation's brand. The results of this study prove that through the gastrodiplomacy program, the Thai government can spread Thai restaurants in various countries which directly promote Thai food. Based on the data obtained, the Thai gastrodiplomacy campaign has a great influence on other countries in terms of cuisine and on Thailand itself where one of them being the number of foreign tourist visits in Thailand has increased drastically.

Keywords: Thailand, Gastrodiplomacy, Global Thai Campaign, Nation branding

1. Introduction: From Sex Tourism to Global Thai Campaign

Nowadays, every state has tried to use the new modern method of diplomacy through the culinary sector and use food as their instrument called gastrodiplomacy that has existed since 2002. Paul Rockower as an international consultant that helps a country in making an effective culinary brand in his book stated that gastrodiplomacy is "the best way to win and mind is through the stomach" According to Rockower (2011), the formal use of gastrodiplomacy has become an official government program to introduce country-specific food as a goal of a country's interest through diplomacy. Therefore, gastrodiplomacy is categorized as soft power diplomacy and becomes an instrument to transform culture as a new power by putting aside military power. Gastrodiplomacy can be a new way of communication for countries to use food

as an element to promote their food at the international level. Since the emergence of gastrodiplomacy, food has become something that has an important role in improving relations between all countries and food can also help increase the number of foreign tourists who come to the country which will be explained later.

Thailand was one of the first countries to use gastrodiplomacy in 2002 to achieve its diplomatic goals. At first, Thailand's diplomacy in promoting its cuisine around the world began in early 2001 where the government of Thailand tries to brand its country as the "Kitchen of the World" and "The Food Basket of Asia" (Zhang, 2015). Then by successfully promoting its cuisine to the world, one of many prominent magazines, The Economist, introduce the term gastrodiplomacy in its article in 2002 by using Thailand's effort as an example promoting its cuisine around the world especially its promotion in the United States where Thai restaurants has grown from 500 in 1990 to more than 2000 in 2002 (The Economist, 2002). The term gastrodiplomacy then becomes a new practice in diplomatic relations by countries around the world, wherein this case by using food as the instrument of diplomacy. Many countries following the successful campaign by the Thai government, implement gastrodiplomacy as part of their national interest to promote their food around the world, those countries are Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Peru. In a very first place, the ultimate goal of Thai government to implement gastrodiplomacy is to change the image of tourism in Thailand into quality tourism because there are still some unscrupulous tourism promotions such as sex workers. Image alteration of Thailand tourism was supported by the Minister of Tourism of Thailand, Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul in order to achieve quality tourism in a country of white elephants (Tanakasempipat, 2016).

In order to understand the rise of Gastro diplomacy in Thailand, knowing genealogy of stereotype about Thai image far before government launch Global Thai Campaign is tremendously important. First, Thailand is considered sex tourism because there are 123,530 sex workers in Thailand, it makes Thailand become a country that is famous for its sex tour, and invites many people from other countries to come to Thailand to do it (CNN Indonesia, 2018). Thailand's sex tourism has also become a source of state income, with the Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) stating that the country received over 14 million international visitors in 2007 and earned an estimated 16 million USD (Hospitality & Tourism Complete database, 2007). The sex industry's growth in Thailand, however, has had negative consequences, such as the spread of HIV/AIDS among sex workers and their clients. Cheng (2010) in his research about sex tourism and its impact on Thailand found that in Thailand, there were estimated to be 26,114 HIV/AIDS infected people in 2000 (Cheng, 2010). According to data from an estimated 125,530 sex workers in Thailand in 2009, HIV/AIDS was spread at a rate of 12% for Male Sex Workers (MSW) and only 3% for Female Sex Workers (FSW) (Ibid, p. 103). According to other data, 12% of female sex workers and their clients in Thailand are infected with HIV/AIDS. Not only has HIV/AIDS spread to sex workers and clients, but it has also spread

to Bangkok, showing that up to 20% of the population of the Thai capital city is due to sex workers who travel about (Ibid). The increasing number of HIV/AIDS on Thailand's sex workers can give a negative impact on the welfare of the people as well as international tourists, not to mention that most of these sex workers travel abroad and around the neighboring countries of Thailand. This could affect not only the people of Thailand but also Thailand's relationship with its neighboring country. Not to mention that the international community acknowledges that sex tourism in Thailand has become their main attraction as it affects the country's national income. Therefore, the urgency of solving this problem becomes the main goal for Thailand to change its image from sex tourism to a better tourism agenda. The decision to shift Thailand's tourism appeal away from sex tourism was also supported by Thailand's Minister of Tourism, Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, who believes that the sex industry is not Thailand's main tourist attraction, but the country's beaches and temples. Wattanavrangkul also stated that she wanted the sex industry to disappear (Saigoneer, 2016). That is why the use of gastrodiplomacy by Thailand does not escape the problem of sex tourism which becomes a negative image for this country in the international community. Thus, Thailand's effort in handling this issue is by creating a campaign to promote Thai food and restaurant around the world and shift their negative image of sex tourism into quality food tourism through its programs like the Kitchen of the World. This study will discuss the practice of gastrodiplomacy by Thailand because of their efforts in promoting its restaurant which becomes its nation branding as well as a pioneer for other countries to follow and become a lesson to learn in the practice of gastrodiplomacy.

To show the world that Thailand is against sex tourism, the country has prepared several strategies, one of which is by utilizing Thai food. This kind of national strategy is also known as gastrodiplomacy which is a way for a country to conduct diplomacy by using food as its main instrument. Therefore, Thailand tried to make a program using gastrodiplomacy to rebrand their image in the international community called Global Thai Campaign in 2002. This program has a goal to increase the number of Thai restaurants and also to promote Thai food in other countries. To succeed in this campaign, the Thailand government also aims to facilitate Thai restaurants that open in other countries to import Thai food with easy access. They will help them hire a chef that is reliable and sometimes can give other benefits such as a soft loan for a new restaurant. That is all the way Thailand increases the number of Thai restaurants and they are so open for every person who wants to take the opportunity to open a Thai restaurant and support Thailand's gastrodiplomacy. By launching the Global Thai Campaign as a means to rebrand the country's image, Thailand also created a program under this campaign known as the Kitchen of the World program which aims to specifically promote Thai food and spread Thai restaurants around the world which later will be explained more in the next part. As already mentioned before, the goal of this program is to spread the influence of Thai food around the world, so Thai food can go international and

make people curious to come to Thailand to directly taste the food. Because Thailand's tourism also has a special character it can be said that Thailand has a combination of natural, historical, and modern tourism. Therefore, the culinary existence is not only a complementary factor for Thailand, but its existence has become part of their national brand because some of the food in Thailand is hardly owned. Many people are curious about Thai food because in Thailand they have so many kinds of food that are very original and have a unique taste. This can become one of many reasons that make the number of tourists in Thailand increase from time to time. On the other hand, one of the many Thai tourism programs, the Global Thai Campaign also contributes to increasing foreign tourists to Thailand, they can have an opportunity in economic sectors because the number of foreign tourists in Thailand is increasing every year (Vanhaleweyk, 2018).

This study will provide a comprehensive picture of the Thai government's efforts in practicing its gastrodiplomacy. Based on the statement above, the author makes a research question, how is the practice of Thai gastrodiplomacy in its efforts to create a nation brand. This research will use the qualitative method to analyze the topic of this research methodology. By using this method, the research will do data collection and analysis through qualitative techniques. The reason why the research uses the qualitative method is to see how successful Thailand is in practicing gastrodiplomacy to rebrand its nation as well as the implementation of the programs and the impact of this practice. Thailand's strategy of practicing gastrodiplomacy will be analyzed thoroughly using the qualitative method based on the most relevant literature that has been gathered.

2. Gastrodiplomacy as a Tool of National Branding in Thailand

The Theorist of Gastrodiplomacy Rockower (2012) mention there are dissimilarities between gastrodiplomacy, culinary diplomacy and food diplomacy. Gastrodiplomacy indeed utilize food as a tool to build up the awareness and also attraction of the cultural aspect of a country and history represented by the food. Culinary diplomacy is a use of a variety of food that having almost the same with the practice of gastrodiplomacy, however culinary diplomacy is used for formal diplomacy at official diplomatic events and targeting bureaucrats and elites from other countries. Last but not least, food diplomacy is carried out by the state by providing food assistance to other countries that in crisis or disaster or in difficult condition. Gastrodiplomacy takes culinary in aimed at attracting the appetite of global audiences and assist to develop brand awareness in culture and history aspects in order to increase the reputation of a nation. He also describes gastrodiplomacy as subset of public diplomacy. In line with what have been elaborated by Rockower (2012), Baskoro (2017) also states the similar ideas, explaining that this context must be explain clearly, so that, not to bring any logical fallacy to understand the conceptual framework of gastrodiplomacy.

In short, there are differences between the aforementioned contexts in

terms of their purpose and scope as described by Rockower (2012 p.237) as follows:

a) Gastrodiplomacy is a practice of diplomacy carried out by a country by using traditional or special foods as a tool between countries to learn and understand each other's culture and it is hoped that these countries will establish healthy cooperation.
b) Culinary diplomacy is diplomacy through food, where this diplomacy is only carried out by the state government. Also, this is a formal diplomatic practice by the government and has a very narrow scope.
c) Food diplomacy is a diplomatic practice carried out by a country that usually has a high poverty rate. Therefore, in the case of food diplomacy, the effort of the state in this diplomacy is to attract the sympathy of the international community and from this, it can form a positive image for the country.

The use of gastrodiplomacy in promoting the image of Thailand can support the nation's branding strategy through food tourism. Nation branding is a strategy to present a country to create reputation values through tourism, socio-economic, social, and investment conditions. In planning nation branding related to factors that influence a country, studies and research are needed to find the identity of the country as the basis for planning nation branding. Gudjonsson (2005) states that nation branding is created when the government or a private company uses power to persuade anyone who can change the country's image (Gudjonsson, 2005). In terms of rebranding the image of Thailand, they can use gastrodiplomacy to promote their traditional cuisine as well as their popular Thai restaurants to other countries. The reason why Thailand's image need rebranding is because one of the factors in the tourism sector that needed to be changed is sex tourism. As already mentioned above, Thailand already has a negative title as a state that has sex tourism with a lot of sex workers and it brings a bad image for Thailand. Therefore, Thailand tries to rebrand its image to create a quality of its tourism sector. This issue was supported by a statement from the Thai Minister of Tourism, Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul, who stated, "We want Thailand to be about quality tourism. We Want the sex industry gone", as a minister said it loud and clear to Thailand's people (Tanakasempipat, 2016). Overall, based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that gastrodiplomacy is used by the Thai government for various reasons and interests, starting from creating a new image to promoting Thai identity.

Thailand tries to rebrand its image, promote its food that also promotes its culture and history to the international community. This movement has brought Thailand like right now as a state that has good quality tourism, famous with the Thai food that has a unique style, and it is making many people from other countries want to come to Thailand and it also brings the advantages for Thailand in many aspects. There are many Thai dishes that are popular and favored by foreign tourists, in this case, according to the Kitchen of the World program the following are several most popular Thai foods:

Figure 1: Popular Thai Dishes; (Thailand: Kitchen of the World, 2004).

Talking about nation branding, according to Ying Fan, nation branding is "a process by which a nation's images can be created, monitored, evaluated, and proactively managed to improve or enhance the country's reputation among a target audience" (Fan, 2010). This definition emphasized the importance of nation branding that must have a positive image and focus on the overall image of a country on the international stage both in a political, economic, and cultural context. But according to Simon Anholt (2008), despite having great advertisements, with attractive logos and accompanied by memorable slogans often associated with strong reputable brands these three things are not a factor that impacts the positive or negative reputation of any brand. A brand will only be strong and successful if the product it produces is trusted by the public (Anholt, 2008). Same as the nation branding, a state's nation branding can be judged by the perception of the international public whether a positive or negative reputation that the public gave to some country.

Therefore, the use of food as an instrument of diplomacy is a more effective way of becoming an intermediary for non-verbal communication that

can unite all groups. Gastrodiplomacy is carried out by a country to carry out public diplomacy by promoting the food of each country so that it can increase public awareness of a country's national brand, and also help the foreign public to familiarize themselves with other countries' culture through culinary experience. Because gastrodiplomacy allows the state not only to introduce food to the international public, but to open opportunities to communicate its unique culture, history, taste, and value itself. Not to mention, the food and restaurants promoted by the government through gastrodiplomacy can influence the nation's branding agenda where the original food from the country can become a brand for the international community. There are also several other elements that can be affected by gastrodiplomacy as shown in the following figure:

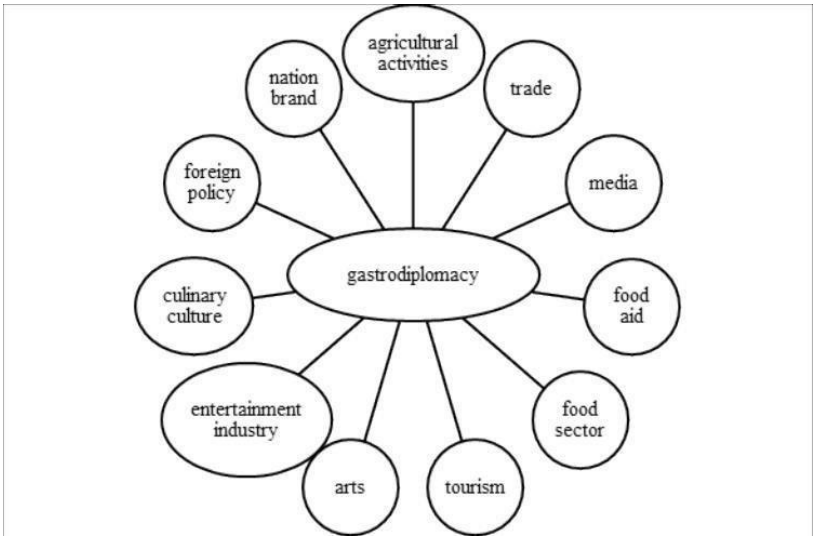

Figure 2: Components of Gastrodiplomacy; (Toner & Alan, 2021)

The figure above which was developed by Toner and Alan (2021) emphasize that there are diverse field of components that compatible with gastronomy which is shown in the figure above. Gastrodiplomacy is at the center of a value chain that incorporates all other components. This shows that not only gastrodiplomacy can become a major influence in a nation's brand but also influence its other sectors.

According to Zhang (2015), culinary can become a national branding for the state, which states that culinary can be used as a tool to communicate ideas, values, and identities (Zhang, 2015). This can be proven if at every meeting or visit the country makes culinary one of the main and most important things in entertaining guests who visit because culinary is used as a symbol that represents the importance of relations between these countries. So that along with the times, culinary has become a diplomatic tool that was first initiated and campaigned by the Thai state which makes it a form of public diplomacy to promote its cuisine to other countries (Ibid).

Overall, the use of gastrodiplomacy can be a good practice of cultural diplomacy in the form of public diplomacy that uses national food and cuisine for

nation branding strategy. Cultural relevance in the practice of gastrodiplomacy can be seen in how governments use their national food and cuisine in diplomatic practice because they believe that food can represent their nation. Gastrodiplomacy can also be seen as a practice of public diplomacy because the actors involved in this practice are not only high-level actors such as the government, but also involve the public as well as foreigners. In this case, state actors become one of the important factors in successfully promoting gastrodiplomacy. As for Thailand's gastrodiplomacy, this strategy was proven to be successful for Thailand where they have received several awards through the Kitchen of the World program. This effort is carried out to change the negative image of Thailand, where Thailand has been created as a sex tourism country. Moreover, gastrodiplomacy is carried out in the most peaceful way to influence people within the country as well as in other countries. That is why in the practice of gastrodiplomacy, a country usually has big ambitions to rebrand its national image.

3. The Practices of Thailand's Gastrodiplomacy Through Global Thai Campaign

As explained above, the context of gastrodiplomacy in Thailand has been known since 2002 when the government launched the Global Thai Campaign program at the global level. This campaign aims to promote Thai restaurants and their traditional food and increase the number of branches and awareness to be known internationally. According to the article by the Center on Public Diplomacy (CPD) (2015), it is stated that the Global Thai Campaign can raise the profile of Thailand abroad where Thai branding is not only for culinary purposes but also to create economic cooperation and opportunities for Thai chefs, products, and culture (CPD, 2015). In the early years of implementing this program, the government of Thailand aimed to branch out to 5.500 Thai restaurants around the world which later on sought to increase to 8.000 restaurants (The Economist, 2002).

Based on what Nuttavuthisit's (2007) perspective, Global Thai Campaign has been claimed reach its top and it has transformed to the next level into a new program called Thai Cuisine to the World. The number of Thai restaurants multiplied in foreign countries providing authentic Thai nuances that can be recognized by the food lovers. Eventually, discussing the Global Thai Campaign at that time was only one of the national projects related to food, fashion, health, culture, and tourism that aimed to recreate a positive image of White Elephants in the eyes of the publics and also transform attention from stereotypes related to Thai sex tourism. Thus, the campaign of Global Thai is only put in a political context by initiating other cultural promotions to change Thailand's image abroad as an idea of unique travel destination.

Thailand has a culinary taste that is different from other countries and in addition it is supported by Thailand's natural resources which can be said to be rich which can make this a golden opportunity for Thailand itself by conducting

public diplomacy to the international community. The sex industry is getting serious attention from the Thai government because it creates a bad image of Thailand in the eyes of the international community, from this negative impression it can close the world's eyes on the tourism sector and culinary wealth in the country. The steps taken by Thailand to change the world's view towards them is through food tourism or gastrodiplomacy where Thailand was able to use their potential of culinary wealth. Thailand's bad image is forced to build a good image with a new brand image through the Global Thai Campaign where one of the programs is known as Kitchen of the World (Ibid, p. 25-26).

The Kitchen of the World program has a purpose in improving Thailand's strategy of promoting gastrodiplomacy such as (Murray, 2007):

1) Expanding agricultural land and food business.
2) Improving the quality of better agriculture by using advanced technological production.
3) Support and participate in regional and international cooperation.
4) Supporting Thai investment which spreads overseas especially in the construction of Thai restaurant networks.

This shows how important the Global Thai Campaign is in supporting and promoting Thailand's tourism sector. Aside from rebranding the bad image of Thailand's tourism sector, fully implementing the Kitchen of the World program, was able to shape the international community's perspective towards Thailand's tourism sector. Several strategies were able to be implemented by the government of Thailand from this program, for example, the product marketing strategy which can contribute to the economy of Thailand. In 2002, Thailand has ranked 15th as a food exporting country with a value of USD 9.9 billion (Fartiannur & Mujiono, 2018). Therefore, Thailand had a market share of 2.12% in 2002 (Jekle, 2005). Continuing in 2003, it rose to USD 11.4 billion. The main product exported by Thailand in 2003 was rice with a total of 7,552,000 tons, and the main countries that were Thailand's export destinations were Indonesia with a value of 8.6% and the USA with a value of 73%. Fishery products are 34.5%, cereal products are 19.95%, meat products are 545,710 or equivalent to 10.49%. Thailand, along with Indonesia and the Philippines, has controlled 80% of the pharmaceutical industry market in Southeast Asia (Hartanto, 2013). In 2008, Thailand became one of the prominent agricultural products exporters in the world where Thailand's export destinations include ASEAN countries, the Middle East, the European Union, the United States, Japan, and China (Fartiannur & Mujiono, 2018).

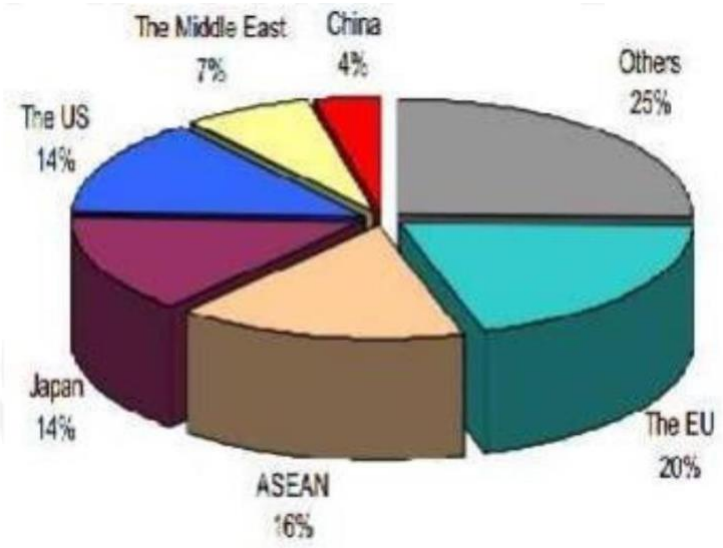

Figure 3: Thailand's Main Food Export Market 2008; (Thailand: Kitchen of theWorld, n.d.)

The figure above showcases the percentage of Thailand's export market around the world. This shows that the Kitchen of the World program contributes to the economy of Thailand in traderelations. Apart from the economic benefits gained, there are successful strategies to be implemented through the Kitchen of the World program by the Thailand government. The strategies are gastrodiplomacy campaign, product marketing strategy, food events strategy, coalition-building strategy, media relation strategy, and education strategy.

1) Gastrodiplomacy Campaign

The purpose of Thai gastrodiplomacy is to change Thailand's negative image through the gastrodiplomacy program, namely Kitchen of the World, which began when the Thai government surveyed the world's views of Thailand and the result is that there arestill many people about the sex industry in Thailand. Thus, that makes Thailand an important instrument to change the image by choosing culinary.

The urgency of mission in a campaign of Kitchen of the World Program is to make sure that the culinary products made in Thailand meet the safety and hygiene standards legitimated by universal regulations. In addition, the Ministry of Trade have to collaborate closer to the Thai Chamber of Commerce in order to revitalize the Kitchen of the World and also giving more budgets to cover quality of food, quality of chefs, e-commerce development technology, innovation, and start-ups to create authentic Thai food and products for publics (Arunmas, 2018). The Kitchen of the World program has been claimed as an integrated program, analyzing from the objective of this program which does not only targeting one goal to rebrand the Thai. However, it also promotes the food Thai products transforms into the export sector in a very good quality.

2) Product Marketing Strategy

This strategy seeks to market a food product and food image in a country to the whole world. Underlying the Kitchen of the World program, the goal is not only to spread the authenticity of Thai cuisine but also to promote products made from ingredients and forms of Thai food which are then transformed into the export sector. Thai gastrodiplomacy through Kitchen of the World has focused on exports and restaurants. In line with this goal, Thailand plays an active role in exporting food products abroad. Marketing Thai cuisine brands and food image around the world through building restaurant chains, developing franchisees, and promoting export products related to Thai specialties and services. This strategy has the main goal in gastrodiplomacy, namely to promote export products related to Thai food ingredients (Zhang, 2015, p. 10).

3) Food Events Strategy

This strategy seeks to involve staging events and participating in international events to promote a country's food to foreign elites and the general public. The Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs is involved in efforts to develop the country's brand image, every Thai embassy has a target to continue to increase the number of Thai restaurants, this is following the placement of the ambassador (Thailand: Kitchen of the World, 2018). So, it is hoped that in this case the development of Thai cuisine can be evenly distributed throughout the world, without having someone come to Thailand.

4) Coalition-building Strategy

This coalition-building involves building partnerships with organizations that share the same interests and goals in expanding the network. The campaign through this strategy is targeted at hotel and tourism industry partners because they have the same interests and have the resources at their disposal to have a great influence on the target audience. Other partners include diplomatic organizations, such as embassies as well as cultural centers, as well as foreign grocery stores. Several groups in Thailand are involved in implementing Thailand's efforts such as the Export Promotion Bureau, Ministry of Commerce, Media and Advertising Organizations, as well as financial and educational support.

5) Media Relation Strategy

This strategy uses traditional media, social media, and fully controlled media to publicize messages from the Kitchen of the World campaign through culinary diplomacy, increasing interaction by making investments in other countries which then builds long- term relationships with targeted Thailand. We can see the example of social media promoting Kitchen of the World which can be accessed through the official Thailand website which is accessed directly by the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs under the name Thailand Kitchen of the World website (Thailand: "Kitchen of the World").

6) Education Strategy

In this educational strategy, Thailand has involved culinary education through teaching programs. Not only providing a cooking program, after that the participants or chefs who have been trained professionally are sent to work abroad, which has been supported by a special visa with other countries so that the chef can easily get a work visa. This strategy has two aspects. First, state sponsors are trained and certified cooks before they are sent to work overseas, this is to ensure consistent food quality. Second, teaching programs to enhance their hands-on experience and subsequent identification with the labeling of a nation's cuisine (Zhang, 2015, p. 17).

The Thai government's efforts to facilitate training and send professional chefs from Thailand abroad aims to make Thai citizens not only experience other cultures, but also to provide opportunities for those who have their interests in the culinary world, but it is only for those who have received training culinary program from the government's program to spread Thai cuisine.

4. Global Thai Campaign and Tourism: A Lesson Learned from The Pioneer

The use of gastrodiplomacy by the Thai government to rebrand their image is a good strategy for the country to influence the international community about Thai culture. The purpose of rebranding Thailand's image is because one of the tourism sectors in Thailand is promoting sexual activity to tourists. This issue is a problem for Thailand which has shaped the view of other countries that Thailand promotes sex workers for its citizens and foreigners. Therefore, to change the perspective of other countries, Thailand has taken action to rebrand its image, one of which is by conducting gastrodiplomacy.

In 2002, Thailand took the initiative to rebrand its image using gastrodiplomacy which can be seen in the Global Thai Campaign, where this campaign aims to promote Thai food and cuisine to the world. There are several programs carried out in this campaign, one of which is known as the Kitchen of the World program. This program aims to promote Thai gastrodiplomacy to the world while at the same time promoting Thai food and restaurants to change the international community's view of Thailand from sex tourism to quality tourism. The implementation of the Kitchen of the World program is one of the most successful gastrodiplomacy campaigns that Thailand was able to accomplish. The known success factors of gastrodiplomacy strategies are as follows:

1. Product marketing, by exporting food stuffs.
2. The use of events, which are carried out domestically and abroad.

3. Building relationships through media, which is done by creating applications and websites to introduce Thai tourism and food, even sponsoring relationships with foreign websites.
4. Through education, which is done by making chefs who go to other countries as cooking teachers in other countries.

The implementation of the Kitchen of the World Program by the Thai government has had a significant impact on its tourism sector. Based on statistical data on The World Bank Data website, the number of foreign tourist visitors in Thailand shows that since 2002 there has been an increase in the number of visitors to 10,8 million international arrivals. Then in 2003, it decreased due to the SARS pandemic which in that year reached 10 million visitors. In the following years until 2010, foreign tourist visits to Thailand experienced a drastic increase, reaching a peak of 15,9 million visitors in the last years leading up to 2010 (International tourism, number of arrivals - Thailand | Data, 2021). Take a look at the figure below for further details:

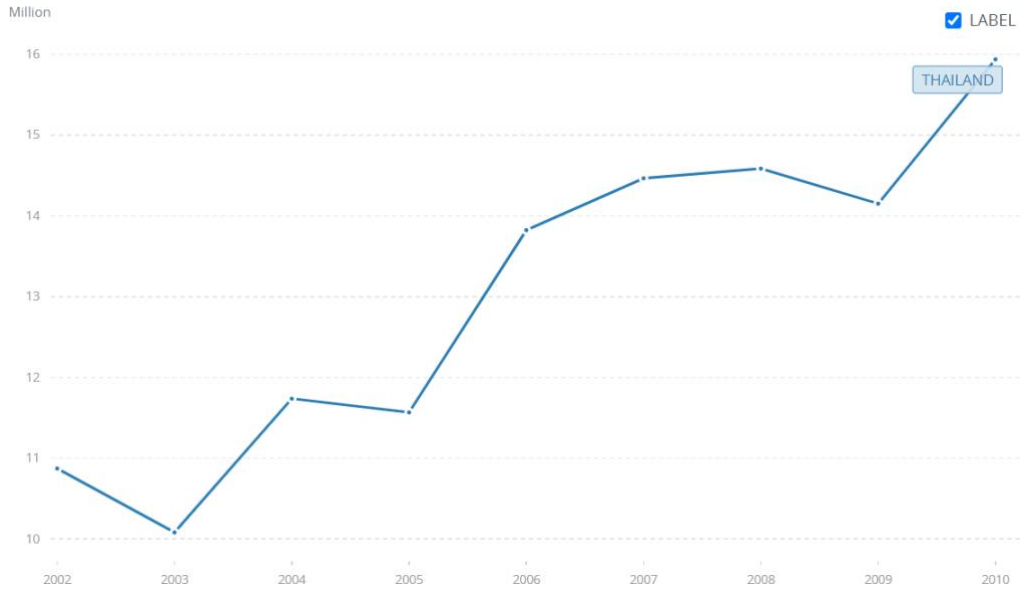

Figure 4: International Tourism, Number of Arrivals – Thailand; (The World Bank, 2021)

The figure above showcases the number of international tourism arrivals in Thailand from 2002 until 2010. Since the scope of this research timeline is between 2002 – 2010, the figure above shows the increase of international tourism visits in Thailand since the utilization of gastrodiplomacy by the Thailand government. As we can see, the tourism development of Thailand has a significant increase in its number of international visitors based on the timeline provided above. This is the same year where the Global Thai Campaign was launched as part of Thailand's gastrodiplomacy strategy. By implementing the Kitchen of the World program to promote Thai food and restaurants around the world, it was able to increase the number of tourists visiting Thailand from 2002

until 2010. Not to mention that other opportunities can be gained from this successful program such as the economy of Thailand. Therefore, the gastrodiplomacy campaign carried out by the Thailand government shows a significant impact on the tourism sector, this is because Thailand was able to introduce something new as their national brand, in this case, is their culinary. As a result, the gastrodiplomacy campaign through the Kitchen of the World program by the Thailand government has proven to be successful in rebranding the image of Thailand as well as attracting more international tourism visits in Thailand.

Changes in the international community's perception of Thailand after the existence of gastrodiplomacy activities through the Kitchen of the World program, as evidenced by a survey conducted by the Kellogg School of Management of the US on people's perceptions of food in the world, and the results show that the most widely mentioned food is Thai cuisine. Not only that, but the survey also asked about the most popular traditional cuisine, which is traditional Thai cuisine. The statement positions Thai food in the food category that first comes to mind (Murray, 2007, p. 21). From this statement, it can be concluded that the realization of the Kitchen of The World program which strives for the authenticity of authentic Thai food has succeeded in attracting visitors from abroad.

Thailand's gastrodiplomacy strategy also has an essence in the state to public relations relationship which tries to change the international community's perception of the image of Thailand's tourism as a country with sex tourism, however, this image remains because there are still places of prostitution and there are still many poor people in Thailand, making this problem difficult to take further action even though using gastrodiplomacy. Apart from this, at least the negative stereotypes against Thai sex tourism are receding. The nickname of Thailand's sex industry has become a label of a dark past. Thailand has slowly proven to the world that it is a country with a wealth of authentic and diverse culinary delights.

Thailand's national brand presents something different from other countries. The national brand with the program through a gastrodiplomacy approach is a concept that is interrelated in helping attract public interest to know and sympathize with Thailand better. Thus, that is the real success of diplomacy chosen by this country, Thailand can attract Thai culinary appeal to the international arena and spread Thai-flavored restaurants to foreign countries. Thailand's success has also changed the image of the country from a sex tourism country to a country with delicious cuisine. Therefore, Thai cuisine becomes known to the international community and helps the country's image to be better.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the practice of gastrodiplomacy has become the main instrument in the international world to promote their brand through food.

Thailand is a country that uses gastrodiplomacy as a tool to promote its cuisine throughout the world, especially to rebrand its image in the eyes of the international community. The reason Thailand wants to change its image is because of the promotion of the sex industry which has been known as a leading tourism activity in Thailand. Many countries see Thailand as a country that promotes prostitution which has an immoral impact on Thailand's image. Therefore, the effort to rebrand the image is through a new approach to diplomacy promotion, which in this case is by using gastrodiplomacy.

Thailand started its gastrodiplomacy campaign in 2002 where at that time it is known as the Global Thai Campaign which is a culinary global campaign by Thailand with the purpose to promote its traditional food, expanding and spreading Thai restaurants around the world, as well as rebranding its national image. Through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand's effort in practicing gastrodiplomacy, the Global Thai Campaign was able to be successfully implemented where the numbers of Thai restaurants are increasing every year. Later on, due to the increased number of Thai restaurants around the world, the Global Thai Campaign created a new program known as Thai Cuisine to the World. Throughout the years, as the international community gradually accepted the new culinary brand that Thailand promotes, the Thai Cuisine to the World program was changed into the Kitchen of the World program. It has the same purpose as the previous program under the Global Thai Campaign, however, the Kitchen of the World program is the most successful gastrodiplomacy program ever done by Thailand. It is because the program was able to increase the number of Thai restaurants around the world and later on was able to rebrand Thailand's image. Not to mention that Thailand has received many awards from this program which has attracted international attention. The success of this program is not without a good strategy carried out by Thailand where this program was successfully implemented through a gastrodiplomacy campaign, product marketing strategy, food event strategy, coalition building strategy, and media relations strategy.

It can be concluded that Thailand, as the first country in the world that practice gastrodiplomacy, was able to successfully manage and implement its gastrodiplomacy campaign which has big contributions to the economic and tourism sector of Thailand. It is because, since the Kitchen of the World program was carried out under the Global Thai Campaign in 2002, the campaign was able to catch the international community's attention. It can be seen from the numbers of international tourism arrivals in Thailand that have increased dramatically since the launch of this campaign.

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