

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents (1) a summary of the study, (2) a summary of the findings, (3) discussion of the results, (4) the conclusion, and (5) recommendations for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This section summarizes the objectives of the study, subjects, materials, and procedures as follows:

5.1.1 Objectives of the study

The main objective and sub-objective of the study were:

Main Objective

To study the attitudes of Bangtao Thai-Muslim people towards the expansion of real estate business in their community.

Sub-Objective

To find whether or not the expansion of real estate business in the area affects the Islamic culture in terms of behavior patterns such as the inconvenience of praying five times a day, the prohibition of drinking alcohol, female Muslim dress style, and the Muslim teenagers' tendency to participate in nightlife.

5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures

The subjects of this study were Bangtao Thai-Muslim people in Bangtao area, Phuket. They were selected by using a purposive sampling design. In fact, the total number of subjects in this study was 120 persons but only 115 questionnaires were returned. The questionnaires were translated into Thai language and were used as the instrument in the study. The questionnaire was divided into three parts including demographic information of the respondents, attitudes towards the expansion of real estate business in terms of the economy, environment, society and culture as well as suggestions.

The data was collected from January 13-19, 2009, with the researcher distributing the questionnaires by approaching Bangtao Thai-Muslim people in Bangtao Community, Phuket. The respondents were asked if they were willing to

answer the questions. All the questionnaires were collected after the respondents completed them.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program version number 14 was used to analyze the collected data in the form of descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution and percentage.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Results of the Attitudes of Bangtao Thai-Muslim people towards the Expansion of Real Estate Business in their area.

Economy

In terms of the economy, more than half of Bangtao Thai-Muslim people in Bangtao community in Phuket agreed with the expansion of real estate business in their area because it had increased local income, provided jobs and expanded employment opportunities for residents. Moreover, the expansion of real estate business attracted more international investment which led to higher real estate value as well as high land price. Lastly, many tourism activities and entertainment business such as travel agencies, bars and restaurants were opened by both local and outsider investors.

Environment

Regarding the environmental aspect, most of the respondents agreed that real estate business expansion caused deforestation and those natural resources such as mountains and beaches had been destroyed by real estate investment. Moreover, they also agreed that the real estate expansion increased litter, air pollution, and led to crowding in the community.

Society

In terms of the social aspect, almost half of respondents agreed that the real estate business contributed to overcrowding in the local area and it influenced more people from other regions to settle down and live or work in the area. They also agreed that real estate growth increased crimes and robberies in the community. Moreover, more than half of them agreed that real estate growth provided more opportunities for respondents to work in their community rather than moving out to

work in other provinces. However, about one third of them were not sure whether local residents were more likely to invest in entertainment businesses.

Cultural Aspect

For the cultural aspect, more than half of respondents agreed that Muslim residents who had been working in hotels and resorts, in residential properties and in shopping plazas were inconvenienced by praying five times a day. Also, half of respondents agreed that Muslim residents were more likely to ignore the prohibition of drinking alcohol. Moreover, respondents felt that Muslim teenagers were more likely to participate in nightlife entertainment and that intimacy between sexes was more accepted by local residents. However, half of them agreed that female residents now were more likely to generate income for the family, while foreign dress style might not influence local people's clothing style as the percentage of agreement and neutrality was nearly the same.

5.2.2 Summary of Returned Suggestions

From 115 respondents, there were a total of 42 respondents giving suggestions and opinions in this study. They revealed that real estate business had increased income and career opportunities for residents as well as brought better financial status to the community. Nevertheless, real estate expansion, in general, damaged the environment, increased bad pollution, and caused harm to society. They recommended that the government and entrepreneurs should be concerned about the environment and have clear zoning policies. Additionally, the respondents felt that investors and the government, treated foreigners better than locals and Thai people; therefore, they would like real estate investors hire more local residents in their businesses. Lastly, Thai-Muslim people believed that real estate business, in particular, did not deteriorate Islam religion or Islamic beliefs and that the culture was not assimilated with western culture because Thai-Muslim residents still practiced strict Islam. They suggested that the development should go hand in hand with good education and morality including the teaching of Islamic practices to residents.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section concerns a discussion in answer to the thesis statement of the study. The results of this study on attitudes of Bangtao Thai-Muslim people towards the real estate expansion in their community were revealed in four main aspects related to the literature review as mentioned in chapter 2 as follows:

Economy

This study revealed that more than half of residents, in general, had positive attitudes towards the real estate expansion because it had increased local income (strongly agreed and agreed: 63.5% and 13.9%), provided career opportunities (strongly agreed and agreed: 65.2% and 18.3%), and created better financial status in the community (agreed and strongly disagreed: 59.1% and 14.8%). The expansion of real estate business generated jobs for local residents not only in the real estate and residential property investment, but also in other hospitality and service businesses in the area. In addition, real estate expansion was more likely to attract international business and tourism activities. This was similar to Phong-Ampai Thongpob's research (2007) that tourism brought more international investment and real estate investment.

However, a negative impact was real estate value as residents agreed that real estate expansion created high land prices. This study supports Corgel, Ling, and Smith (2001) on the point that real estate provides space that humans need and costs money. People improve land to induce demand which affects the value of real estate. Corgel, Ling, and Smith (2001) stated in his research that real estate businesses' objectives are to maximize an individual's wealth or rate of return according to how land is used. Thus, when real estate business is vigorously invested, in land costs will be higher and local landowners benefits from higher property values.

Environment

The results of this study showed that, overall, Bangtao Thai-Muslim people had negative attitudes on the environmental aspect which resulted from the real estate expansion. Concisely, they agreed that real estate expansion caused deforestation (strongly agreed and agreed: 33.9% and 31.3%) such as in mountains, beaches, and rubber plantation areas. Moreover, most of them strongly agreed that real estate expansion destroyed natural resources (strongly agreed and agreed: 40% and 31.3%)

and increased pollution (40.9% and 20.9% agreement and strong agreement) and more litter (46.1% and 23.5% agreement and strong agreement). Because the expansion of real estate business created more related tourism businesses such as hotels and resorts, travel agencies, restaurants and bars, this study supports the World Tourism Organization (1994) on “National and Regional Tourism Planning: Methodologies and Case Studies”. Finding stated that the development of tourism possibly caused damage to the natural environment in Tibet.

According to Corgel, Ling, and Smith (2001), over use of land uses encouraged America to institute “community policing” programs in order to protect the environment. Investors were fined if environmental hazards were found on their properties. Moreover, Phong-Ampai Thongpob (2007) revealed in her research that tourism results in more crowding in public areas; similarly, this study found that real estate expansion also made communities more crowded and overdeveloped (agreed and strong agreed: 42.6% and 31.3%) as businesses provided more job opportunities and the chance to expand investment. In their suggestions, some residents recommended that the government and entrepreneurs should be concerned about the environment in the community and improve the cleanliness in the area.

Society

Brian Archer and Chris Cooper (1998) stated in “The Positive and Negative Impacts of Tourism” that tourism, both international and domestic, brings social problems such as prostitution, drugs, and gambling. Tourists may also be victims of robbery and crimes performed by local residents. The result of this study also revealed the negative impacts to the society from the real estate expansion in support of the cited research. Because the real estate expansion contributed to overcrowding in the community, there were a diverse mix of people from different countries, provinces, and cultures which might increase the number of crimes (agreed and strongly agreed: 47.8% and 24.3%), robberies and thieves in the community (agreed and strongly agreed: 45.2% and 23.5%).

In addition, three respondents in this study suggested that the government should generate clear zoning policies. Corgel, Ling, and Smith (2001) again, stated that land use in real estate investment may have an impact on a neighborhood and community as local governments typically regulate how land may be used through

zoning. For instance, investors should avoid constructing a bar in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Therefore, limiting and allowing high densities, planning and zoning can reduce crime and congestion.

Most residents also had a positive attitude about real estate expansion providing opportunities for residents to work in their own communities (agreed and strongly agreed: 59.1% and 22.6%). However, about one third of them (33%) felt uncertain whether or not the local residents would be interested in entertainment business investment because they were in the Muslim community.

Cultural Aspect

The results of this study showed that residents who had been working in the hotels and resorts, in residential properties, and in shopping plazas agreed about the inconvenience of praying five times a day (agreed and strongly agreed: 34.8% and 27.8%). One resident stated that entrepreneurs should provide rooms for praying and allow Muslim workers to pray. Moreover, they agreed about the tendency to ignore the prohibition on drinking alcohol (agreed and strongly agreed: 30.4% and 20.9%), and the tendency for Muslim teenagers to participate in nightlife entertainment (agreed and strongly agreed: 36.5% and 25.2%). This study also revealed that female residents now were more likely to generate income for the family by working outside the home (agreed and strongly agreed: 53% and 22.6%). However, the foreign dress style did not influence local people's clothing style (25.2% uncertain and 23.5% disagreement).

Seven residents insisted in this study that real estate business did not deteriorate the Islam religion and Bangtao Muslim's culture was not assimilated with western culture because the Thai-Muslim residents practiced strict Islam. A few residents might change Islamic beliefs and practices. However, in general, the Thai-Muslim residents accepted the cultural and behavioral changes. Therefore, the results of this study regarding the cultural aspect supports Sawvane Jitmoud's findings (1992) that some behavior changes from cultural assimilation are accepted implicitly and carried down to the next generation. According to Steven Vago (2004), different cultures have different degrees of capability and readiness for accepting change; so, Bangtao Thai-Muslim people are open to acculturation and cultural assimilation. Since residents insisted that they were strictly practicing Islam even though the

community followed Islamic regulations, not the policy and control of the community's administration; this result supports the World Tourism Organization's study on the Maldives (1994). As the Maldives' society is Islamic, several policies and controls have been established which relate to socio-cultural and economic consideration; thus, those reasons emphasize that Islamic codes and customs should be carefully maintained.

5.4 CONCLUSION

The following conclusions can be drawn from the discussion above.

5.4.1 Bangtao Thai-Muslim people had positive attitudes on real estate business in terms of the economic aspect. They believed that development led to both advantages and disadvantages for the community. For example, the real estate had increased local income for residents but land prices and prices of products and services increased accordingly. In addition, residents strongly agreed that real estate expansion had a negative impact on the environment and natural resources.

5.4.2 Bangtao residents expressed negative opinions on real estate expansion affecting in terms of an increase in robberies, car accidents, traffic jams, and drugs because of overcrowding and overdevelopment. Not all residents benefited from this business situation as some people took advantage of opportunity to do illegally activities. For example, they might take advantage of foreigners by stealing their property or selling products or services at inflated prices.

5.4.3 Thai-Muslim residents believed that real estate expansion did not affect the Islamic beliefs and culture. Cultural behavior is not easily assimilated even though they were accepted change. All of them still observed Islamic practices although the admitted that some did not.

5.4.4 Some residents wanted the government to be concerned about the expansion of international investment in real estate business and tourism activities. They felt that the government should have clear zoning policies and expected to see coordination between the government and business entrepreneurs to conserve the nature and the community's environment.

Generally, Bangtao Thai-Muslim people were not opposed to the expansion of real estate business but they would like to see development go hand in hand with

preserving Muslim culture and values, environmental conservation and good fostering human relationships among the different cultures.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for future research.

5.5.1 Future research similar to this study is recommended. Nevertheless, the sample size should cover all Muslim communities in Phuket or other Islamic communities in order to compare Muslim people's attitudes.

5.5.2 In-depth interviews are recommended as the topic related to beliefs and religion is sensitive. In order to avoid bias or to gain more insights, qualitative approach should be used. This will help generate more diverse opinions among people having different beliefs and cultures.

5.5.3 Further research about the problems between local residents and investors is also recommended in order to reduce the conflict between the different religions and encourage understanding between different religions and cultures. A questionnaire concerning governmental support is also recommended because the government or the district administration is a key factor in promoting good relationships in the community.