

CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 Background

Alcohol has followed human beings for millenniums, and most societies acknowledge its benefits as well as the consequences of its misuse. Societies are however affected differently by the use of alcohol by its members, for every culture has its own manifestation on how to consume it, while other societies have little or no cultural relations with the substance. The latter is true for many developing countries, many of which were only introduced to alcohol through their colonizers. Some of these societies have seen a significant increase in alcohol consumption being accompanied with its downside, the alcohol related harm.

Thailand is such a society, where alcohol consumption was not a part of traditional life, since it got introduced to the Thais, and gained social acceptance, the consumption of alcohol beverages has grown enormously. The thesis will document the recent social changes that have occurred in Thai society, emphasizing the last decade, from 2000 to 2010. Cultural aspects of Thai drinking will be discussed as well as the evolution of the Thai alcohol industry. Evidence of changes in drinking behaviour and alcohol related harm will be

illustrated and then a discourse on the main determinants stimulating this transformation of behaviour will be presented.

1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the development of alcohol consumption in Thailand and scrutinize how that development is linked to the country's social and market developments. The scope of the thesis will vary between three fundamental social aspects, all of which are linked with the main objective of the thesis, the consumption of alcohol and Thai society:

1. Production and consumption of alcohol in Thailand.
2. Thai drinking behaviour.
3. Determinants of the change in drinking behaviour.

By researching these dynamics of Thai alcohol consumption the researcher will be able to analyze the following aspects:

- Historical aspect and evolution of alcohol consumption in Thailand.
- The Thai alcohol market environment.
- Different aspects of Thai drinking behavior, for example, what alcohol beverages are consumed, under what occasions, where and with whom.
- The manifestation of recent changes in alcohol consumption of the Thais

- The main determinants stimulating these alcohol related social changes in Thailand.

By researching these different aspects on how alcohol manifests in Thai society, the researcher will be able to clarify how big of an impact alcohol consumption is having on Thai society.

1.3 Scope of Research

The scope of the thesis is Thai society and different manifestations of alcohol in the Thai society. As Thai society is still a very complicated phenomenon it is necessary to simplify the scope and divide Thai society divided into urban and rural. The researcher believes that these social divisions reflect the two main attitudes and behaviour toward alcohol in Thai society.

1.4 Research Methodology

The research was carried out through methods of quantitative and qualitative research. The quantitative research included evaluating books, reports and articles that address different aspects of alcohol consumption in Thai society. For example, to research global perspectives on alcohol, the researcher found the writings of Tomas Babor to be very helpful, especially the book *Alcohol; no ordinary commodity*, which is considered to be one of the most respected published works on global alcohol policy to date. Another helpful book was *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*, written by

Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard, Nisenholz and Gary Robinson. Even though the book is about the alcohol related problems of America, the researcher found the book to be very helpful, for in the earlier chapters give a very good description of the many functions of alcohol in societies, and it also assisted to inform the researcher on more complex matters of alcohol, such as metabolism and chemical functions of the substance.

To research general developments of alcohol consumption in the Southeast Asian region, the researcher found reports from The World Health Organization (WHO) to be quite informative. Even though each and every Southeast Asian nation has their own alcohol related characteristics, the similarities in the manifestation of alcohol use are often very similar, and these reports helped the researcher to see the Southeast Asian regional developments of alcohol consumption.

To get an insight into alcohol consumption in Thailand from a historical perspective, the author relied greatly on the book *The History of Alcohol Consumption in Thailand*, written by Prah Paisah Wisalo, a very respected monk in Thailand.

In order to research the different manifestations of alcohol in Thai society the researcher found articles written by Dr. Thaksaphon Thamarangsi to be very enlightening especially his article "Newly introduced alcohol marketing strategies; Thai experience", and the booklet on Thai alcohol policy *The "triangle that moves the mountain" and Thai alcohol policy development*. The field of

alcohol studies is in its infancy in Thailand. Therefore, there is a limited supply of material written in English, but the researcher feels that the published materials at hand were sufficient.

Those are just a few examples of the published materials the researcher read and evaluated in order to get acquainted with the topic of the thesis. Most of the books are available at the one of the many Chulalongkorn University libraries. Most of the articles were found on online electronic archives such as J-store and Pro-Quest or simply by using Google search, and many more articles were sent by e-mail, often by the authors of the articles themselves.

For the qualitative part of the research the researcher interviewed individuals who are associated with alcohol problems in Thailand in one way or another, such as nurses, doctors and social workers, were interviewed. To get a larger perspective on the manifestations of alcohol in Thai society, the researcher interviewed other individuals who also have a say in the matter, such as recovered Thai alcoholics, community leaders and Buddhist monks.

Three research trips were made in the research period. Firstly, on a three-day trip to Khon Kaen in the northeast part of the country, the researcher visited The Khon Kaen Drug Treatment Center (KKDTC) on July 9th to July 12th 2010 and met with nurses, psychologists and patients and interviewed them. There nurse May gave the researcher a good insight into the drinking customs in some of the villages surrounding Khon Kaen, but she has been very busy

interacting with villagers and trying to raise awareness on alcohol related matters.

On July 20th to the 22nd the researcher went to Yasothorn, accompanying Sor Sor Sor's (Thai Health Promotion) Wean Juthamas, who has been working with alcohol addicts and advocating a more an alcohol free lifestyle. The researcher visited Kudchum hospital, which operates a drug and alcohol screening clinic as well as a halfway house, a short-term housing system for recovering alcohol addicts. In the period of three days the researcher interviewed professionals and other individuals such as nurse Ying, a psychologist and supervisor of the drug and alcohol screening program, Phra Kru Su Pat, a Buddhist monk in Watt Cud Chum, Phra Kru Si Ha, a monk in a small Watt which treats addicts located in the small village of Tumbun Waso and Community leader at same town, to name a few.

And the last research trip was a day trip to Wat Thamkraborg, one of the most established treatment oriented Buddhist Watt in Thailand. While there the researcher observed a few aspects of the treatment and had a memorable in-depth interview with Phar Kong Sak, the monk who is in charge of the therapeutic part of the therapy, where he explained how Buddhist ideology can be used to address addiction problems.

The researcher also met with a few individuals in Bangkok; these meetings lasted from about thirty minutes up to two hours and often turned into interesting discussion. Among the individuals interviewed were;

- Dr. Pichai Saengcharnchai, who is one of the leading researchers in the field of Alcohol in Thailand. A meeting took place in his office at Phramongkutlao Hospital on the 2nd August 2010
- Natwipa Sinsuwan, an alcohol researcher and a PhD student at Chulalongkorn University. Researcher and the interviewee met at the Faculty of Communication Art and had lunch within walking distance from the faculty, where the interview took place on the 17th of August 2010
- Dr. Thaksaphon Thamarangis, Director of the Center of Alcohol Studies in Thailand. At the Center of Alcohol Studies Office on 10th of August

1.5 Key Terminology In Use

- Thai Society
- Alcohol Related Harm
- Drinking Behaviour
- Modernization
- Marketing Strategies

1.6 Contribution of Research

The thesis will first and foremost provide a better understanding of the different manifestations of alcohol consumption in Thailand and the

development in the consumption of alcohol beverages. Hopefully the research will clarify what social forces are stimulating Thai drinking behaviour and distinguish Thai drinking characteristics and the consequences for Thai society

The results might become useful for various individuals and institutions that address social issues, such as politicians, policymakers, NGO's, social workers, doctors, nurses and alcohol treatment councillors engaged in working with alcohol addicts.

1.7 Limitations

The biggest hindrance concerning the research of the thesis was the fact that the researcher neither speaks nor reads the Thai language. That immediately ruled out accessibility of many books, articles and reports, which have been done on the subject of the thesis. It also limited access to people, who could have been interviewed.

In order to minimize the effects of the language barrier, the researcher got hold of abstracts of many academic papers published on the subject of alcohol and Thailand. In one instance the researcher had the good fortune of attaining help, with getting a qualified Thai person to translate an important text, which was done in the instance of the book, *The history of Thai alcohol consumption*, written by Prah Paisah Wisalo. Every chapter of the book was

abstracted in English for the researcher allowing him to formulate his own text on the subject for the thesis.

In order to interact with the native Thais, the researcher devised a plan to interview professionals in the field, who in most instances had high education and could therefore speak very good English.

The objective of the thesis is to emphasize on the timeframe of 2000-2010, however in some instances data is not available for the required timeframe, therefore the researcher used the data available even though it did not fit in to the timeframe of the research.

พอล อาร์นาร์ สไตน์สสัน: สาเหตุและผลของการเพิ่มปริมาณการบริโภคเครื่องดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ในประเทศไทย (CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE INCREASE OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND) อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร. ชีระนุชเปี่ยม, อ.ที่ปรึกษาวิทยานิพนธ์ร่วม: อ. ดร. วิสลา วิสัยทอง, 130 หน้า.

หากกล่าวถึงในระดับโลก แอลกอฮอล์ถือว่าเป็นประเด็นใหญ่ประเด็นหนึ่งที่ถูกกล่าวถึงและยังคงเป็นปัญหาที่สังคมยังคงถกเถียงกันอย่างมาก ส่วนใหญ่เนื่องมาจากหลักฐานต่างๆที่เพิ่มขึ้นซึ่งกล่าวได้ว่าเป็นภัยสังคม ภัยทางกายภาพและต่อเศรษฐกิจต่างๆที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการนำแอลกอฮอล์มาใช้งาน การบริโภคเครื่องดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ได้รับความนิยมในประเทศไทยมานานหลายทศวรรษและยังคงได้รับความนิยมเพิ่มขึ้นอย่างต่อเนื่อง ทั้งๆที่การบริโภคแอลกอฮอล์จะขัดต่อหลักคำสอนของศาสนาพุทธก็ตาม ปัจจุบันนี้ทัศนคติและพฤติกรรมการดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ของคนไทยได้มีการเปลี่ยนแปลงไปอย่างมาก นอกจากนี้การเปิดกว้างของสังคมการดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ก็มีมากขึ้นกว่าเดิม โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งเมื่อมีการกระตุ้นให้มีการใช้แอลกอฮอล์ในทางที่มีอันตรายมากขึ้น บางส่วนของการพัฒนานี้สามารถสืบเนื่องไปถึงปรากฏการณ์ภายนอกเช่นโลกาภิวัตน์หรือโลกตะวันตกซึ่งมีผลกระทบต่อการพัฒนาของปรากฏการณ์เป็นปรากฏการณ์ทางสังคมที่ชอบความทันสมัยและบริโภคนิยมในสังคมไทย การเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสังคมที่เกิดขึ้นในประเทศไทยมีมากขึ้นโดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งช่วงไตรมาสสุดท้ายของศตวรรษที่ยี่สิบได้สร้างสภาพแวดล้อมทางอุดมการณ์และเป็นประตูสู่ตลาดที่กว้างขวางของเครื่องดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ที่มีการเปลี่ยนค่านิยมดั้งเดิม ทัศนคติและพฤติกรรมการบริโภคเครื่องดื่มแอลกอฮอล์ที่มีผลกระทบต่อภัยทุกรูปแบบของสังคมต่างๆในประเทศไทย

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