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**CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE INCREASE OF ALCOHOL
CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND**

Mr. Páll Arnar Steinarsson



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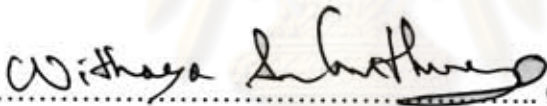
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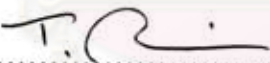
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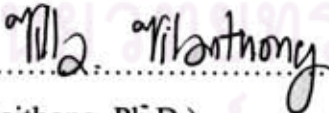
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หากกล่าวถึงในระดับโลก แอลกอฮอล์ถือว่าเป็นประเด็นใหญ่ประเด็นหนึ่งที่ถูกกล่าวถึงและยังคงเป็นปัญหาที่สังคมยังคงถกเถียงกันอย่างมาก ส่วนใหญ่เนื่องมาจากหลักฐานต่างๆที่เพิ่มขึ้นซึ่งกล่าวได้ว่าเป็นภัยสังคม ภัยทางกายภาพและต่อเศรษฐกิจต่างๆที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการนำแอลกอฮอล์มาใช้งาน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

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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PALL ARNAR STEINARSSON: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE
INCREASE OF ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IN THAILAND. THESIS ADVISOR:
ASST. PROF. THEERA NUCHPIAM, PH.D, THESIS CO-ADVISOR: VILLA
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On a global scale, the use of alcohol is and has been a highly controversial issue, mostly due to ever increasing evidence of the social, physical and economical harm related to its use. The consumption of alcohol has been increasing steadily in Thailand for decades and in spite of their religious and traditional non-alcohol consuming ways. There has been a transformation in value, attitude and behavior toward alcohol in Thailand. Furthermore the openness toward alcohol is growing among the Thai people, stimulating further use of alcohol, followed by increased alcohol related harm. Part of this development can be traced to the external phenomena such as westernization, modernization and consumerism in the Thai society. The enormous social changes occurring in Thailand have created an ideological environment or a gateway where extensive marketing of alcohol beverages have become the main determinants for this transformation of traditional values, attitudes and behavior towards alcohol consumption, with serious consequences for Thai society.

Field of Study: Southeast Asian Studies

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

CONTENTS

Abstract (Thai).....	iv
Abstract (English).....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi
Contents.....	vii
List of tables.....	ix
List of figures.....	x
CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background.....	1
1.2 Research Objectives and Research Questions.....	2
1.3 Scope of Research.....	3
1.4 Research Methodology.....	3
1.5 Key Terminology in use.....	7
1.6 Contribution of Research.....	7
1.7 Limitations.....	8
CHAPTER II : ALCOHOL.....	10
2.1 Brief History of The Global use of Alcohol	10
2.2 Nature of Alcohol.....	16
2.2.1 Food.....	18
2.2.2 Drug.....	19
2.2.3 Chemical.....	20
2.3 The Global Burden of Alcohol.....	20
2.3.1 The disease concept.....	21
CHAPTER III : THAILAND AND ALCOHOL.....	27
3.1 Brief History of Alcohol Consumption in Thailand	27
3.2 Alcohol use and Thai Landscape.....	32
3.3 Thai Drinking Culture.....	36

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: ICD-10 diagnostic criteria for dependence.....	25
Table 2: World rank alcohol consumption per capita	46
Table 3: Consumption development of age groups 1996 -2007.....	48
Table 4: Gender group alcohol consumption development 1996 -2007... 	49
Table 5: Trends of alcohol consumption in Thailand.	49
Table 6: Company share by volume	59
Table 7: Ten marketing mix P's	76
Table 8: 13 characteristics of modernization	96



ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Thai Alcohol consumption in general.....	33
Figure 2: Thai Weekly – monthly alcohol consumption.....	34
Figure 3: Thai daily alcohol consumption.....	35
Figure 4: Thai alcohol consumption 1961-2004.....	47
Figure 5: Production and import 1997-2008.	61
Figure 6: Sales of alcohol beverages (volume)	63
Figure 7: Sales of alcohol beverages (volume)	65
Figure 8: Beer Production 2000- 2008	66
Figure 9: Beer import & export.....	68
Figure 10: CSR activity	86
Figure 11: CSR activity by events	87
Figure 12: Mass media and alcohol.....	106

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

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 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.



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CHAPTER II

Alcohol

2.1 Brief history of the global use of alcohol

The origins of alcohol beverages are ambiguous, but there are historical indications originating the craft of winemaking to the wild grape regions of the Middle East. There can be found implications in the Bible about alcohol use, such as in Genesis 9:20 which claims that Noah had planted a vineyard in Ararat, an area which today belongs to eastern part of Turkey.¹

One of the earliest civilizations associated with the general use of alcohol were the ancient Egyptians. It is believed the brewing existed in ancient Egypt around 3,500 BC. Alcohol consumption was very common among the Egyptians, where people at all level of society drank mainly beer, and in great quantities. The beer of the ancient Egyptians was not the same beverage as modern beer, ancient Egyptian beer was commonly brewed by women, alongside other chores of the household, and was a beverage of more nutritious value than modern beer, containing considerable amount of calories and vitamins. Another indicating factor of the Egyptians love of alcohol could be that one of the popular gods of

¹ Thomas Babor. (1986). *Alcohol, customs and rituals*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. Page 1.

the ancient Egyptians was Osiris, known as the god of nature, he was also associated with wine, and he was worshiped throughout the country.²

The craft of wine making may have reached the Greece about 2,000 B.C. Among the first alcohol beverages to be commonly used in Greece, was a drink called Mead, which was a fermented beverage, made from honey and water. By the period around 1,700 B.C. winemaking is considered to be common among the ancient Greeks, and during the following thousand years, usage of wine became a commonplace aspect of Greek society. These social aspects of wine usage could be found in religious rituals, for medical purposes, became a way of means to display hospitality and was it a part of daily dining.³

In Asian culture, the Chinese are considered one of the pioneers on the use of alcohol, unlike the wine culture spreading through out the Mediterranean region, the Chinese people drank mostly distilled spirits, some claim the Chinese to be the inventors of distilled spirits. Evidence such as inscriptions on bones, tortoise shells describing offerings of millet wine and tulip-flower wine to the dead, these ancient findings have been dated to as early as the sixteenth century B.C. Many of these documents on the usage of alcohol in ancient china point to the importance of alcohol in religious rituals. The link between alcohol and

² Richard W. Unger (2007). *Beer in the middle ages and the renaissance*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Page 18.

³ Thomas Babor. (1986). *Alcohol, customs and rituals*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers. Pages 2-3.

religious rituals was specifically in rituals relating to the sky, earth, deceased ancestors and other spirits.⁴

Alcohol has been considered to be an important variant in Chinese medicine, in fact the Chinese character for “alcohol” and “medicine” share the same root, there is an old Chinese proverb which says that alcohol is the best of all medicines. There can be found ancient Chinese scriptures on alcohol, one of which was called *The Yellow Emperors Canon of medicine*, which contained a chapter describing how to use alcohol to cure a variety of sicknesses. Another ancient scripture; *Compendium of Materia Medica*, written by Ling Shizhen of the Ming Dynasty, has a list of seventy nine different Chinese alcohol beverages, displaying their usefulness, some for treating specific illnesses and other for nourishment.⁵

The Chinese also have a history of using alcohol beverages in other segments of society, as in other societies alcohol played a large role in expressing hospitality, and was considered an essential ingredient at events like weddings and funerals. Moreover there is also a tendency to use alcohol beverages to stimulate inspiration.⁶ Old Chinese scriptures also mention the misuse of alcohol, as an old Chinese proverb says:

⁴ Xiao Jiacheng. (1995). China. in D. B. Heath, *International handbook on alcohol and culture* (pp.42-50). Westport: Greenwood Press. Page 42.

⁵ Xiao Jiacheng, X. (1995). China. In D. B. Heath, *International handbook on alcohol and culture* (pp.42-50). Westport: Greenwood Press. Page 47.

Xiao Jiacheng. (1995). China. In D. B. Heath, *International handbook on alcohol and culture* (pp.42-50). Westport: Greenwood Press. 43-45.

“First a man takes a drink, then the drink takes the drink and then the drink takes the man”⁷

In the Indus Valley of India, the distillation and fermentation of alcohol are believed to have been practiced as early as 2000 BC. Clay relics have been discovered in the archeological city of Taxila, which ensemble into a set of complete distilling instruments.⁸ Hindu mythological descriptions from the same period, tell of the consumption of alcohol drinks like soma or somrasa and sura, used by various groups of society for their tranquillizing and euphoriant effects. Somawasa was another alcohol beverage of the ancient Indian civilization, but it was reserved for the upper class and the Gods.⁹

Alcohol use was not well seen in ancient India, but there were exceptions from the rule as in other societies. Descriptions of alcohol use in ancient India can be found in the ancient Indian sacred collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns, called the Rig Veda. There it is recommended that strong alcohol beverages should be served to guests as they enter a new house or when a bride first enters her newly wed husband's home. The Kshatriya Warrior class and the Trading community, the Vaisyas, were allowed to consume alcohol beverages, brewed from honey and mahua flower or jaggery.

⁷Peterson, J. V., Nisenholz, B., & Robinson, G. (2003). *A nation under the influence: America's addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 22.

⁸WHO. (2003). *Get high in life without alcohol*. South East Asian Regional Office. Bangalore: WHO. Page 2.

⁹WHO. *Historical Background*. Retrieved 4. Oktober 2010 from <http://www.searo.who.int/>: [www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Facts and Figures ch1.pdf](http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Facts%20and%20Figures%20ch1.pdf)

In an ancient text from the 400 BC, the era of the first great Indian emperor Chandragupta, there are description on how The Mauryan governments regulated the sale and taxation of alcohol beverages and the conduct of bars or tavern in almost every village.¹⁰

In the era of the colonization of Southeast Asia by European nations brought forth changes, in the societies in many forms. One of the economical changes was in the form of manufacturing alcohol. The influence of the European colonizers affected the local culture, in many ways, one of them by introducing their culture of alcohol usage, mostly influencing the native groups that had the closest contact with their colonizers. The British allowed the setting of a distillery in India in the year 1862, taxing the manufacturing and sale of the alcohol beverages, becoming an important source of revenue for the British Crown.¹¹

The rise of the Roman Empire saw further spreading in the use of alcohol, for the Romans alcohol beverages were a necessity with food. They had accrued a taste for various alcohol beverages from different parts of their Empire, such as, Egypt, Judea, Greece, Liberia and southern France and they mostly consumed wines, beer and other fermented drinks.¹² The alcohol consumptions of the

¹⁰ WHO. (2003). *Get high on life without alcohol*. South East Asian Regional Office. Banglore: WHO. Page 2.

¹¹ WHO. *Historical Background*. Retrieved 4. Oktober 2010 from <http://www.searo.who.int/>: [www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Facts and Figures ch1.pdf](http://www.searo.who.int/LinkFiles/Facts%20and%20Figures%20ch1.pdf)

¹² Atanas Ionchev. (1998). Central and Eastern Europe. In M. Grant, *Alcohol and emerging markets: patterns, problems, and responses* (pp.177-202). Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel. Page 179.

Romans was very common and the general alcohol consumption in Rome at the start of Christianity is estimated to have been about 1,8 million hectoliters on an annually, which is about a half a liter of alcohol consumed for every individual of the city every day of the year.¹³

The birth of Christianity in Europe saw no dramatic changes in the attitudes toward alcohol. According to the teachings of the Catholic Church alcohol was a gift from God and meant to be used in moderation for enjoyment and health, while drunken behavior was considered a sin. This attitude did not alter with the uprising of the protestant reformation (1512). The production and disputation grew in early modern period in Europe (from the 16th century). Although spirits were mostly used for medical purposes, it has been claimed on the consumer and production development of distilled alcohol in Europe of that period, that;

"The sixteenth century created it; the seventeenth century consolidated it; the eighteenth popularized it"¹⁴

According to Gregory Austin, author of the book, *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800*, drunkenness was an accepted behavior in the eighteenth century, but industrialization changed these attitudes towards

¹³ Jack S. Blocker, David M. Fahey & R. Ian Tyrell. (2003). *Alcohol and temperance in modern history*. California: ABC-Clio. Page 667.

¹⁴ Fernand Braudel. (1979). *Capitalism and material life, 1400-1800*. London: Harper Colophon. Page 170.

drunkenness changed, when the need for punctual and reliable workers became apparent.¹⁵

In the colonial period a new use for alcohol was introduced. For the European colonial powers used alcohol intentionally to control the annexed colonial labourers. This use of alcohol was implemented in colonies both in the Asian and African colonies. The goal was to attract and addict labour forces in tin mines, rubber and palm oil plantations. It has been claimed that the British had introduced alcohol in India and Opium to the Chinese to ensure the control of domestic labour.¹⁶

2.2 Nature of alcohol

Alcohol has multiple functions in a community, for it can at the same time be categorized as food, drug and chemical, and can be rendered with various elaborated cultural symbolic meanings. In today's modern society alcohol products are usually looked upon as beverages served with meals or associated with socialization and enjoyment.¹⁷ Others categorized alcohol as a depressant, for the alcohol is essentially a toxic substance, poisonous to the human body, , and once the substance is ingested the body immediately starts to

¹⁵ Gregory Austin. (1985). *Alcohol in Western Society from Antiquity to 1800*. Santa Barbara: ABC -Clio Information Services. Page xxv.

¹⁶ David Jerningan. (1999). The Global expansion of alcohol marketing. *Journal of public Health Vol.20. No.1.* (pp56-80). Page 63.

¹⁷ Thomas Babor. (2003). *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press. Page 16.

dispose of it, in a worst case scenario drinking too much alcohol at one can kill a person.¹⁸

There are two main ways of producing alcohol beverages; fermentation or distillation. Famous ethnologist and author Desmond Morris believes that men discovered the effects of ingesting juice of fermented fruit after witnessing animals eating large quantity of fermented fruit followed by a strange reaction. It is known that wild elephants sometimes get intoxicated after eating fermented fruit.¹⁹ The process of fermentation of wine is a process that increases the chemical reaction within the substance, which turns grape juice into an alcoholic beverage. Yeast, a fungus with appetite for sugar causes the fermentation, which happens when the yeast interacts with sugars in the juice and create ethanol, commonly known as ethyl alcohol, and carbon dioxide.²⁰ In simple terms fermentation is the process of winemaking.

The origination of distillation is not clear. Some scholars such as Dr. Xiao Jiacheng claim that the technique is originated in China.²¹ Others such as, Dr. J. Vincent Peterson claim that distillation is an Arab invention, dated back to about 800. AD. The process of distillation serves to get the percentage of the

¹⁸ Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 19 & 23.

¹⁹Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; A report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 1.

²⁰Wikipedia. *Fermentation Wine*. Retrieved 31. August 2010 from wikipedia.org: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermentation_\(wine\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fermentation_(wine))

²¹ Xiao Jiacheng. (1995). China. In D. B. Heath, *International Handbook on Alcohol and Culture* (pp. 42-50). Westport: Greenwood Press. Page 42.

alcohol content to a higher level, this is done by boiling the alcohol away from the sugar, leaving pure alcohol, which is then diluted with water for it is too strong to drink.²²

2.2.1 Food

Alcohol beverages have been considered to be a part of dining for thousands of years. Wine culture in most societies often aligns specific wines with specific foods that make a special combination such as wine and cheese, red wine and steak and beer and peanuts. Alcohol can technically be classified as food, because it contains a considerable amount of calories. However the calories in alcohol are so called “empty calories”, meaning that there is little or no nutrition benefits from ingesting an alcohol beverage. Furthermore alcohol can hinder the metabolism of other food with actual nutrition value. Even though alcohol supplies individuals with a boost of energy, it is most often a short-term effect.²³

2.2.2 Drug

Alcohol is a mind altering and a toxic substance in terms of the direct and indirect effects it has on human body. In other words alcohol is a poisonous substance, if an individual drinks too much alcohol in a range of a very short period it can cause death. Like most drugs, alcohol can have positive effects

²²Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 18.

²³Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 18.

when consumed in moderate doses. The main attraction of the effects of alcohol is most likely the gradual dulling of the brain and the nervous system. Alcohol normally affects the part of the brain that regulates inhibitions. A few drinks can therefore make the drinker feel more sociable, creative or brave.²⁴

The effects most often caused by the consumption of alcohol are often individually based and dose related, and involves a short time restraint of normal bodily functions, such as slurred speech and the inability to drive a car. Intoxication, whether it is on a regular or an irregular bases is the key factor in the often-unfavorable consequences of alcohol consumption.²⁵



²⁴Vincent J. Peterson, Bernand Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation Under the Influence: Americas Addiction to Alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Pages 23-25.

²⁵ Thomas Babor. (2003). *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press. Pages 15-17.

2.2.3 Chemical

There are a few different types of alcohol attainable. The most popular type of alcohol is ethanol, which has been produced and consumed as fermented or distilled alcohol beverages for thousands of years. Ethanol is a clear and flammable liquid and has other practical uses than just as a beverage. Ethanol is generally used as a paint solvent, fuel for cars and raw material in the chemical industry. Ethanol which is meant to be used in industry, usually contains additives that make it unfit for oral consumption, even poisonous.²⁶

2.3 The global burden of alcohol

The problems associated with alcohol consumption are numerous and usually fall in the category of being social, economical or health related. Among the widespread negative social effects of alcohol consumption and abuse of alcohol are violence, low worker productivity, child and spousal abuse, homelessness and school failure.²⁷ Some developing societies, especially in the rural parts of the poorer societies, have seen alcohol consumption contribute to a kind of a poverty trap, with the increased social acceptability of alcohol consumption and accessibility in the poorer parts of the countries. When the man of the household becomes dependent on alcohol, it can lead to a

²⁶Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 22.

²⁷Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Pages 177-179.

significantly larger portion of the family budget being spent on alcohol beverages instead of other necessities, like food, clothing or education for the children.²⁸

The healthcare related harm caused by alcohol ranges from various forms of physical harms to mortality, often as a result of accidents at workplace, domestic violence, and road traffic injury or transmission of sexual transmitted diseases like HIV. The World Health Organization (WHO) claims that there is a relationship between alcohol consumption and more than 60 types of disease and injury. Alcohol is estimated to cause about 20-30% of worldwide of esophageal cancer, liver cancer, and cirrhosis of the liver, homicide, epilepsy, and motor vehicle accidents. Alcohol is believed to cause 1.8 million deaths worldwide (3.2% of total) and 58.3 million (4% of total) of disability. WHO estimates that about 76.3 million persons have alcohol disorders in the world.²⁹

2.3.1 The disease concept

Even though alcohol related problems have followed humankind for a long time the fact remains, that we do not know fully how to define the problem. Some say alcohol problems are to do with a moral weakness or a

²⁸ Ian Newman. (2004). Globalization and Alcohol. *Executive Journal* , 54-56. Page 54.

²⁹WHO. *Management of substance abuse - alcohol*. Retrieved 6. February 2010 from http://www.who.int/substance_abuse:
http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/facts/alcohol/en/index.html

personality defect, other say it to be a lack of spirituality. And then there is the concept of the disease.³⁰

A Swedish physician named Magnus Huss was the first to systematically classify the harm attributable to alcohol consumption disease in 1849. Huss formulated the term alcoholism and used it to describe what he considered to be a chronic disease.³¹

The concept of alcoholism as a disease was embraced in the late 1930's by Alcoholics Anonymous, a self-help group originated from The United States that addressed the helping individuals who had lost control of their life, because of compulsive alcohol drinking. In the opening chapter of the AA book, sometimes referred to as the Big book. Dr. William D. Silkworth, director of Charles B. Towns Hospital for drug and alcohol addictions in New York city in the 1930s and supporter of AA wrote the following description of alcoholism in the Big book, calling alcoholism an allergy of the body or a disease;

“We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot

³⁰ J. Vincent Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz og Gary Robinson, *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003). Page 79

³¹Wikipedia. (12. September 2010). *E. Morton Jellinek*. Retrieved 16. September 2010 from Wikipedia.org:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E. Morton Jellinek](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._Morton_Jellinek)

break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.³²

Getting the medical community to accept alcoholism as a disease was a complicated matter, there was though a growing movement to push the concept alcoholism as a disease in to get acknowledgement from the professional community. By the year 1940 at least thirty-nine different diagnostic systems had been introduced for alcoholism. Elvin Merton Jellinek a biostatistician, physiologist, and an alcoholism researcher, put forth a groundbreaking theory of subtypes of alcoholism, where he associated the subtypes with different degrees of physical, psychological, social and occupational impairments.³³

Defining alcoholism has been a highly controversial matter, alcohol researchers are not autonomous on the concept of disease, there are controversies of if it is a mental or a physical disease, other claim it a behavioral problem or a lack of will power, which can treated with behavioral therapy, and other sects claims alcoholism to be a spiritual sickness, or lack of god.

In the first edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, published by the American Psychiatric Association in 1952,

³²Alcoholics Anonymous. (2001). *Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book)*. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc. Page xxviii.

³³Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary Robinson. (2003). *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 99.

alcoholism was categorized as a personality disorder along with homosexuality and neurosis.³⁴

The concept of alcohol dependence syndrome was put forward in 1976 by a group of experts working for The World Health Organization.³⁵ The new concept had a new conceptualization of a core of indicators related to alcohol dependency. It was noted in the new concept that an individual did not have to have dependence to alcohol to experience alcohol related problems. However an individual with dependence on alcohol was more likely to experience harm from the use or abuse of alcohol.³⁶ WHO constructed six variable diagnostic criteria called ICD-10 with addiction diseases as seen below:

Table 1 , ICD-10 diagnostic criteria for dependence

1.	Difficulties in controlling substance-taking behaviour in terms of its onset, termination, or levels of use
2.	A strong desire or sense of compulsion to take the substance;
3.	A physiological withdrawal state when substance use has ceased or have been reduced, as evidenced by: the characteristic withdrawal syndrome for the substance; or use of the same (or closely related) substance with the intention of relieving or avoiding withdrawal symptoms;
4.	Evidence of tolerance, such that increased doses of the psychoactive substance are required in order to achieve effects originally produced by lower doses (clear examples of this are found in alcohol- and opiate-

³⁴Vincent J. Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz & Gary RobinsonG. (2003). *A nation Under the Influence: Americas Addiction to Alcohol*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon. Page 99.

³⁵WHO. *Management of substance abuse*. Retrieved 29. Agust 2010 from who.int: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/terminology/who_lexicon/en/

³⁶Thomas Babor. (2003). *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press. Page18.

	dependent individuals who may take daily doses sufficient to incapacitate or kill non-tolerant users)
5.	Progressive neglect of alternative pleasures or interests because of psychoactive substance use, increased amount of time necessary to obtain or take the substance or to recover from its effects;
6.	Persisting with substance use despite clear evidence of overtly harmful consequences, such as harm to the liver through excessive drinking, depressive mood states consequent to periods of heavy substance use, or drug-related impairment of cognitive functioning; efforts should be made to determine that the user was actually, or could be expected to be, aware of the nature and extent of the harm.

Source; WHO.³⁷

Alcohol Dependency syndrome was recognized in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition (DSM IV) of the American Psychiatric Association in 1994 which in turn have their own definition of alcohol dependency with similar diagnostic criteria as ICD -10.³⁸

In spite of the growing acceptability of the alcohol dependency as a disease, there are other models that have different approaches, and some of them have a following in the professional community. One of the more recognized is, The Public Health Model, which lays out alcohol problem from three different dimensions. Firstly there is the agent or the alcohol. Secondly, the host or the alcoholic and thirdly the environment. Another well recognized approach to the alcohol problem is the spiritual model. It is often affiliated with

³⁷WHO. *Dependence syndrome*. Retrieved 29. Agust 2010 from who.int: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/terminology/definition1/en/

³⁸American psychiatric Association. (1994). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental criteria from*. Wasington: American psychiatric Association.

Alcoholics Anonymous, for even so the organization are followers of the disease concept, they firmly believe that to accomplish full recovery from the “disease” the individual is in need of a spiritual awakening.³⁹



³⁹ J. Vincent Peterson, Bernard Nisenholz og Gary Robinson, *A nation under the influence: Americas addiction to alcohol* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2003). Page 81 & 87.

CHAPTER III

Thailand and Alcohol

3.1 Brief history of alcohol consumption in Thailand

Evidence of the alcohol use of the ancient Thais can be found on Khmer stone inscriptions in at the “Phra Nom Rung” castle, which name alcohol as a supranational being that should be worshiped like a god.¹

The alcohol drinks made by the ancient Thais where usually made from fruit, vegetables and rice preserves. Examples of the early alcohol drinks are “Nam Tan Mao” or “KraChae”, both made from coconut, “Au” which was made from sticky rice and then the distilled alcohol drinks such as “Sa Toe”. The Ayutthaya period (1350-1767) saw the introduction of distilled alcoholic drinks, like “LaowRong” which was made from rice, potato, corn and the highest quality rice known as “ Sam –Shoe”²

Accounts from foreigners who visited Siam (Siam is the former name of Thailand, changed in 1939) in the Ayutthaya era to the Rattanakosin era (1350 – 1932), claim that the main beverages consumed by Thais where water and tea. There was alcohol but the usage of it was an exception to the rule and it was mainly used for medical and traditional purposes or to show one status in

¹ Prah Paisah Wisalo. (1994). *History of Alcohol Consumption In Thailand*. Bangkok.

² Prah Paisah Wisalo. (1994). *History of Alcohol Consumption In Thailand*. Bangkok.

society, for only wealthy and authoritative personnel could get away with drinking.

Commerce with alcoholic beverages had begun in Thailand in the Ayutthaya period (1351-1767). The Siam government had made measurements to regulate the alcohol industry in order to generate tax revenue. During the Ayutthaya period Thai authorities found the need to control alcohol consumption among high rank officials. Therefore a law was enforced banning all parties where alcohol was served among the officials, a violator of the law would be considered being guilty of treason. After the fall of Ayutthaya all commerce with alcohol was halted, and then it was re-established in the era of Rama I (1767).³

The main reason for the Thais low consumption and abstention from alcohol among the Thais is considered to be the strong faith in Buddhism.⁴ In the teachings of the Buddha are the so called five Precepts or teachings, which are recommendations Buddha proposed to be lived by one who wishes to lead a peaceful life while contributing to the happiness of family and society.⁵ The fifth precept emphasizes on respect for mental and physical wellbeing by avoiding all intoxicants. It furthermore advises its followers to be mindful, or to be aware of

³Bundit Sornpisan, & Chutaporn Kaewmungkun. (28. May 2008). Past and present. *dramatic change of alcohol consumption in thailand*. Page 1.

⁴Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2006). Thailand: Alcohol today. *Society for study of addiction* , 783-787. Page 783.

⁵ Peter Harvey. (2000). *An introudction to buddhist ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 60-61.

the suffering caused by un-mindful consumption.⁶ Therefore drinking alcohol was considered a violation of Buddhist way of living. Despite the Buddha teaching, consumption of alcohol was a part of social events, such as: weddings, funerals, New Year and other special celebrations.⁷

During the reign of King Rama I the first king of the Rattanakosin period (1782- 1932), the first alcohol brewery was established and taxation of alcohol began to generate revenues for the government.⁸ Social attitudes toward alcohol consumption also changed significantly in the Rattanakosin period, when drinking alcohol was no longer seen as shameful or bad behavior. Historians trace this change in attitude towards alcohol consumption to be the effect of growing influence of the Chinese in Thai society, who had been immigrating in to Thailand in ever greater numbers. During this period the number of Chinese immigrants in Thailand grew so sharply that they resulted in constituting a quarter of the Thai population. Therefore the individuals belonging to the elite of Bangkok, civil servants and community leaders could be seen drinking alcohol freely in public.⁹

1855 saw the birth of the Bowring Treaty, which was a Treaty of trade between the Kingdom of Siam and Great Britain, with the objective to ignite

⁶ Peter Harvey. (2000). *An introduction to buddhist ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 77.

⁷ Ian Newman. (2004). Globalization and alcohol. *Executive Journal* , 54-56. Page 55.

⁸ Ian Newman. (2004). Globalization and alcohol. *Executive Journal* , 54-56. Page 55.

⁹ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2006). Thailand: Alcohol today. *Society for study of addiction* , 783-787. Page 783.

trading between the two nations. The Bowring Treaty gave the British residents rights in Thailand and trading privileges. The treaty also removed all trading privileges that had been awarded to the Chinese community and was an attempt to regularize import and export between the two nations and to maximize the mutual profit from opium trade. The Siamese Kingdom later made similar Trade agreements with other Western nations such as the US, France, Denmark, Portugal and Netherlands. The Bowring Treaty open a gateway for import in to Siam, which later in the 18th century was dominated by Western shipping companies and contributing to a popularization of western goods, such as Beer and spirits.¹⁰

With increased availability of alcohol beverages the consumption also increased. In 1887 The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was founded in Siam in order to counter the alcohol problems in Thai society. According to writings of Miss Mary L. Cort of Petchaburi, who was the president of the Siam Union, there was considerable drunkenness visible on the streets of Bangkok as well as moderate drinking, but the drinking behavior was mostly upheld by foreigners.¹¹

The great depression and retreat from colonial exports opened up opportunities in beer production in the 1930's. BoonrawdSrethabutra of the BhiromBhakadi family had been working as a manager for a European sawmill,

¹⁰ Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (1995). *Thailand economy and politics*. Oxford: Oxford Univerity Press. Page 98-102.

¹¹ Ernest Hurst Cherrington. (Editor.). (1929). *The Encyclopedia of the Alcohol problem* (V. 5). Ohio: Anti saloon league of America.

recognized the opportunity for domestically manufactured beer.¹² In 1933 Boonrawd persuaded the Siamese government for a concession to raise a beer brewery. The BhiromBhakadi family managed to preserve the concession with the Thai authorities for the next six decades, ensuring the them virtually a monopoly of the Thai Beer market, for their beer brand Singha, had no rival on the Thai market.¹³

The consumption of alcohol in Thailand increased a lot after the end of the Second World War (1945). A barrier was broken in that period, as it became socially accepted for the general public to use alcohol as a channel for relaxation and celebration, and in this period the alcohol industry in Thailand began to get more organized and started to use advertisements to promote its products to further increase their sales. The period after the war saw a lot of changes in the Kingdom of Siam. It marked the beginning of both social and economic changes for the nation, influenced by the forces of urbanization, modernization, capitalism and then later globalization and finally the power of the mass media. These dynamics forced modernity upon the Thai nation which was made up mostly by rice farmers and fishermen stepping in to an era of fast growing modernity and in many ways transforming the ways of life for the people, one of the changes being the increase in alcohol consumption.¹⁴

¹² Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (1995). *Thailand economy and politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Page 46

¹³Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 130-131.

¹⁴Wisalo, P. P. (1994). *History of Alcohol Consumption In Thailand*. Bangkok: Thailand Public Health Institute.

3.2 Alcohol Use of the Thai people

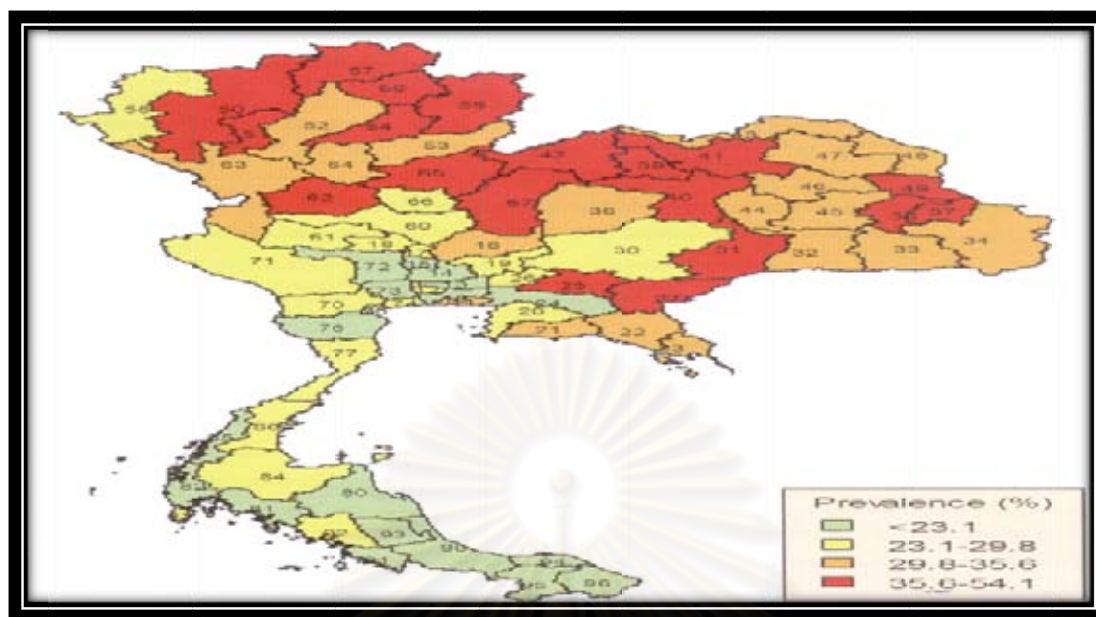
Thailand is the highest alcohol consuming country in the Southeast Asian region, the only other country in the region with similar alcohol consumption is Lao. According to the Who Global Status Report on Alcohol, Thailand ranks in 40th place as a global alcohol consumer, 85th place in consumption of beer and in 5th place as a global spirit consumer, these figures are from the year 2001, therefore its is likely that Thailand's alcohol consumption even ranks higher now in 2010, for all evidence points to a rapid growth in overall alcohol consumption.

¹⁵ The alcohol consumption is varies a lot between the geographical areas of the country. Elements affecting the geographical difference in alcohol consumption are mostly economical, religious and traditional. For example the people of Isan (Northeast part of Thailand) have a reputation of being heavy drinkers. The figures below portray the geographical diversity of the Thai people.

ศูนย์วิทยทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

¹⁵WHO. (2004). *Global alcohol status report*. Geneva: WHO.

Figure 1. Thai Alcohol consumption in general



Source: Thailand Alcohol situation 2009.¹⁶

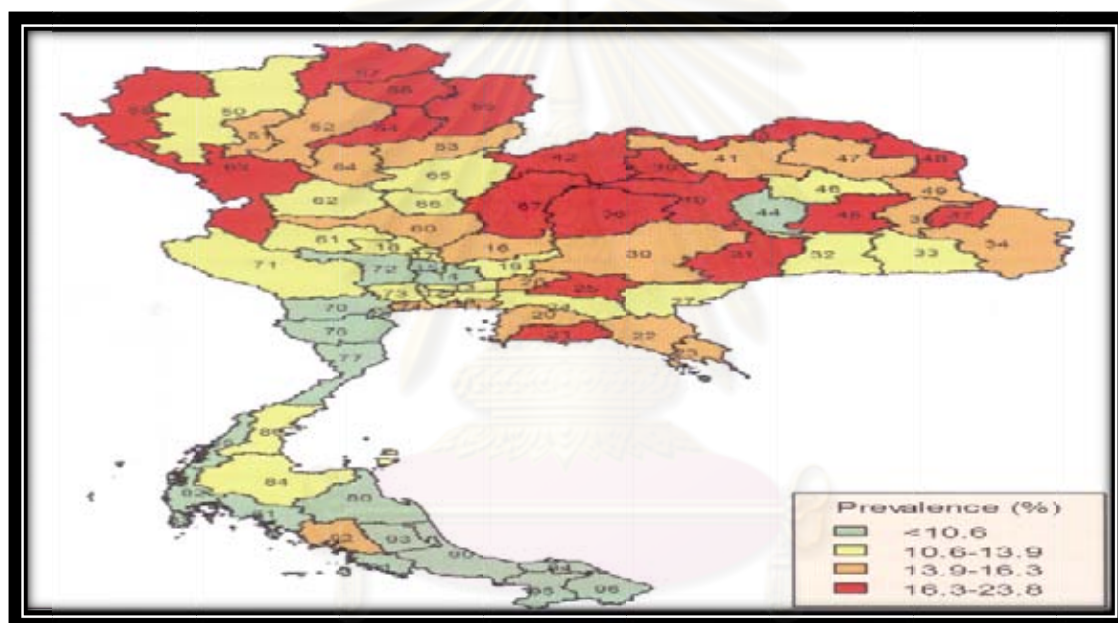
Figure 1 shows a percentage of Thai alcohol drinkers in general. The green color representing the lowest consumption 10,6 % and under, the yellow 10,6 -13,9 %, the orange 13,9 -16,3% and the red 16,3 -23,8%. As displayed on the picture there is a huge difference the northern and the southern parts of Thailand. Why in the Southern parts of the country alcohol consumption is low, is explained by the regions strong Islam.

The explanation for the high alcohol prevalence in the North and Northeast is harder to explain, but there does seem to be strong tradition to consume alcohol in those parts of the country then the some other parts. One would think that a rise in alcohol consumption would go hand in hand with a rise in general consumption, but it does not seem to do that according to the data, for

¹⁶CAS. (2009). *Thailand alcohol situation 2009*. Bangkok: ThaiHealth. Page 10.

the general alcohol consumption is not so high in the Bangkok area. When the picture is examined one can see that the north and northeast seem to be the high prevalence drinkers and the southern part are low prevalence drinkers. It is also interesting that surrounding the Bangkok province most provinces are low prevalence, and Bangkok seems to have a slightly higher alcohol consumption rate than its neighboring provinces.

Figure 2. Thai Weekly - monthly alcohol consumption



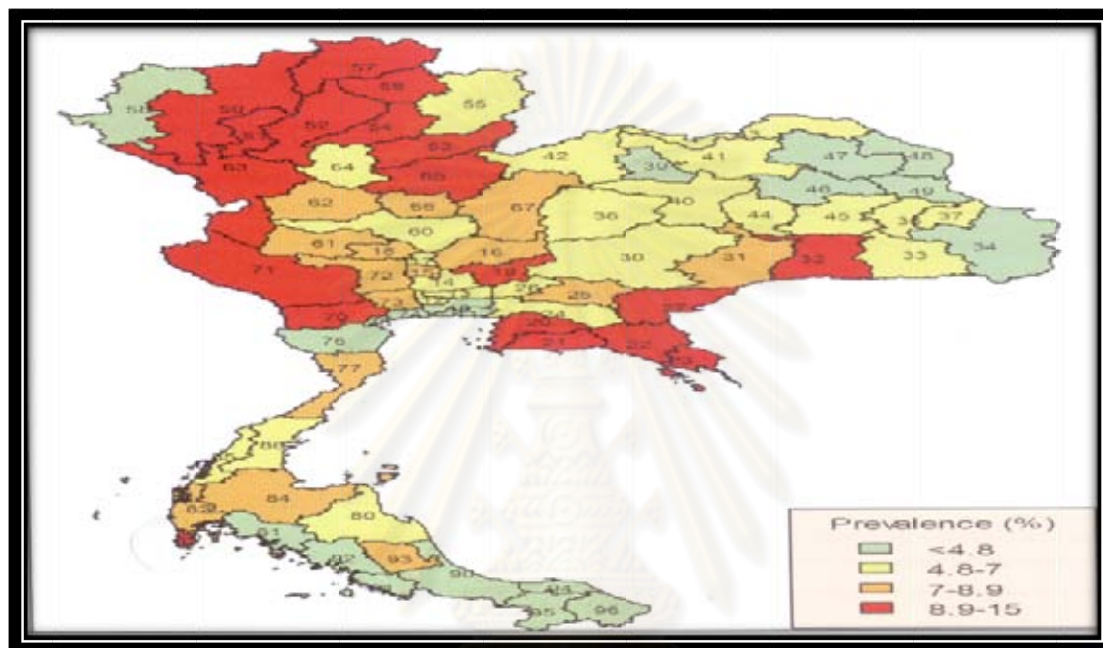
Source: Thailand Alcohol situation 2009.¹⁷

Thai moderate drinkers, consuming alcohol on a monthly basis can be seen on figure 2. The pattern of alcohol consumption is very similar to the one on figure 1. However there is a change in the northeast, many drinking provinces turn from red to orange or orange to yellow. This indicates that though they are among the high consumption population, they consume alcohol moderately.

¹⁷CAS. (2009). *Thailand alcohol situation 2009*. Bangkok: ThaiHealth. Page 12.

Again the urban area of Thailand is on the higher side of the scale. Consumption of alcohol on a daily basis indicates that there is a high chance of problem drinkers on the premises. Figure 3 shows those areas of Thailand with daily alcohol consumption, which indicates alcohol dependency.

Figure 3. Thai daily alcohol consumption



Source: Thailand Alcohol situation 2009.¹⁸

The highest prevalence area of alcohol consumption is the north and northeast parts of the country, as well as South-eastern coastline. The Thai peninsula or southern Thailand now gets marked in the higher part of the scale, seeing four parts of the southern parts of the country in orange and one part in red. The red part being the island of Phuket, one of the most popular tourist areas, the area southeast of Bangkok is also a very popular tourist area, which might explain the high consumption in that part of the country. The Bangkok

¹⁸CAS. (2009). *Thailand alcohol situation 2009*. Bangkok: ThaiHealth. Page 14.

area is among the lowest alcohol prevalence areas in the country according to the picture.

There does not seem to be any particular pattern between urban and rural drinking behavior. Other from the part that the urban drinkers drink more expensive and imported alcohol beverages, while the rural stick to the more traditional and cheaper alcohol beverages. There are surely more in-depth differences on urban and rural alcohol consumption, which will be recommended for further research.

3.3 Thai Drinking Culture

Thailand does not have an established culture of using alcohol through their historical usage of the substance as mass consumers. This is accounted for mostly by the fact that the country was a poor country, therefore most of the inhabitants could not afford the luxury of alcohol. Further more according to the teachings of Buddha, one should not consume alcohol or any other intoxicants, which by many indications seem to have been more respected in old Siam than in modern time Thailand. Even so, there are indications that the Thais do have an existing alcohol culture, especially in the rural parts, where it is common behavior for Thais to curdle together on a mat on the ground after the hard days work and share a bottle of “Lao Kao” Thailand’s famous white whiskey.

The social and cultural roles of alcohol in a society are various and differ from one society to another. Alcohol beverages are in often defined by their

symbolic meanings and they play a vital part in classifying the social context, which they are consumed in. The following subchapters will go further in to discussing the characteristics of Thai alcohol culture and their symbolic meanings relating to Thai customs and behavior.¹⁹

3.3.1 Situation definer

Alcoholic beverages are often used to define the nature of the occasions. Every alcohol beverage has a link to some sort of an occasion. For example it is widely expected behavior in most western cultures that wine is appropriate with a meal, but the same does not stand for beer and spirits. Beer and spirits are thought to be more appropriate for social relaxation and spirits as well. An example of an alcohol beverage in the western culture associated with a celebratory occasion is champagne. If people are seen drinking champagne, it is assumed by other bystanders that those drinking the champagne are celebrating something.²⁰

Consumption of alcohol beverages is associated with celebrations in Thailand as in most societies. Recent developments have however seen many of the celebrations and some traditional Buddhist one in particular have been

¹⁹Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; A report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 31.

²⁰Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; a report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 30.

turned in to drinking festivals, such as Songkran, where people engage in water fights and massive alcohol consumption.

3.3.2 Statement of affiliation

When an individual chooses an alcohol beverage he can also be making a statement of affiliation, that is a declaration that he might belong to a particular group, generation, class, tribe, subculture or a nation with its associated values, beliefs and attitudes. Many alcohol beverages are a symbol of their nation; such as Vodka for Russia, Beer for Germany and Tequila for Mexico. The national alcoholic drinks are often romanticized images of the nation's character and when an individual stays loyal to the national alcohol brand he may be expressing his loyalty to the nation and his cultural identity.²¹

Modern day drinking patterns of Thai people, especially the younger ones, give reason to believe that they align themselves with certain groups by their choice of alcohol beverage. One indicator for this might be the increased sales of imported alcohol beverages, which in spite of being way more expensive than the domestic ones have the image of being trendy and sophisticated.²² In rural Thailand the people drink more of the cheap and domestic alcohol beverages, mainly beer, spirits and homebrewed spirits. In most rural areas in

²¹ Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; a report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 34.

²² Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2. February 2010). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer).

Thailand people choose the cheaper alcohol beverages simply because of the fact that the rural areas have a weaker economy than the urban areas. In some cases drinking local beer and spirit is a symbol of the region or the district, so the individuals could be expressing their identity through their choice of drink.

Thailand does not have an alcohol drink that resembles the national characteristic, like some other nations. Interestingly, if any alcohol beverage has affiliation with a Thai national identity, it would be beer. Not because beer has any sort of traditional or historical affiliation, but because of social acceptability of the product and affiliation with the Thai nation and culture through.²³ This can be explained by ongoing marketing strategies of the two major beer brands, Beer Chang and Beer Singha, both apply their marketing tactics in a way that focuses a lot on Thai national culture. PatricJory gives a good example on how Beer Chang is advertised in a common Thai magazine in the late nineties. Where the use of Thai cultural codes, such as a traditional Thai textile and elephants in the background as well as a corner logo stating “we love Thai culture”. Which is the logo of a government sponsored campaign aimed at conservation of Thai culture.²⁴

²³ Natwipa Sinuswarm. (17. August 2010). PhD student and alcohol Resercher. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer).

²⁴ Patric Jory. (1999). Thai Identity; globalization and advertising culture. *Asian Studies Rewiew* , 461 - 487. Page 475-476.

3.3.3 Social status indicator

The choice of an alcoholic beverage can also be an indicator of social status. Generally imported alcohol drinks have a higher status than the local ones. In many East European nations, such as Poland, wine is considered to resemble high status, while beer and vodka are the alcohol beverages of the working class.²⁵

The same applies to Thailand, which is a society where hierarchy has been an underlying social factor for centuries, as in other Asian cultures. According to Niels Mulder, Thai people invest a lot in their image in their social “face” and they are highly vulnerable in how they present it. The consequences for the Thai individual to “lose face” can be insecurity and anxiety over his or hers status in society.²⁶ Therefore gaining and holding status in Thai society is of great importance. Drinking occasions can be used as an opportunity to express ones status, by ordering an expensive imported alcohol beverages could be used as a gateway to mingle with the upper-class elites, in order to heighten ones status within society.

²⁵Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; a report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 32.

²⁶Niels Mulder. (2000). *Inside Thai society*. Chaing Mai: silkworm Books. Page 53.

3.3.4 Thai drinking places

As noted before, alcohol consumption is essentially considered to be a social act. There are rules and norms regarding who, what, when, where and in whose company an individual shall drink. Most cultures have formed some sort of a specific environment, designed for people to drink alcohol. There are various types of different drinking places in the world, varying from a fancy New York cocktail lounge to scruffy bamboo hut by the beach at in Jamaica. Most cultures have their own version of a socially acceptable drinking place.

Whether being a communal facility like a bar, club or any other type of official drinking venue, or a private one such as a private household, the drinking places around the world are in general very similar. There are however a few interesting cultural differences that are worth highlighting. In societies where attitudes toward alcohol are more ambiguous and uneasy and where alcohol consumption is a moral issue, the drinking environments are more likely to be more enclosed, isolated and even secretive. This applies to cultures such as in Scandinavian countries, Britain and North America.²⁷

In societies where the consumption of alcohol is more accepted as an element of everyday life the drinking environments tend to be highly visible, and when inside there are usually large windows and open spaces. These more open societies also have a tendency to drink outside, even if the climate of the

²⁷Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; a report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 36.

country will not allow it all year round. Countries that fit this description are for example European countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece.²⁸

It is safe to say that Thai attitude toward alcohol consumption is more in line with the countries of South Europe. For there seems to be a very relaxed attitude towards alcohol in Thailand. Dr. Graham Fordham, experienced a very positive attitude towards drinking in the Northern Thailand. He wrote the following in his paper on the social change in Northern Thailand;

“Unlike many western societies where alcohol use is often considered synonymous with alcohol abuse, in rural Thailand at least, alcohol is looked upon as very positive experience”²⁹

These attitudes are probably manifested in the drinking environments the Thai people have designed for their consumption of alcohol, which are very much in line with the drinking environments of the South European countries. According to a survey on drinking patterns of Thai men, most of them drank at their own home or at a relative's home. Drinking at the village store was also popular in rural part of the country. Other places mentioned where picnic areas such as by the beach or by a waterfall.³⁰

²⁸Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *Social and cultural aspects of drinking; a report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 36-37.

²⁹ Graham Fordham. (1995). *Social change, cultural logic, and the transformation of domestic relations in rural Northern Thailand*. Canberra: Australian National University. Page 13.

³⁰ Sawtri Assanagkornchai, John B. Sounders & Katherine M. Conigrave. (2000). Patterns of drinking in Thai men. *Alcohol and alcoholism*, 263-269.

The Thai people have very liberal attitude towards alcohol, which manifests itself in social acceptability to consume alcohol almost anywhere at almost any time of the day. All that is needed is a mat or a foldable table and stools sit on, and beer or Thai whiskey and preferably ice cubes and snacks to make the occasion more pleasant. Thais can be seen sipping on alcohol beverages outside on street corners from early morning until midnight

3.3.5 Drinking of the genders

There are distinctions between masculine and feminine alcohol beverages in all societies. Usually the alcohol beverages for men are described as strong and fierce, while female drinks are often weaker, softer and sweeter. Even in societies that have just a one alcohol beverage available, such as palm wine among the Lele of Zaire, a weaker and a sweeter version of the same beverage is considered more suitable for the women.³¹

According to the research of Dr. Graham Fordham, in the North of Thailand alcohol consumption is a behavior dominated by men and it is considered to be a significant factor in the performance of a male role. An individual who does not drink alcohol would undoubtedly have a hard time “khao sang khom” socializing with the others, though the villagers would in some

³¹Social Issues Research Center. (1998). *social and cultural aspects of drinking; a report to the Amsterdam Group*. Oxford: Social Issues Research Center. Page 34.

way respect such a person by calling him a “good man” others would express that an individual who does not drink must be gay (katoj).³²

A Thai alcoholic and member of Alcoholic Anonymous who the researcher interviewed, described similar attitudes in the urban life in Bangkok. According to him there is great pressure for a young male to drink in Thai society. He mentioned an example of this pressure from his high school period, where in parties the older boys will pick on the juniors and order them to drink alcohol. Most often it was alcohol in a large container, and the older boys cheered as the young one finished of the alcohol drink in a short period of time. The aim is to get the junior heavily intoxicated. If however the young one resists taking a drink, he is in great danger of getting beaten up by the older boys. The interviewee remembered a few instances when his friends from school beat up on a younger one for resisting, he also shared that he had in his senior years participated the same activity and pressured juniors into to drinking alcohol, and at least once he beat a individual up after he had resisted taking a drink.³³

Alcohol consumption of Thai male overshadows the consumption of the females. Traditionally Thai women have not consumed alcohol, theirs was the responsibility of the home and raising the children, while the men worked and had time to play. In spite of the Thai tradition on the role of females and

³² Graham Fordham. (1995). *Social change, cultural logic, and the transformation of domestic relations in rural northern thailand*. Canberra: Australian National University. Page 14

³³Thai_alcoholic. (10. March 2010). Thai Member of AA. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewee).

alcohol, the behavior of Thai females has been changing, and rather rapidly in recent years.

3.4 Recent developments in Thai alcohol consumption

All available evidence suggests that the number of alcohol drinkers in Thailand has been increasing. A survey from 2001 indicates that the number of drinkers increased from 13.7 million in 1996 to 15.3 million in 2001 or increased 2.3 per cent per year. Among those 15.3 million drinkers, 13.0 million were male, and 2.3 million were female. The highest prevalence or 39.3%, was among people in the age group of 25-39 years old and the people in the youngest age group 15-24 years old, their prevalence was 21.6%.³⁴

Thailand is the highest alcohol-consuming nation in the region of Southeast Asia, a region with a history of relatively low alcohol consumption. WHO alcohol consumption world rating system shows the same upward trend in Thai alcohol consumption.³⁵

³⁴J. Bung-OnRitthiphakdee. (2001). *Alcohol consumption and control in Thailand*. London: Global Alcohol Policy Alliance. Page 16.

³⁵WHO. (2004). *Global alcohol status report*. Geneva: WHO.

Table 2: World rank alcohol consumption per capita, (liters)

Year	Beer	Vine	Spirit	Total
2001	85 (1,31)	124 (0,04)	5 (7,13)	40 (8,47)
2000	92 (1,25)	132 (0,03)	6 (7,12)	43 (8,40)
1999	102 (1,13)	138 (0,03)	6 (7,16)	44 (8,31)
1998	102 (1,04)	146 (0,01)	9 (6,61)	50 (7,71)

Source: WHO Global Report 2004.³⁶

As seen above in table 2 the Thai people are increasing their alcohol consumption in every category of alcohol beverages, in the four-year period from 1998- 2001, with spirits being the most popular, but Thais are according to this data Thailand is the fifth largest spirit consumers in the world, in the year 2001. The biggest progression how ever is in beer consumption, going up seventeen places in the four-year period, while spirit consumption only moves up ten places. The year 2001 Thais where ranking the 85 largest beer consuming country. Even though vine is not the favorite alcohol beverage of the Thais, the ranking shows that the Thais are developing a taste for vine, with a considerable growth in the vine consumption in the period.

Data gathered by Dr. Bandit former director of CAS shows the large increase in alcohol consumption of a period of 44 years, showing the alcohol consumption increasing many fold in that period.

³⁶WHO. (2004). *Global alcohol status report*. Geneva: WHO.

Figure 4: Thai alcohol consumption 1961-2004.



Source: CAS.³⁷

The line on figure 4 shows that in the beginning of the 1960's the alcohol consumption was 0,26 liters per capita. Forty-three years later the alcohol consumption has reached 8,7 liters per capita, which is a thirty-three fold increase in alcohol consumption of the Thai nation.

Data compiled by the Centre of Alcohol Studies in Thailand, on consumption development between 1996 to 2007, further substantiates these findings on considerable increase in alcohol consumption in Thailand.

³⁷Bundit Sornpisan. (2008). Alcohol development in Thailand and policy control. Bangkok, Thailand: Center of Alcohol Studies. Slide 7.

Table 3: Consumption development of age groups 1996 -2007.

Age Group	Drinkers 1996	Drinkers 2007	Change
15 – 19	4.7 %	8.0 %	70%
20 – 24	15.0 %	21.6 %	44%
25 – 29	20.1 %	24.5 %	22%
30 – 34	22.1 %	24.7 %	12%
35 – 39	22.0 %	25.6 %	16%
40 – 44	20.9 %	25.6 %	22%
45 – 49	20.9 %	24.9 %	19%
45 – 54	18.6 %	21.7 %	17%
55 – 59	18.6 %	17.9 %	-4%
60+	11.6 %	10.5 %	-9%

Source: Centre of Alcohol Studies Thailand³⁸

As seen in table 3 the youngest age groups are the ones who have the highest increase in alcohol consumption in this period. The youngest age group 15 -19 years old shows an escalation of 70% consumption in this 11-year period. The second youngest age group 20-24 year old is not so far behind, with an escalation of 44% in alcohol consumption over the same period. The statistics show that almost all age groups are consuming more alcohol in 2007 then 1996. The only age groups that are decreasing their alcohol consumption are the two oldest ones. Though the increase in alcohol consumption is visible among all age

³⁸ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2010, February 2). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

groups under 55 years old, the utmost growth in alcohol consumption is among the young Thai people.

Table 4 : Gender group alcohol consumption Development 1996 -2007.

Sex	Drinkers 1996	Drinkers 2007	Change
Male	28,3%	37,7%	33%
Female	23%	3,8%	65%

Source: Centre of Alcohol Studies in Thailand³⁹

When the same data is analyzed according to gender, the consumption increase is seen from another perspective, as seen above on table 3. The 11-year period shows a change for male alcohol consumers from 28,3 % to 37,7 %, which is a 33 % increase in alcohol consumption during this period. The findings on the female alcohol consumption show a big increase in consumption or a rise from 2,3 % to 3,8 %, which is a 65% change from 1996.

Table 5 : Trends of alcohol consumption in Thailand.

	1996	2001	2004	2006	2007	Change
Non Drinker	68,5%	67,4%	67,3%	68,5%	70%	2%
Drinker	31,5%	32,6%	32,7%	31,5%	30%	-5%
Occasion Drinker	14,6%	16,2%	14,9%	13,1%	9,7%	-34%
Regular Drinker	16,8%	16,4%	17,8%	18,5%	20,2%	20%
Daily Drinker	6,2%	5,8%	6,4%	7,7%	6,5%	6%

³⁹Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2010, February 2). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

1-2 Times a week	5,5%	5,6%	6,1%	6,6%	6,7%	4%
1-2 Time a month	5,2%	5%	5,3%	4,2%	7,9%	46%

Source: Centre of Alcohol Studies Thailand ⁴⁰

The drinking trend has also changed considerably in the in the eleven year period measured by CAS. As seen on table 5 there can be seen several patterns in Thai drinking trends. After seeing the alcohol beverage production volume on an almost constant rise over the last decade, one would expect a similar rise in consumption. But in fact the drinking trend of the Thais seems to be in both directions. First of all there is a decrease in drinkers and occasional drinkers, as well as an increase in non-drinkers, which implies that fewer individuals are consuming alcohol. Secondly, the data shows a considerable increase with regular, monthly, weekly and daily-drinkers. The largest figure is the 46% increase with the 1-2 drinks per month drinkers and on the opposite side there is a 34% decrease with the occasional drinkers. Then there is a 20% increase with regular drinkers. Overall there is an increase with the drinkers, and it should be noted that the high percentage decrease among occasional drinkers does not necessarily mean a decrease in overall drinking trend. The individuals that are no longer belonging to that group could just as well increased their drinking than stopped drinking, In fact one would think it logical that occasional drinkers, increased their drinking, thus the data could be interpreted that 34 % of them drink more then they did before.

⁴⁰ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2010, Febuary 2). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P.A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

CHAPTER IV

The Thai Alcohol Industry

4.1 Thai Alcohol Market Environment

The Thai alcohol industry was largely controlled by a few wealthy Thai families, the most dominating being the Bhirom Bhakdi family who made a alcohol a concession in 1933 with the Thai government ensuring them a monopoly of the Thai alcohol market, with the only Thai manufactured Beer brand, Singah. The concession came to a close about six decades later in 1999, when the manufacturing of alcohol beverages in Thailand was liberalized.¹

The Anand Panyarachun government proposed the liberalization of the Thai alcohol market in 1992 and after discussion in the congress it was decided to implement it in two steps. The brewing of Beer was liberalized in 1993 and spirits in 1999. The liberalization was executed in two parts, firstly, the government distilleries were auctioned off, including property, buildings and equipment. Secondly, it became available for any company to apply to the Excise Department for a license to manufacture alcohol beverages, those who applied for these licenses had to conform to certain laws and standards.²

¹ Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 130.

²Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 141.

After the liberalization the alcohol market environment changed and many smaller manufacturers began to expand their business. The most noticeable was Surathip, later known as Thai Beverage (ThaiBev). Today ThaiBev is Thailand's leading alcohol manufacturer with more than half of the market share. The rivalry between Boon Rawd Brewery and ThaiBev, starting in the middle of the 1990's have been know as the " Beer Wars" and ThaiBev are have come out with the upper hand in these beer marketing battles. The fall of Boon Rawd Brewery is remarkable, being one of the most highly established family companies in Thailand and with 90% of the Thai alcohol market in the mid 1990's. Just a few years after the liberation of the alcohol market in 2000 their market share had reduced to 30%. A company, which had battled every crisis in the 20th century and had grown a custom to a secure and comfortable monopolistic business atmosphere, almost became their downfall.³

4.2.1 ThaiBev

ThaiBev's dominance of the Thai alcohol market can be traced to the company's founder Charoen Sirivadhanabhakdi, often ranked as Thailand's riches man. In 2005 Forbes Magazine he was ranked the fifth richest man in Southeast Asia and 194 in the world .^{4&5} ThaiBev's foundations was where

³Nation. (18. August 2010). *Boon Rawd's battle for survival*. (P. Chagsorn, Writer) Retrieved 6. October 2010 from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com>:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/2010/08/18/business/Boon-Rawd-s-battle-for-survival-30136097.html>.

⁴Baker, C., & Phongpaichit, P. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 129.

formed in 1983 when Charoen set up his alcohol company Surathip with the aim to take part in bid to control 32 provincial distilleries, the provincial distilleries where split into twelve zones in the bid. Surathip eventually got control of all twelve zones, mostly due to network of powerful friends. After the liberation of the Thai alcohol market Surathip spearheaded an offensive in progressive marketing of alcohol, one of them being the introduction of Beer Chang to the Thai market in 1995.⁶ In 2003 Charoen set up Thai Beverage to act as his holding company and in 2006 the company was listed on the Singapore exchange where it raised the third highest first sale of stock by a company to the public, ever seen in Singapore.⁷ ThaiBev is the biggest alcohol manufacturer in Thailand, even one of the biggest in the region of Southeast Asia. ThaiBev's main alcohol brand are as follows;

Beer

- Chang is the highest selling beer manufactured by ThaiBev. First on the market in 1995 and is brewed at 6,4% alcohol by volume (abv) for the domestic market and 5% abv. for export. In fact the domestic and exported versions of Chang beer are two different types of beer, the

⁵Forbes. (9. July 2007). *Southeast Asia's 40 Richest*. Retrieved 6. October 2010 from forbes.com: http://www.forbes.com/2005/09/07/southeast-asia-richest-cz_05sealand_6.html.

⁶Baker, C., & Phongpaichit, P. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 145.

⁷Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 150.

exported version being a 100% malt, while the domestic Chang beer contains rice.⁸

- Archa beer has only been on the market for 6 years, but it was launched 2006. The beer is 5,4% abv and especially aimed at an emerging group of beer drinkers who prefer a smooth beer with a lower alcohol content.⁹
- Federbrau Beer is especially aimed at the younger generations of beer drinkers. Some of the marketing of the Federbrau beer entails that this particular beer is for young people who live sophisticated and exiting lives. As the name gives away, the beer has the flavor of a German beer and has the lowest abv. percentage of all the beer manufactured by ThaiBev, which is at 4,7% abv.¹⁰

Spirits

- Mehkong is ThaiBevs most famous liqueur brand, but not the highest selling. Mehkong liqueur is categorized as rum and was first manufactured in 1941, with the intent having a high quality domestic liqueur to compete with the imported ones.¹¹
- Sang Som rum is ThaiBev's biggest selling Spirit and their strongest domestic brand. Sang Som rum held about 50% of the brown spirit

⁸ThaiBev. *Beer*. Retrieved 13. August 2010 from Thaibev.com:
<http://www.thaibev.com/en08/product.aspx?sublv1gID=11>

⁹ThaiBev. *Beer*. Retrieved 13. August 2010 from Thaibev.com:
<http://www.thaibev.com/en08/product.aspx?sublv1gID=11>

¹⁰ ThaiBev. *Beer*. Retrieved 13. August 2010 from Thaibev.com:
<http://www.thaibev.com/en08/product.aspx?sublv1gID=11>

¹¹ ThaiBev. *Spirit*. Retrieved 14. August 2010 from Thaibev.com:
<http://www.thaibev.com/en08/product.aspx?sublv1gID=12>

market in Thailand for about three decades. In the year 2006 the brand fell under 50 %, the drink is still the spirit choice of the Thai drinker.^{12&13}

- Ruang Khao is the ThaiBevs biggest white spirit brand. It comes with four different levels of alcohol content, which is 28%, 30%, 35%, 40% abv.

Other successful spirit brands produced by ThaiBev are; Mungkorn Thong and Hong Thong and brands based on malt whisky such as Crown 99 and Blue, White spirit like Niyomthai and White Tiger. Thau also manufacture Scottish whisky brands such as Hankey Banister and Pin Winnie Royal Scotch Whisky.¹⁴

4.2.2 Boon Rawd Brewery

Boon Rawd Brewery was established in the year 1933 by Boonrawd Srethabutra whom King Prajadhipok Rama VII bestowed the seniority title of Phraya Bhirom Bhakdi. The Boon Rawd Brewery is still owned and operated by the Bhirom Bhakdi family, now the third and the fourth generation.¹⁵

¹²ThaiBev. *Spirit*. Retrieved 14. Agust 2010 from Thaibev.com: <http://www.thaibev.com/en08/product.aspx?sublv1gID=12>.

¹³ThaiBev. *History*. Retrieved 14. Agust 2010 frá sangsomrum.com: <http://www.sangsomrum.com/history.htm>

¹⁴Wikipedia. (18. July 2010). *ThaiBev*. Retrieved 14. August 2010 from Wikipedia.org: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ThaiBev>.

¹⁵Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2008). *Thai capital after the 1997 crisis*. Silkworm Books. Page 130.

The company's main products are beer and soft drinks, though initially they were a beer brewery, the soft drinks are a new line of products and give the company a broader variety of products, as said before their main goal has been to dominate the domestic beer market, as well as to increase the growth in beer export. Their most successful beer brands are as follows;

- Singha is the brewery's flagship product and their premier beer and the brewery's highest selling product. Singha was the highest selling domestic beer until Chang replaced took the first spot in the so-called "beer wars". The alcohol content of the beer used to be 6% abv. but was changed to 5% abv.
- Leo is the economy beer brand of the brewery and with young people as the preferred target group. The alcohol content of the beer is 5% abv.¹⁶
- Thai Beer is an economy priced beer with high alcohol content or 6,4% abv.¹⁷ The beer's target group are the rural and the poorer domestic beer drinkers, which is the same target group as the Isan beer, which was the economy brand the brewery had before, obviously targeting the rural Thais.

4.2.3 Global alcohol corporations

The strong monopolistic hold the ThaiBev and Boon Radd Brewery have on the Thai alcohol market is exceptional. The overall development in

¹⁶ Boon Radd Brewery. *Leo Beer Product*. Retrieved 14. August 2010 from Leo Beer : <http://www.leoism.net/product.html>

¹⁷ Boon Radd Brewery. *Thai Beer*. Retrieved 14. August 2010 from www.boonradd.co.th/: <http://www.boonradd.co.th/>

alcohol consumption in the Southeast Asian region as well as the rest of the developing world has seen transnational corporations spearhead the promotion of alcohol beverages. This development has progressed mostly with progressive marketing strategies, often in business environments that are often lacking policies regarding alcohol, such as restrictions on promotion methods. In other Southeast Asian countries, the large transnational alcohol manufacturers control the majority of the alcohol industry.¹⁸

Of the 10 biggest alcohol manufacturers in the world, Carlsberg and Heineken have been major players in the Southeast Asian mainland, of the top ten transnational alcohol manufacturers. In some instances the major alcohol manufactures join forces to secure their hold on the market in the region, like in the case of Heineken and Guinness and their joint venture in Singapore, where the Heineken brewery brews Guinness. In Malaysia Gunnies is a part owner of a domestic brewery that manufactures the Guinness beer.¹⁹

According to Dr. Thaksaphon there are in three different models on how the transnational alcohol companies enter the domestic markets in the Southeast Asian region:

1. Establishing their branch in the country, centralized form the head office preferably in Europe or North America and importing the alcoholic beverages for the market. An example of this is San Miguel in Thailand.

¹⁸ David Jerningan. (1999). The Global Expansion of Alcohol Marketing. *Journal of public Health Vol. 20. No 1., 56-80. Page 58.*

¹⁹ David Jerningan. (1999). The Global Expansion of Alcohol Marketing. *Journal of public Health Vol. 20. No 1., 56-80. Page 58 – 59.*

2. Establishing a joint venture with another transnational alcohol corporation in order to enter the market, just as Heineken and Guinness in Singapore.
3. Establishing a partnership with a local brewery, assisting it to brew its domestic brand, which is usually an economy beer aimed at the local beer drinkers, while the imported global brand enjoy the same channels to promote their brands. Example is the Heineken partnership in Cambodia with a local brewery, which manufactures Anchor Beer.²⁰

As mentioned before, Thailand is the exception in the Southeast Asian region. Domestic alcohol companies control the majority of the alcohol market and they seem to have a secure hold on it. The Thais did not however miss out completely on joining forces with one of the global majors. In December 2000 Carlsberg and ThaiBev introduced the beer brand name Chang under the auspices 50/50 joint venture named Carlsberg Asia. The objective was to create a significant brewing company in Asia. A mere three years later in 2003 Carlsberg pulled out from the joint venture, resulting in ThaiBev claiming 2.5 billion US dollars in damages. In 2005 the two companies reached a settlement of 120 million US dollars, which was paid by Carlsberg.²¹

²⁰ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (10. August 2010). Director of Center of Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewee) Bangkok.

²¹ Carlsberg. (31. August 2005). *Chang and Carlsberg agree on settlement*. Retrieved 15. August 2010 from carlsberggroup.com: <http://www.carlsberggroup.com/media/News/Pages/changandcarlsbergagreeonsettlement-SEA2005.aspx>

Table 6: Company share by volume

Company Shares of Alcohol Market 2004 – 2007				
% Total Volume pr. Company	2004	2005	2006	2007
Thai Beverage PLC	57.1	55.3	52.6	55.3
Boon Rawd Brewery Co Ltd	22.7	26.0	31.3	33.2
Heineken NV	3.8	3.7	3.5	3.2
Permod Richard Group	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.9
Siam Winery Co Ltd	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Diageo Plc	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6
The Asian Pacific Brewery Co Ltd	-	-	0.3	0.4
Asian Pacific Breweries (S) Pte Ltd	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3
Regency Thai Co Ltd	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
San Miguel Corp	-	0.1	0.2	0.1
SABMiller Plc	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Bacardi & Co Ltd	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Modelo Sa de CV, Grupo	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Independent Distillers Group	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Ashai Breweries Ltd	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Carlsberg A/S	0.1	-	-	-
Allied Domineq Plc	0.1	-	-	-
Others	12.9	11.4	8.9	9.6
Total %	100	100	100	100

Source: Centre of Alcohol Studies in Thailand.

Table 6 shows the overall companies percentage share in the Thai alcohol market measured by the volume of produced products between the years 2004 to 2007. ThaiBev sits on the throne and dominates the market with 55–57% share of the market. Interestingly the manufactured volume of alcoholic products are decreasing gradually in the four year time period, falling by 4,5% between 2004 and 2006, then recovering slightly again in a year later in 2007. Boon Rawd

Brewery on the other hand sees a considerable growth from year to year, gaining a 10,5% growth in produced volume in the four-year period.

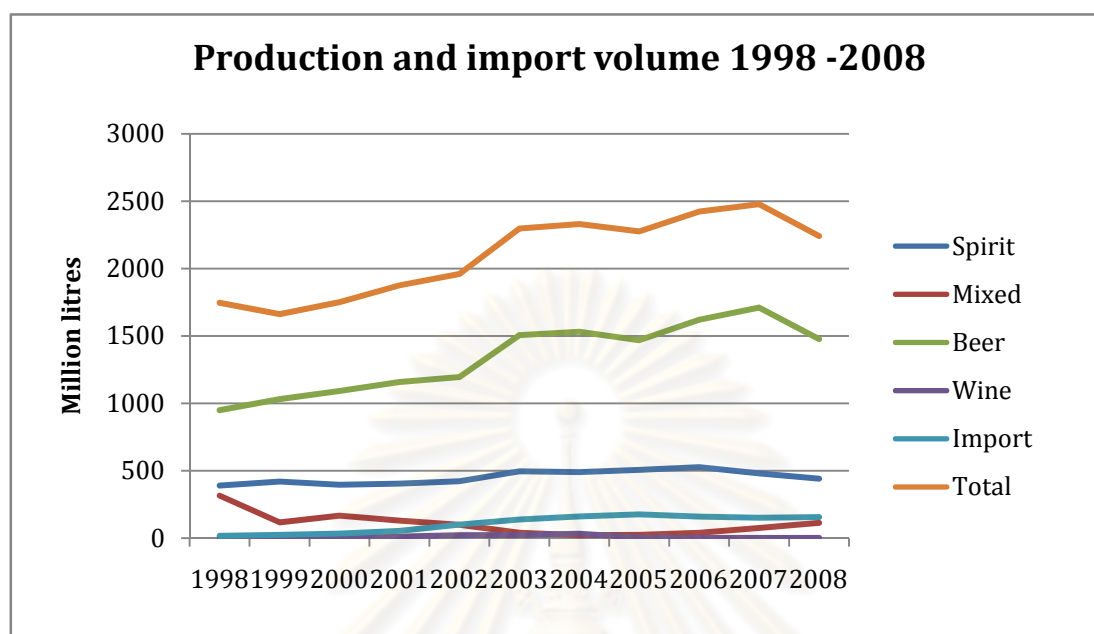
According to the data the two Thai companies share 88,5% of the domestic alcohol market in the year 2007. The remaining 11,5% of the markets volume is divided by transnational corporations that are trying to penetrate the Thai market and a few smaller domestic alcohol companies. The most successful global brand is Heineken, with 3,2 % in 2007, but the data shows that their market share by volume, has decreased by 0,6% from the year 2004, which indicates that the competition on the Thai alcohol market is tough. The other companies only have a fraction of the market, some are well known established global brands, such as Carlsberg, Miller, San Miguel and Bacardi.

4.1 Thai Alcohol Production

The Thai alcohol industry has had an rapid growth rate, especially in the recent years. In the year 1940 the total sales of alcohol beverages in Thailand were 11,8 million liters, 2006 or 66 years later the sales of alcohol beverages had increased 54 times, or a total of 641 million liters, let it be noted that the later figure does not include any imported alcohol beverages.²²

²²Bundit Sornpisan, & Chutaporn Kaewmungkun. (28. May 2008). Past and present. *Dramatic Change of Alcohol Consumption in Thailand*. Page 2.

Figure 5. Production and import 1997-2008.



Source: Centre of Alcohol Studies Thailand.²³

Figure 5 shows the development in alcohol beverage production and import from the year 1998 to 2008. As indicated on the line chart the amount of alcohol produced and imported dropped in three periods in this ten-year time line. The first drop in total production and imports occurred in 1998. Dr. Thaksaphon argues, that the fall in production was due to the Asian financial crises, which hit the region heavily in 1997 and caused a serious decrease in consumption. The second production drop occurred in the time frame of 2003 to 2005 and shows a slight fall or a status quo in the production. Dr. Thaksaphon explains that this particular drop in alcohol production and imports was a result of the war on drugs in the northern parts of Thailand. The third fall in production

²³Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2010, February 2). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

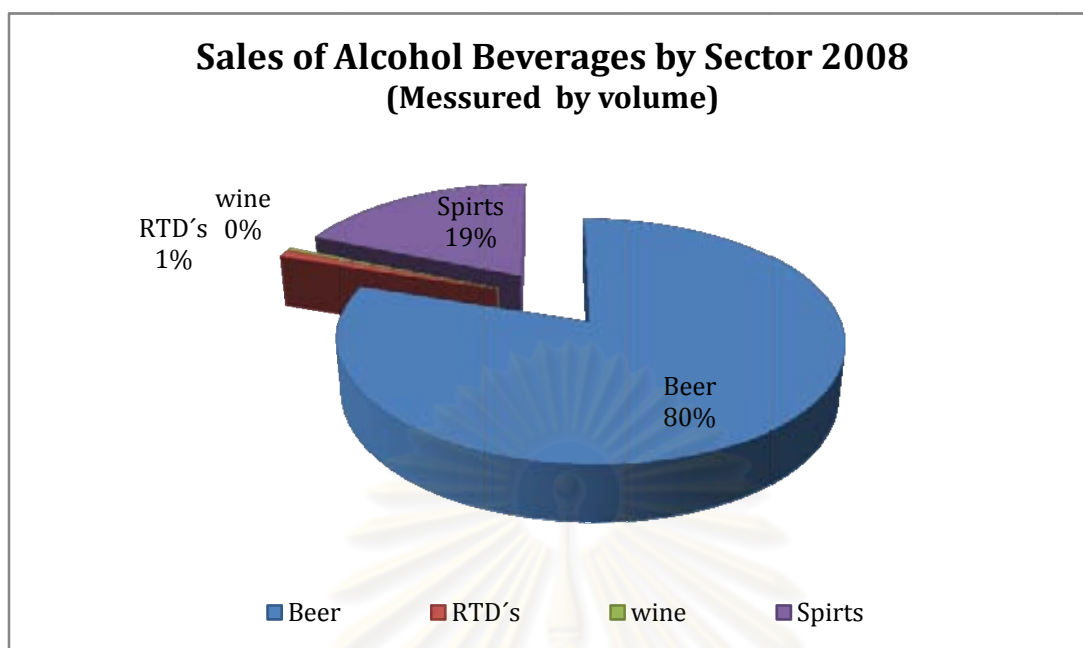
can as seen on the chart is in the end of 2008 and can be explained by factors such as a decrease in tourism because internal affairs like, the seizing of the Thai international airport and political turmoil as well as an large overproducing of beer in the years before. External causes would be the financial crises hitting Thailand later that same year.²⁴

Aside from the clear increase trend in the total production and import of alcohol in this period, the most noticeable development in the alcohol production is the immense rise of beer production. In 1998 the production volume is 950,3 million liters then peaking at 1711million liters in 2007, then descending to 1477 million liters in 2008. In fact the rise in beer production counts for most of the increase in production and import of alcohol. The rise of imported alcoholic beverages is also very interesting. In the ten-year period the alcohol import grows from 17,64 million liters in 1998 to 156,15 million liters in 2008, the growth is nine fold in this ten-year period. Dr. Thamarngsi said that the sales in imported alcohol beverages were mostly linked to fashion trends, it is considered cooler than Thai beverages.

ศูนย์วิทยุทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

²⁴ ThaksaphonThamarangsi. (2. Febuary 2010). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P.A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

Figure 6. Sales of alcohol beverages (volume)

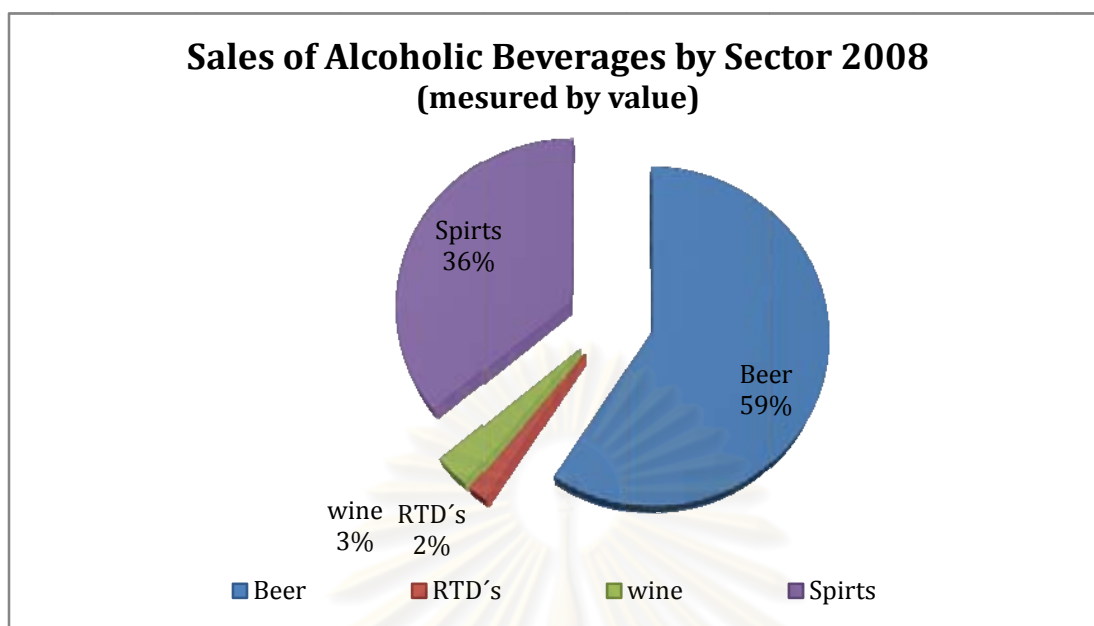


Source: International Center for Alcohol Policies²⁵

Market data from the Thai alcohol industry on the sales of alcohol beverages shows the sales by types of beverages by volume. As seen on figure 6 beer is by far the most sold of the alcohol beverages in Thailand with 80% market share. Spirits are in second place with just under one quarter of the sale of beer with 19%. Combined beer and spirits have 99% of the alcohol produced, the remaining 1 % is divided between and ready to drink alcohol beverages (RTD's) with 1 % and wine just less than 1%.

²⁵International Center for Alchol Policies. (2010). *Alcohol Production by Country*. Canadean Limited.

Figure 7. Sales of alcohol beverages (volume)



Source: International Center for Alcohol Policies.²⁶

The sale of alcohol beverages by volume mirrors the value created by their sales up to a point, as displayed in figure 7. The alcohol market generated 346,503.8 millions Baht in revenue in the year 2008. Beer provided the highest turnover with 59% of the alcohol industries revenues, with sales at 205,493.3 million Baht. Spirits account for 36 % of all alcohol industries turnover with the total of 124,683.2 million Baht. Wine generated 3% with sales at 10,715.2 million Baht, and RTD's sales were 5,612 million Baht. If figure 6 and 7 are compared, it becomes tangible that spirits, which have only 19% volume share, are generating 36 % of the total value. The difference in the shares is explained by the fact that spirits are generally more expensive and therefore generating a higher income. The same applies with wine and RTD's, which have a higher portion of volume

²⁶International Center for Alcohol Policies. (2010). *Alcohol Production by Country*. Canadean Limited.

sold but lower income than RTD's, wine is in many cases categorized as a luxurious product and therefore can be very expensive.

According to an estimate calculated by Dr. Thaksaphon and CAS, based on the production volume in picture 1. The production from 2008 to 2020 will have an average of 13,7 % increase in imported alcohol beverages. The estimate also shows a yearly increase in the total, that is import and production of a 11,7%. The distilled spirits show an estimate of a very low increase just under 2% on a yearly basis.²⁷

The most significant thing about the increase in production of alcohol beverages is the massive increase in beer sales in the country. Thai alcohol consumers have a history of choosing spirits rather than wine or beer. Recently there has been a shift in this consumer behavior where more consumers have been turning to beer. The consumption of beer had an eightfold increase in the period from 1982 to 2001.²⁸ This development in beer consumption is backed up by statistics compiled from the alcohol industry and the stock exchange by Bundit Sorngpi and Chutaporn Kaewmungkun in 2004. Their findings show that the market growth of beer in Thailand was four times faster than in the world market, the growth rate in that period was 2,5% for the world market

²⁷Thaksaphon Thamarangsi,. (2010, February 2). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

²⁸Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2006). Thailand: Alcohol today. *Society for study of addiction* , 783-787. Page 783.

while it was 10,1% in Thailand. Their research also showed that growth rate of spirits was eight times higher in Thailand than the rate of the world market.²⁹

Figure 8. Beer Production 2000- 2008



Source: International Center for Alcohol.³⁰

Recent data gathered for the International Center of Alcohol policies reveal clearly the development in the popularity of beer amongst Thai alcohol drinkers. As seen on figure 9, the production of beer in Thailand is on an almost constant rise in the period 2000 to 2007. The year 2006 shows a slight stagnation in production, which is most likely attributed to the political turmoil and the worldwide financial crises accruing in that period. Another reason for the production stagnation pointed out by Dr. Thaksaphon, is the piling of beer or

²⁹Bundit Sornpisan, & Chutaporn Kaewmungkun. (28. May 2008). Past and Present. *Dramatic Change of Alcohol Consumption in Thailand*. Page 2.

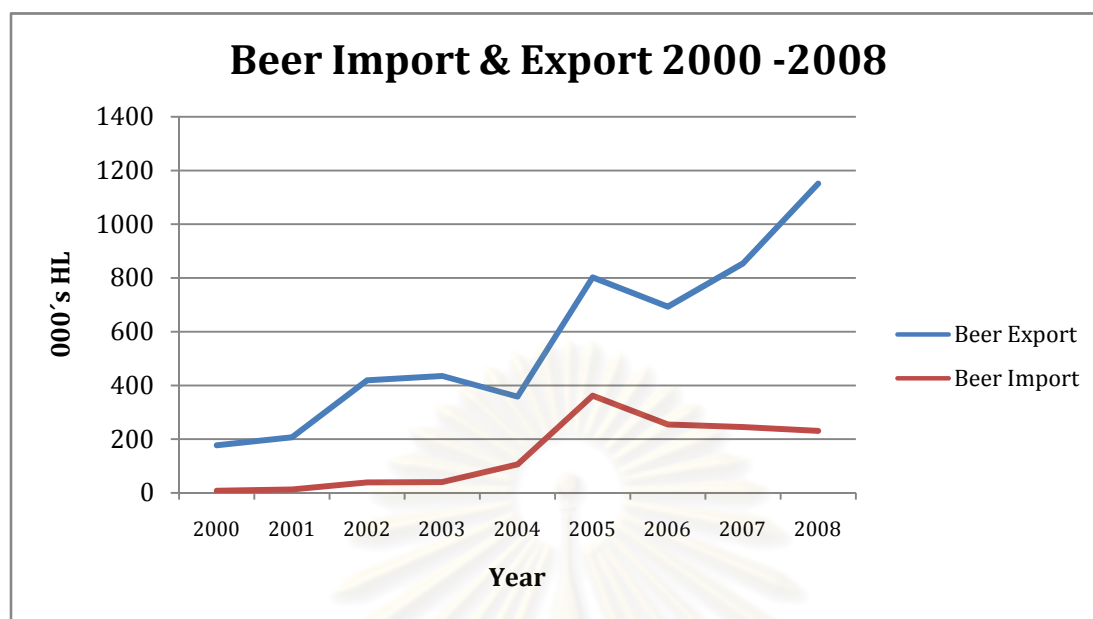
³⁰International Center for Alcohol Policies. (2010). *Alcohol Production by Country*. Canadean Limited.

simply overproduction, which causes less production the year later.³¹ Overall there is production of beer in Thailand has approximately doubled in this eight year period, growing from just 10,833,000 hecto liters (HL) to 20,820,000 HL. Estimates of the alcohol industry accounting for the period 2008 – 2013 speculate on a 7 % annual growth in beer sales, estimating that total sales growth in beer in the same period being 40,6%.

Thailand has not only seen growth in the production of beer in for the domestic market in recent times. The export of Thai beer has been ever rising as an export product. The export of Thai beer is spearheaded by the two major alcohol companies in Thailand, ThaiBev who export the beer Chang and Boon Rawd Brewery with Singha. As shown on Figure 10 the beer export have grown from being just under 177.000 hecto litres (HL) up to almost 11,51000 HL in just eight years accounting for approximately six fold growth in the period.

ศูนย์วิทยุทรัพยากร
จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย

³¹ ThaksaphonThamarangsi. (2. Febuary 2010). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P.A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

Figure 9. Beer import & export

Source: International Center for Alcohol.³²

Beer production in Thailand has not only been spurred by increased domestic demand but also by greater exports as Figure 9 displays. Just like domestic beer, exported beer is growing rapidly, until the year 2005 taking a dramatic fall and not recovering. When asked about the reason for this fall in import Dr. Thaksaphon assumed that it could be related to the ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA). Which stimulated an influx of industry investment from imported to domestic copies of international beer, with brands such as Tiger. This explanation of Dr. Thaksaphon can be backed up by the data on Thai Beer production, but as seen on figure 6, Thai beer production increases considerably with in the same timeframe as the increase in the imported beer.³³

³²International Center for Alcohol Policies. (2010). *Alcohol Production by Country*. Canadean Limited.

³³ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (24. August 2010). Director of Center of Alcohol Studies in Thailand. *E-mail*. Bangkok, Thailand.

4.3 Thai Legislation on Alcohol

Before round one of the discussion of the Alcohol Control Act in 2546 (2003) there was no specific regulation regarding promotion and advertisement of alcohol products in Thailand. The only regulation concerning alcohol products that could be found was in the Food Control Act 2522 (1979), prohibiting the advertisement of beverages with more than 15% alcohol content, on television before 22.00. It was the responsibility of the Government Public Relation Department (PRD) to monitor that those regulations were followed. In reality the sector was mostly regulation free. Evidence shows that the Thai public had been exposed to a very high level of alcohol promotion. For example, the advertising budget for broadcast media of the alcohol industry grew 7,4 times between the years 1989 and 2003. The overall advertising budget of alcohol companies reaching 2,500 million Baht in the year 2000.^{34&35} There was obviously need for structuring of a system to regulate the control of promotion of alcohol products.

The partial advertising ban on alcohol was a heated issue at the time. The alcohol industry lobbied heavily against it, forming an unexpected alliance with the sporting sector. Their argument was that a ban on alcohol advertisement would harm sports and the Thai economy. They also claimed that the advertising

³⁴ J. Bung-On Ritthiphakdee. (2001). Alcohol consumption. *The Globe*, 16-17. Page 17.

³⁵ThaksaphonThamarangsi. (2009). *The "triangle that moves the mountain" and Thai alcohol policy development*. Bangkok: Federal Leagal Publications. Inc. Page 256.

ban would not lead to a reduce in consumption and therefore not reduce in alcohol related harm.³⁶

One of the main reasons for the ban was the building pressure on the Thai government to reduce road traffic accidents, which were baked up by the data of enormous alcohol consumption rise among the Thai citizens in recent years. Dr. Yongyuth Kajorntham a adviser to The Thai health Promotion, had distributed data he had gathered from the WHO database, concluding that Thai per capita consumption was the fifth highest in the world at 13,59 litres in the year 2000. Five years Later Dr. Kajorntham findings where revised by WHO to 8,40 litres per capita.³⁷

There where also indicators that a majority of the Thai population wanted to see the Thai alcohol industry take more responsibility for the harm their product causes and that the youth should especially be protected form alcohol promotion. A survey done on the opinion of the public on the partial advertising ban showed that 41,1 % thought the partial ban would be positive, while 38% did not, 25 % where undecided.³⁸

³⁶ThaksaphonThamarangsi. (2009). *The "triangle that moves the mountain" and Thai alcohol policy development*. Bangkok: Federal Leagal Publications. Inc. Page 257.

³⁷ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2009). *The "triangle that moves the mountain" and Thai alcohol policy development*. Bangkok: Federal Leagal Publications. Inc. Pages 257-258.

³⁸ ThaksaphonThamarangsi. (2009). *The "triangle that moves the mountain" and Thai alcohol policy development*. Bangkok: Federal Leagal Publications. Inc. Page 259.

The year 2008 (2551) saw the first round of discussions for of the Alcohol Beverage Control Act B.E. 2551, pushing further alcohol control policies upon the Thai people, covering other fields concerning alcohol consumption. Following are some of the main issues in the Alcohol Control Act:

- Legal drinking age is defined as 20 years and it is forbidden to sell alcohol beverages to highly intoxicated persons.
- Manners and practice of sale of alcohol beverages are limited as follows;
 - Forbidding the sale of alcohol in automatic vending machines.
 - Salesperson of alcohol are not allowed to wander about, in order to sell their product
 - Discounts on all alcohol products are forbidden
 - Forbidding giving free goods when alcohol is purchased
- Banning alcohol consumption at certain places, such as
 - Temples or any place of worship
 - Public health institutions, like hospital and clinics
 - Educational institutions, like high schools and universities
 - Public offices and institutions
 - Public parks
 - Petrol stations
- Direct or indirect advertising of alcohol beverages is banned. Alcohol manufacturers are however allowed to advertise with intent to give out information about the beverage to the public.

- Alcohol beverages should not be accessible during certain time period of the day and on special dates. These restrictions are announced by the authorities and apply to daily sales ban from 14:00 – 17:00. During elections there is a alcohol sales ban the weekend the elections are held.³⁹
- The Alcohol control act also states that individuals that suffer form alcohol dependence or their relatives should get necessary treatment.⁴⁰

In assition to the Alcohol Beverage Control Act B.E. 2551, thereare a few other legislations referring directly to alcohol. In the 43 section of the Land and Traffic Act B.E. 2522 (1979) are legislations on drinking and driving that prohibits the alcohol concentration of a driver of an auto vehicle to be over 50 ml. The Consumer Protection Act, B.E. 2522 (1979) regulates that all alcohol products should have warning labels, which clearly state the harm that can be caused by the consumption of the product.⁴¹

The Thai alcohol industry is not pleased with the regulationa which have been proposed and implemented in the recent year by the Thai authorities, and does not hesitate to provoke the laws and policies. They complain that the

³⁹Thai Alcohol Industry. (2008). *Thai Alcohol Market 2007*. Thai Alcohol Industry.

⁴⁰Thai Governmnet. *Alcohol Control Act B.E. 2551*. Retrieved 21. Agust 2010 from thaiantialcohol.com: www.thaiantialcohol.com/eng/images/.../alcohol_beverage_control_act.pdf

⁴¹Thai Alcohol Industry. (2008). *Thai Alcohol Market 2007*. Thai Alcohol Industry. Page 9

authorities are adding difficulties to their working environment, on top of all the internal problems Thailand has been facing since 2006.

In spite of the harsher regulatory system on alcohol products and the political turmoil, which has had serious consequences for the economy of the country. Estimates predict 5,7% annual growth in the period 2008 – 2013, which accumulates to a 32,2% total growth.⁴²

4.4 Alcohol Marketing in Thailand

The last decade has seen the alcohol industry in Thailand engaged in a new and more controversial ways of marketing strategies. These new strategies are considered to be a new threat to the recent alcohol control advocacy activities. In spite of the partial ban on alcohol advertisement, which took effect in 2003, the alcohol industry has found ways to circumvent the regulations by using indirect advertising or simply ignore them.⁴³

As mentioned above the Thai alcohol industry responded to the partial ban by changing their advertising tactics. The Alcohol industries budget for mobile advertisement, such as billboards on busses and on drinking site promotions rose by 583 % between the years 2003 -2004, the year the partial

⁴²Thai Alcohol Industry. (2008). *Thai Alcohol Market 2007*. Thai Alcohol Industry. Page 17

⁴³Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2008). Newly introduced alcohol marketing strategies: Thai experience. *The Globe*, 5-7. Page 18.

ban took effect.⁴⁴ One of the Thai alcohol industries questionable tactics is the so-called “hidden promotion” which is advertising or promotion of surrogate products. A Thai newspaper (Khao-sod) monitored the hidden alcohol promotion on Thai television. The findings were that a typical viewer of Thai television was exposed to alcohol promotion 167 times a day, which was an average of all the television stations.⁴⁵

Dr. Thaksasphon believes that recent moves of the two major alcohol companies, ThaiBev and Boon Rawd Brewery by adding drinking water to their line of products, is done deliberately with the intent to advertise the companies beer brands. Both of the companies use the brand of their most popular beer brand for their drinking water brand, ThaiBev making Chang drinking water and Boon Rawd Brewery Singha Drinking water.⁴⁶ A survey done on the interpretation on a large billboard showing the logo one of the major Thai beer manufacturers, showed that most people believed the billboard was advertising Beer, but officially it was advertising water.⁴⁷

According the findings of a research done in the year 2007 on alcohol and Thai Youth 73.2% of the youth believe that alcohol advertisements increase of alcohol consumption among youths. However, the most distressing findings in

⁴⁴ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2008). Newly introduced alcohol marketing strategies: Thai experience. *The Globe*, 5-7. Page 6.

⁴⁵Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2009). *The "triangle that moves the mountain" and Thai alcohol policy development*. Bangkok: Federal Leagal Publications. Inc. Page 262

⁴⁶Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (10. august 2010). Director of Center of Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P. A. Steonarsson, interviewer) Bangkok.

the research were that 50% of participants in the survey confirmed that alcohol advertisements lead them to believe that alcohol is not harmful.⁴⁸

Dr. Parichart Sthapitanonda at Chulalongkorn University and her apprentice Natwipa Sinuswarn, a PhD student at Chulalongkorn University, at the faculty of communications arts, conducted a research on the marketing strategies of the Thai alcohol industry in 2006 – 2007. The objective was to study the branding process of alcohol products in Thailand. The result of the research shows that the branding process is based on an integrated marketing communication mix, which the researchers call the ten P's, referring to the well established four P marketing principle.⁴⁹

Table 7. Ten marketing mix P's

1. Product: They emphasize on redesigning the product and the packaging and launching the new products.
2. Price: They encourage discounts, giveaways and product samples. They also keep the price on premium products considerably low.
3. Place: They provide new outlets to attract their target groups; among those places are also websites, who are mostly targeted at the younger generation.
4. Promotion: Use of experimental marketing and intergraded marketing communications tools to appeal to the target groups sense of proud and trendiness.
5. Positioning: Characterizing alcohol beverages as health products. And tying the use of alcohol beverages with only positive aspects such as;

⁴⁸ Nitta Roonsem. (2008). *Alcohol marketing and youth*. (N. Johnson, Translated.) London: Global alcohol policy alliance. Page18.

⁴⁹ Parichart Sthapitanonda & Natwipa Sinuswarn. (2010). *Sin Brand: An Analysis of comunicatin marketing communication mix of alcohol bevereeages*. Bangkok: CAS.

happiness, sophistication and implying that to be a member of the “ in-crowd” one should drink alcohol beverages.
6. Public Advertising: The characteristics accompanied with alcohol are advertised.
7. Public Responsibility Projects: By sponsoring social events and welfare projects
8. Partnerships: They align themselves with various well-known individuals, groups or organisations to join hand in various cooperation’s
9. Publics: They especially target a special type of alcohol consumer, such as; travellers and trendsetters
10. Policy Advocacy: They support social movement groups and use them to challenge policies, which are to their disliking.

Source: CAS⁵⁰

AS seen on table 7 above the ten P’s as marketing mix in terms of the Thai alcohol industry, laid forth by Dr. Parichart Sthapitanonda and Natwipa Sinuswarm give a clear picture of the framework of the marketing strategies of the Thai Alcohol industry. Even so al of them play an important role in the marketing mix of the alcohol Industry, some of the P’s undoubtedly play a far more important role in stimulating the Thais alcohol consumption.⁵¹

⁵⁰Parichart Sthapitanonda & Natwipa Sinuswarn(2010). *Sin Brand: An analysis of comunicatin marketing communication mix of alcohol bevereages*. Bangkok: CAS.

⁵¹Parichart Sthapitanonda & Natwipa Sinuswarn. (2010). *Sin Brand: An Analysis of comunicatin marketing communication mix of alcohol bevereages*. Bangkok: CAS.

4.4.1 Price

One of the more important of these variables is the price of the product, and when considering the price one should not forget the economic conditions of the nation. Even though Thailand is among the most developed communities in the Southeast Asia. Thailand is a developing country where at around 10% of its inhabitants live under the poverty line.⁵²

It is a well-known marketing strategy to lower the price of products to stimulate its demand. In marketing terminology this is known as *penetration pricing policy* and it is usually effective in markets where the elite market is small, as in Thailand.⁵³ That is just what the Thai alcohol industry does in order to get the Thai alcohol consumers to choose their product rather than the locally brewed or the homemade alcohol beverages.

The Thai alcohol Industry emphasize on keeping the price of their products low and further more they engage in allsorts of promotional stunts which affects the price directly and indirectly. The methods used by the Thai alcohol industry have varied from simply providing discounts if a certain amount of alcohol beverages was purchased, to the use of give away's. That is offering two for one deals of alcohol beverages or giving some other kind of merchandise to the buyers of their alcohol beverage brand. ThaiBev for example used their

⁵²Central Intelligence Agency. *Thailand*. Retrieved 6. Septeber 2010 from The World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/th.html>

⁵³ Jerome Carthy & William D. Perreault. (1984). *Basic Marketing*. Illinois: Irwin. Page 562.

popular rum brand Sam Song to promote their beer brand Chang, by giving Sam Song buyers a free sample of Beer Chang.⁵⁴ Another recent example of controversial marketing tactics of the alcohol industry was when a major Boon Rawd Brewery distributed “sexy edition calendars” to buyers while purchasing alcohol beverages for the new years festivities. Dr Saman Futrakul, director of the Office of the Alcohol Beverage and Tobacco Consumption Control Committee, said that distributing a free product to encourage alcohol drinking, was an offence, punishable by one-year jail term or a 50.000 baht fine.⁵⁵ In this case the calendars were confiscated by the authorities, but the alcohol company is putting up a fight, and suing the confiscation of the calendars. According to Dr. Thaksaphon, director of the CAS authorities have been tightening their grip on a toward the alcohol industry, but the industry always hits back. It has a lot of power and does not hesitate to use it, with its army of lawyers and lobbyists.⁵⁶

Another influencing factor that has effected the pricing of alcohol beverages in Thailand is the implementation of trade agreements. The ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) agreement was signed in Singapore 1992 when the regional organization only had six members, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Singapore. Vietnam joined in 1995, Myanmar and Laos in 1997 and Cambodia was the last nation to join in 1999, making the ASEAN

⁵⁴ Natwipa Sinuswarm. (17. Agust 2010). PhD student and alcohol Resercher. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

⁵⁵Nation, T. (16. December 2009). *Health ministry to bust calendars with beverage logos* . Retreived 11. August 2010 from <http://www.nationmultimedia.com>:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/search/read.php?newsid=30118583&keyword=alcohol+youth>

⁵⁶ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2010, Febuary 2). Director of The Center for Alcohol Studies in Thailand. (P.A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

member states ten altogether. It was a requirement for the four newcomers to sign the AFTA agreement in order to become fully-fledged members of ASEAN, but they were given a longer time frame in which to meet AFTA's obligations. Like all regional trade agreements, the primary goals of AFTA are firstly to increase ASEAN's competitive edge as a production base in the world market through the elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers and to attract more foreign direct investment to ASEAN.⁵⁷

WHO have expressed grave concern over the fact that alcoholic beverages are treated just like any other product in trade agreements. WHO pinpoint a fundamental conflict of free trade and public health relating to alcohol, and that the negative effects are likely to be more severe in developing countries because of the free flow of alcohol.⁵⁸

Dr. Thaksaphon argues that the AFTA agreement has led to an expansion of the Thai alcohol market and reduced the retail price of imported alcohol beverages significantly. He furthermore states That that low price of beer and secondary spirits is a major factoring the increase of alcohol consumption among the Thai people, but the price of alcohol beverages have been relatively low in Thailand, both in a regional and a global comparative.⁵⁹ In the grips of a world recession and political turmoil the Thai alcohol industry has been

⁵⁷ASEAN. *ASEAN free trade area (AFTA)*.Retrieved 8. September 2010 from aseansec.org/: <http://www.aseansec.org/7665.htm>

⁵⁸FORUT. (26. January 1007). *Fact sheet WTO/GATS alcohol developments*. Retrieved 10. July 2010 from eurocare.org/: www.eurocare.org/content/download/2470/12068/.../2/.../WTO+GATS.pdf

⁵⁹ Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2008). Newly introduced alcohol marketing strategies: Thai experience. *The Globe* , 5-7. Page 6.

emphasizing on super economy alcohol beverages in order to boost the alcohol consumption of low-income alcohol consumers.⁶⁰

4.4.2 Place (accessibility)

It is a known fact that with increased accessibility of alcohol beverages will stimulate the overall alcohol consumption in a society.⁶¹ Therefore it is in favor of the alcohol industry to have as many outlets as possible. The number of authorized alcohol have dealers grown enormously, mostly stimulated by the economic growth and the evolution of society towards a modern state. With the emergence of convenient stores chains such as Seven-Eleven the accessibility has multiplied. In a research on the economic aspects of alcohol in Thailand 2004 had findings claiming that there was one authorized alcohol dealership on every 110 individuals and only an average of 7,5 minute walk to the next alcohol dealership.⁶²

Another aspect of accessibility of alcohol concerns the younger generation, especially students. Portable bars offering alcohol drinks designed for the younger customer base, like alcohol smoothies and other sweet and candy like alcoholic beverages, place them self nearby high schools and universities, with the intent of selling their product to the students when they

⁶⁰Thai Alcohol Industry. (2008). *Thai Alcohol Market 2007*. Thai Alcohol Industry. Page 1

⁶¹Thomas Babor. (2003). *Alcohol: No ordinary commodity*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press.

⁶²Thaksaphon Thamarangsi. (2008). Newly introduced alcohol marketing strategies: Thai experience. *The Globe*, (pp) 5-7. Page 6.

have finished their schooldays. Authorities retaliated and have banned selling of alcohol in the proximity of educational institutions.

4.4.3 Positioning and Promotion

One of the major arguments for banning or limiting alcohol advertisements is to reduce social harm and protecting children and teenagers who can easily be influenced toward drinking without fully understanding consequences of their choices. Unfortunately much of the advertising from the Thai alcohol industry conveys messages of half-truths. Thus alcohol beverage are usually linked with only enjoyable, exciting, sophisticated or other desirable elements. There is seldom a message of caution or realistic appearances of the consequences of alcohol abuse. Which is understandable, for then the product would not be so desirable if the whole truth was portrayed. The message is clear, If you want to enjoy life to the fullest you drink, alcohol is the variable that makes life fun. Therefore if you do not participate in alcohol drinking behavior you are not a fun person.⁶³

The alcohol industry usually portrays their products alongside young, fashionable, healthy young people, often well known individuals that are idolized by younger people such as actors, models, musicians, athletes or other kinds of celebrities. This is done to create an attractive brand Identity, aligning the alcohol beverage with attractive and well know personalities so the identity

⁶³ Bantid Sornpaisarn. (2007). The impact of Alcohol advertisement on Youth. In C. f. Studies, *The 3rd National Alcohol Conference; "Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity"* (pp. 33-40). Bangkok: Center for Alcohol Studies. Page 35.

of the individuals becomes part of the brand identity. There are several examples of this type of alcohol promotion. To promote Beer Chang, ThaiBev had a very popular advertising campaign featuring the very famous Thai singer Carabao. When Boon Rawd Brewery launched its new brand Thai beer, a economy brand aimed at the rural population, they used three former world champion Thai boxers to appear in their advertisement and to promote the new beer brand. The Thai boxers were Kaosai Galaxy, Samart Payakarun and Sumlock Kumsingh. The campaign was launched just before the Songkran holiday with an estimate 80 million Baht cost.⁶⁴

Another recent example is a campaign by Beer Chang called “ just a little bit more for Thai people” which featured the Thai national football team. Dr. Srirath Larpyai who studied alcohol advertisements and their effects on Thai youth, says that advertisements like “ just a little bit more” by Beer Chang are deliberately aimed at the Thai youth, portraying respected role models in an environment of enjoyment and beauty. These sorts of advertisements send out the message, that if an individual wants to be popular and have a lot of friends, he should drink a certain brand of alcohol beverages. And if they want to help society they should drink another specific alcohol brand to support the alcohol industry, for the alcohol industry are responsible community builders.⁶⁵

⁶⁴Bangkok Post. (6. April 2002). Boxers add punch to newst brew. Page. 8.

⁶⁵Bantid Sornpaisarn. (2007). The impact of Alcohol advertisement on Youth. In C. f. Studies, *The 3rd National Alcohol Conference; "Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity"* (pp. 33-40). Bangkok: Center for Alcohol Studies. Page 34.

Dr. Nita Roonkasem agrees and states that Thai alcohol industry's recent marketing campaigns, show that they are directing their focus more on the youth. These strategies include aligning alcohol beverage with popular leisure or entertainment, mainly; music and sport.⁶⁶ Furthermore she argues that the Thai alcohol industry has been applying a twofold marketing strategy to enhance brand awareness and promote positive attitudes. One part of the strategy is aligning the alcohol beverage brand name with music and sporting events. The other facet of the strategy is to providing community support in various ways, such as; financial sponsoring culture, religion and charities. This is done with the intent to promote a positive image, heighten respect for of the alcohol corporations, and establish a beneficial relationship with its business partners.⁶⁷

Branding the alcohol beverage correctly by making it appealing to the target group is what ultimately makes the product successful. According to Koh Poh Tiong, former CEO of Asian Pacific Breweries (APB), which is a joint venture with Heineken, stated in an interview that branding was what mattered most of all, branding is in many instances the only difference between beer beverages, In his words:

"Beer is six thousand years old roughly. A beer is a beer is a beer.

Nothing much has changed. Maybe it is less cloudy then two

⁶⁶Nitta Roonsem. (2008). Alcohol marketing and youth. (N. Johnson, Ritstj.) *The Globe* , 18-19. Page 18

⁶⁷Nitta Roonkasem. (2007). The Marketing strategies of the Alcohol Business Group in Thailand. In C. o. Studies, *The 3rd National Alcohol Conference; "Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity"* (p. 36). Bangkok. Page 36

thousand years ago.... But there is nothing much you can do with beer because it is six thousand years old. So therefore it is all about brands...if I look at brand, a brand is like a person. How do I make this product so desirable? We are not selling beer, we are selling image."

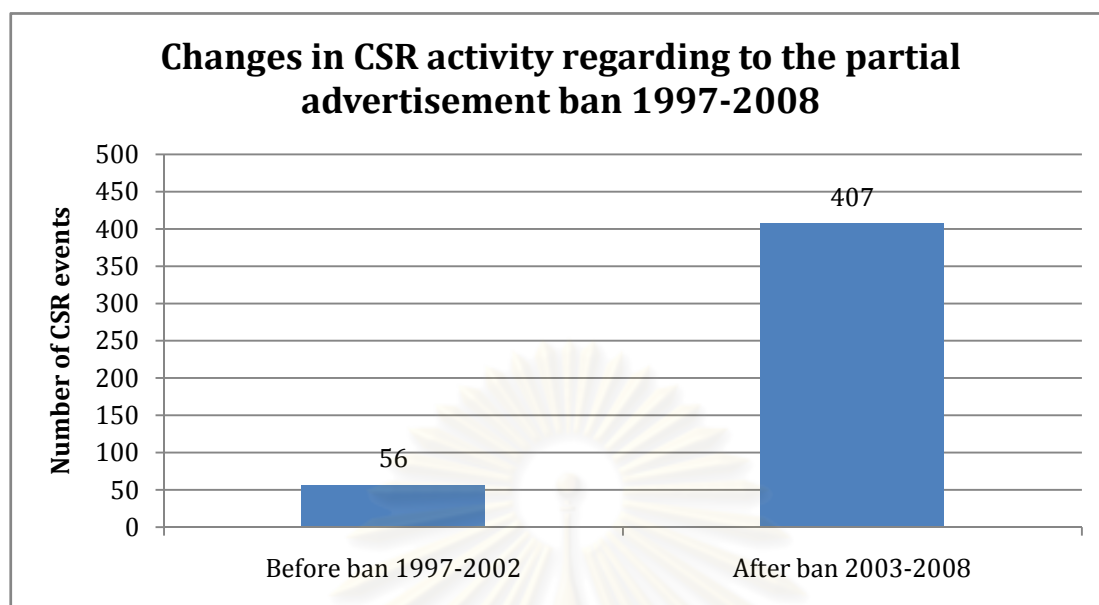
4.4.4 New Marketing tactics

In reaction to the tightening of the regulatory framework the Thai alcohol industry has begun using a more insidious approaches than before. There has been a major shift on the marketing mix of the alcohol brands, mainly shifting from the broadcasting media to what in marketing terms is known as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The ultimate aim of using CSR marketing is for the corporation to gain more importance in the eyes of the public and to raise the reputation of the corporation. For a good reputation will most likely reflect positively on the corporation's brands and products. ⁶⁸

In a recent research conducted by Natwipa Sinuwarm monitored CSR activity of the Thai alcohol industry. The chart below shows the great shift of the alcohol industries usage of CSR marketing.

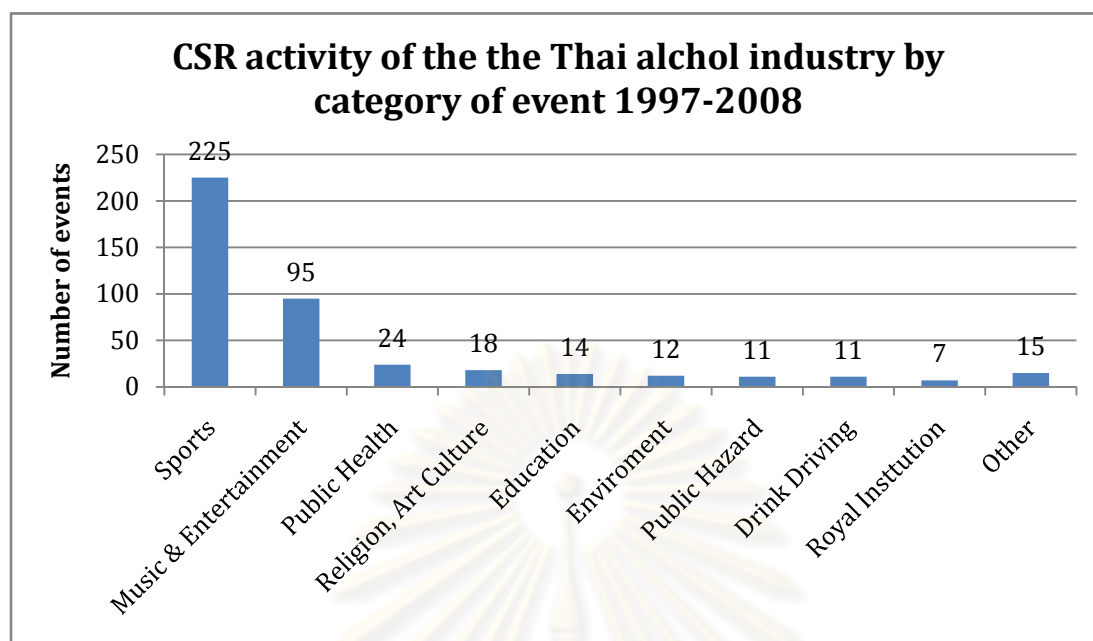
⁶⁸Kolija Paetzold. (2010). *Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): An International Marketing Approach*. Hamburg: Diplomica. Page 52

Figure 10. CSR activity

Source; CAS. ⁶⁹

Figure 10 portrays the number of CSR events held or sponsored by the Thai alcohol corporations, before the partial advertising ban on alcohol and after the partial ban. Before the partial advertising ban in the five-year period between 1997 and 2002 the total sum of CSR events were 56. The second column represents the CSR activity after the partial advertising ban on alcohol, showing a clear focus of marketing strategies in the five-year period 2003-2008 after the partial advertising ban, with the total sum of 403 CSR events being sponsored or produced in order to promote and advertise alcohol beverages.

⁶⁹Natwipa Sinuswarm. (2010, August 17). PhD student and alcohol Resercher. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

Figure 11. CSR activity by events

Source; CAS.⁷⁰

Figure 11 above lays out the CRS activity in the eleven-year period between 1997-2008, and the events are categorized by sector. The Thai alcohol industry is emphasizing mostly on the sport sector with 52 percent of all CRS activity connected to that sector, in second place are music and entertainment CSR activities. Combined the sports and music and entertainments activities are dominant with 74 percent off all CSR activities sponsored by the alcohol industry. The CSR activities of the alcohol industry are spread out between different sectors of society, such as public health, religion, art, culture, education and environment to name a few.

⁷⁰Natwipa Sinuswarm. (2010, Agust 17). PhD student and alcohol Resercher. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer).

Football has been one of the sports the alcohol Industry sponsor greatly in recent years. The Thai alcohol majors have both been sponsoring domestic football and international football. An example of the domestic sponsorship is, Boon Rawd Brevery using Singha as a sponsor for fourteen domestic football teams.⁷¹ Chang follows the same line by being one of the Thai Football Association's main sponsors⁷²

The Thai alcohol companies have further more been pushing the promotion of their Beer brands on a global platform by affiliating their beer bands with well-known football teams in the English Premiership, the most popular football league in the world. Chang has been sponsoring Everton Football club since 2004 and currently have a three-year sponsorship contract with the club ending after season 2010-2011. ThaiBev paid 382 million Thai Baht for the current three-year contract with Everton football club as their number one sponsor, with the logo of their beer brand on front of the team's uniform. ThaiBev have plans to extend the deal with Everton.⁷³

Singha have just signed a sponsorship contract with two of the largest Premiership football clubs in England, Manchester United and Chelsea FC. The contract entails that Singha beer is the official beer of the two football clubs and is the only beer brand available at the two-football club home ground stadiums,

⁷¹The Nation. (6. August 2010). *Singha signs Bt409m sponsorship deal with Chelsea FC*. Retrieved 8. October 2010 from nationmultimedia.com:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/2010/08/06/business/Singha-signs-Bt409m-sponsorship-deal-with-Chelsea--30135329.html>

⁷²Football Association of Thailand. *Football Association of Thailand*. Retrieved 8. October 2010 from fat.or.th: <http://www.fat.or.th/>

⁷³The Bangkok Post. (31. July 2010). *Chang Satisfied*. Retrieved 8. October 2010 from bangkokpost.com: <http://www.bangkokpost.com/news/sports/188765/chang-satisfied>.

Stanford Bridge and Old Trafford. The three-year sponsorship deal with Manchester United costs Boon Rawd Brewery 302 million Thai Baht and the Sponsorship deal with Chelsea FC is a four-year contract costing 409 million Thai Baht. Boon Rawd Brewery will spend a further two billion Thai Baht in the next three years in marketing and sponsorship activities affiliated with the two football clubs.⁷⁴

Marketing director of Singha, Chatchai Wiratyosin, says that, Sponsoring Chelsea and Manchester United is meant to boost and secure the presence of Singha's brand in the international markets, especially in Europe. Boon Rawd Brewery also aims to use the sponsorship with the English football clubs to enhance their brand in the Asian market and plan to be one of the top three beer brands in Asia in the next three years and to become a top-50 global brand within five years.⁷⁵

Dr. Thaksaphon claims that the main incentive for the two major Thai alcohol companies to participate in sponsorship deals with premier ship football clubs is mostly to advertise their beer brands indirectly in Thai television and align them self with a very popular pastime.⁷⁶

⁷⁴The Nation. (6. August 2010). *Singha signs Bt409m sponsorship deal with Chelsea FC*. Retrieved 8. October 2010 from nationmultimedia.com:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/2010/08/06/business/Singha-signs-Bt409m-sponsorship-deal-with-Chelsea--30135329.html>

⁷⁵The Nation. (6. August 2010). *Singha signs Bt409m sponsorship deal with Chelsea FC*. Retrieved 8. October 2010 from nationmultimedia.com:

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/2010/08/06/business/Singha-signs-Bt409m-sponsorship-deal-with-Chelsea--30135329.html>

⁷⁶Thamarangsi, T. (2010, August 12). Director of Center of Alcohol Studies. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer).



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CHAPTER V

The Determinants of the change in Thai drinking behavior

5.1 Economic growth and social Change

There were three waves of economic development in East Asia in the twentieth century. The first one originated in Japan in the mid 1950's and ended in the early 1970's. This first wave saw a flow of Japanese capital to many of the other countries in the region. The second wave spurred the economic rise of East and Southeast Asian countries such as; South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, which were collectively became known as the "Asian Tigers" This wave started in the mid 1960's and ended in the early 1980's. The third and final economical wave of the century took place from 1980's and lasted until the mid 1990's or until the Asian financial crises. The final economic wave saw three Southeast Asian countries follow in the footsteps of the "Asian Tigers" they were; Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand. This massive boom was fueled by the fast growing manufacturing industry in the Southeast Asian countries, who were mostly manufacturing products for export. The economic growth was so rapid in that period that these countries were known as the "Asian miracle" in economic terms.¹

¹Terence Chong. (2005). *Modernization trends in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Pages 5-6

With the departure of the US troops from Vietnam saw Thailand move toward this new era of economical developments. Manifested by liberation of trade, followed by acceleration of finance along with industrialization and urbanization.² The last quarter of the 20th century saw Thailand's economic growth rise to new heights, causing the quality of life of the Thai people. This period saw a considerable reduction in poverty as well as increased trade, adult illiteracy was reduced from 10,7% of the nation to 4,7% during 1983-1999 and accesses to healthcare services improved tremendously. Moreover infrastructure improved rapidly especially with regards to transportation and telecommunication³ The same period saw the rise of the tourism industry in Thailand, which in the mid 1970's was attracting only few hundred thousand tourists. With governmental support the tourist industry took off and reached ever greater heights and by the end of the millennium Thailand was attracting around twelve million tourists on a yearly basis.⁴

The rise of the Thai middle class went hand in hand with process of urbanization. Bangkok dominated that process, and grew over forty times the size of the next largest place in the country Khorat. Business prospered especially in the capital stimulating the growth of the middle class to grow larger and expanding the urban working class, mainly with people from the poorer villages in the country or by attracting workers from Thailand's neighboring

²Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit. (2005). *A history of Thailand*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 199

³Wisarn Puppavesa. (2002). *Globalization and social development in Thailand*. Antwerp: Centre for ASEAN Studies. Page 9

⁴Wisarn Puppavesa. (2002). *Globalization and social development in Thailand*. Antwerp: Centre for ASEAN Studies. Page 204

nations, such as Cambodia, Myanmar and Lao.⁵ The rise of the middle class was one of the manifestations of the economic rise, with the number of the Thai middle class more than doubling in just a seven-year period, from 310.000 in 1987 to 710.000 in 1994. The Thai middle class was mostly made up of executives, managers and other high-skilled technicians.⁶

Even though prosperity grew more in the urban areas than the rural areas in Thailand, there was considerable change in rural societies as well. Dr. Graham Fordham points out in his research on the social changes in the rural north part of the country, that in the mid 1980's it was considered a symbol of status to own a scooter or a motorcycle. A decade later the possession of a scooter was common and the status symbol had switched to owning a pickup truck, which in the mid 1990's was rare.⁷

The prosperity of the Thai economy in the second half of the 20th century not only stimulated mass urbanization. It was also a huge factor in fundamental culture change, that saw consumption patterns of the Thai nations shift to a model influenced mostly by Japan and the west. The foundations had been laid for the culture change in the shadow of the Vietnam War, when a large number Americans had occupied Bangkok, and influenced the capital with their western

⁵Wisarn Puppavesa. (2002). *Globalization and social development in Thailand*. Antwerp: Centre for ASEAN Studies. Page 199-203

⁶Tereance Chong,. (2005). *Modernization trends in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

⁷Graham Fordham. (1995). *Social change, cultural logic, and the transformation of domestic relations in rural Northern Thailand*. Canberra: Australian National University.

way of life. In continuation many Thais traveled abroad for education, western movies became more popular, and shopping malls started to rise in the capital.⁸

5.2 Modernization, consumerism and alcohol

The economic growth period in Thailand can be described as period where Thai society was propelled toward modernity at an enormous speed. Although this development did not affect all parts of society equally, it is safe to say that the majority of the Thai nation experienced this newfound modernity

Academic scholars have different ideas on what modernization is, some emphasize on change in social structure and changes as in education, mass media and political aspects of the phenomenon, while other emphasize on the self-sustainable economic growth, increased education, public participation in policy arguments, diffusion of secular –rational norms in the culture.⁹

Socialist Alberto Martinelli describes the process of modernization in the following way;

“Modernization is specific sum of the large scale social, economic, political and cultural changes that have characterized the world history in the last 200 years and that originate from the multi-

⁸Chris Baker & Pasuk Phongpaichit (2005). *A history of Thailand*. New York: Cambridge University Press. Page 201

⁹Chavivun Prachuabho. (1997). *Famiy, comunity and codernization in Asian Societies; Japan, Vietnam and Thailand*. Thammasat University, Assistans Professor at the faculty of Sociology and Antropology. Fukuoka: ASIAN Pacific Center. Page 47

faced revolution (economic, social, political, cultural) of the second half of the eighteenth century. It is a process that tends to be global in two senses: it affects all aspects of involved societies and it progressively extends to the rest of the world from its birthplace in Western Europe”¹⁰

A more simplistic outtake on modernization is seeing it as an industrial progress that signifies the transition of a developing society into a developed one. These changes consist of major changes in most social sectors as well as with ideology and philosophy of the country's culture.

Modernization is also often linked with the term modernity, which refers to the notion of being a modern individual. This differentiates between the living conditions and the ideological perspectives of an urban living individual and an individual living in a rural area. These individuals have different visions and experiences on work, entertainment and material possessions.¹¹

According to Martinelli there are various characteristics that define how a society progresses from a traditional society to a modern one. He summarizes these essential aspects of the modernization transition in the following thirteen categories as shown on the table below:

¹⁰Alberto Martinelli. (2005). *Global Modernization; Rethinking the project of modernity*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Page 8.

¹¹Terence Chong. (2005). *Modernization Trends in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Page 8.

Table 8: 13 characteristics of modernization

1. Development of science and technology, which becomes the primary source of economic growth and social change, and ultimately changes the way human beings view the environment and the universe.
2. Industrialization, founded on technology greatly increases the capacity to manufacture and trade with goods and ever-accelerating price and value.
3. Forming of a global capitalist market and an economic interdependence between different parts of the world
4. Structural differentiation and functional specialization of social life, bring forth a new form of a power struggle with in the modernizing society.
5. Transformation of class system, a decline of farm laborers and a growth of the bourgeoisies and an expansion of diversity with in societies.
6. Development in political mobilization of movements and parties and representative associations, as well a development in the establishment of a nation state.
7. A liberation from religious control over society and scientific knowledge, and the privatization of faith,
8. Popularity of new values related to modernity, such as individualism, rationalism and utilitarianism.
9. Mass urbanization, where the majority of society live in urban environment, which are functionally complex, culturally pluralistic and socially inharmonious
10. The privatization of family life and separation of workplace from the home, women's liberation.
11. The democratization of education and the development of mass

culture and mass consumption
12. The development of a material and symbolic communication methods, which unite incomparable people of society.
13. The compression of time and space according to the demand of the industrial production and the world market.

Source: Alberto Martinelli.¹³

As seen on Marenelli's list on table 7, the process of modernization affects all the major spheres in society, including the economic, political, social and cultural spheres. If Thailand's evolution is compared to this model, it will in most cases fit the description of the characteristics at hand.

Thailand was transformed from an agriculture society to a consuming society over a very narrow period of time. These social changes also saw a fundamental change in ideology towards consumerism, which sociologist Zygmunt Bauman is defines as follows;

“Consumerism is a type of social arrangement that results form recycling mundane, permanent and so to speak “regime -neutral” human wants, desires and longings in the principal propelling and operating force of society, a force that coordinates systematic reproduction, social integration, social stratification and the formation of human individuals, as well as playing a major role in

¹³Alberto Martnelli. (2005). *Global modernization; rethinking the project of modernity*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Pages 10-11

the process of individual and group self identification and the selection and pursuit of individual life policies”¹⁴

Sunate Suwanalong states in his doctoral thesis that changes in of Thai identity and individuality were considerable and there were increasing number of Thai people who defined them self through their patterns of consumption rather than of their work role, as before. Their consumption also reflected how they wished to be seen by others in the community. As the Thai public developing an appetite for a new consumer driven society soon, it paved the way for the use of advertisements to create further desires.¹⁵

5.3 Thai consumerism and increased alcohol consumption

The role of the marketing is essential when explaining the increase in alcohol consumption in the Thailand and other Southeast Asian countries. As seen in chapter four the alcohol industry has been progressing aggressively with their marketing strategies, and it does not hesitate to use all available tactics to increase the sale of its controversial products. It uses to its advantage the developing environment of the countries. Both the lack of policy on alcohol products and the lack of force to implement those policies that are at hand. The general ignorance in some parts of the societies on the harm of alcohol is also in their advantage.

¹⁴Zygmunt Bauman. (2007). *Consumng Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press. Page 28.

¹⁵Sunate Suwanalong. (2006). The history of consumerism in Thai society. *PhD Thesis* . Munser, Germany. Page 204.

Among the debates about the nature and content of marketing is on the deceptive or manipulative element of the marketing practices. How far can the promoters go to make his product more attractive than his rival products? Some say that debate on the manipulative aspects of marketing ultimately lead to freedom of choice, but in all fairness it is about the right of the consumer not to be systematically deceived.¹⁶

David A Aaker and Geogre S. Day say in their book *Consumerism; a search for consumer interests*, claim that there ore those who fear that the freedom of the consumer to make a well informed judgment call on what product they should consume and purchase, is being restricted by the manufacturers right to promote his products. There are three basic arguments on this aspect, which are;

1. The concern of using motivation research, which appeals to motivate the consumer on a subconscious level. A classic case is James Vicary's theater experiment, by flashing the phrase "drink Coke" and "Eat popcorn" at an exposure of 1/3.000 of a second during the showing of a movie, xhich ultimately led to an 57% increase on the sale of Coke and popcorn.
2. Indirect emotional appeals are related to issues of deception, where the line between artistic presentation and deception can easily get blurred.
3. There are more general claims that the power of modern advertising, which can stimulates individuals to consume products, and conduct in

¹⁶David A. Aaker & S. Day Georg. (1971). *Consumerism; search for the consumer interest*. New York: The Free Press. Page 199

behavior that has negative affects for themself as well as society as a whole.¹⁷

The social effects of marketing have a huge impact on the choices an individual makes, and consequently his lifestyle and values. The impact of the marketing has its positive and negative sides. The main issues in the debate on the effect of marketing are if the values and lifestyles represented in the marketing message lead to a unhealthy lifestyle, it is of course debatable how much of an impact marketing can have on an individual.¹⁸

There is greater consensus on the harm marketing can have on the youth. It is generally recognized among sociologists and professionals in the marketing industry that children are more susceptible to manipulation. They are thought to lack the perceptual defense of adults, therefore not being able to evaluate marketing strategies and advertisements objectively. There are those who claim that all advertising directed at children should be banned.¹⁹ A resolution from the 63rd annual World Health Assembly concluded on the marketing tactics on food and non- alcoholic drinks that the governments of all nations need to show leadership in monitoring and implementing a policy to protect children from the negative marketing effects.²⁰ This consensus on marketing food and non-alcoholic drinks is a made to counter the fight obesity of children, which has

¹⁷ David A. Aaker & S. Day Georg. (1971). *Consumerism; search for the consumer interest*. New York: The Free Press. Page 193

¹⁸David A. Aaker & S. Day Georg. (1971). *Consumerism; search for the consumer interest*. New York: The Free Press. Page 200.

¹⁹David A. Aaker & S. Day Georg. (1971). *Consumerism; search for the consumer interest*. New York: The Free Press. Page 200.

²⁰WHO. (2010). *Set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children*. Geneva: WHO. Page 10.

been rising in most societies and now ranks as the fifth major health threat for children in the world.²¹

The growth of consumption in Thailand has mainly had two external influential sources, the western world being Europe and North America and Japan.²² Westernization, in the region of Southeast Asia is more so influenced by American culture than European, which manifested by the popularity of American pop culture. Chua Beng-Huat, finds the term Americanization more appropriate to describe the trends influencing the Youth of Southeast Asia.²³ The Japanese influences in Thai society are tangible as well with, but have in recent years been replaced by South Korea, the influence of these two East Asian nations on pop culture in Thailand is considerable, manifesting in the popularity of both J-pop and K-pop among Thai consumers.

It is important to recognize that there does not have to be a correlation between what products the public might be demanding and the actual quality or usefulness of the product. In other words the wants and needs of the public are not always in their best interest. The Betamax versus VHS format war in the 1980's is a classic marketing example on how product of lower quality gained market dominance. These were the two rival formats for video recorders in the late seventies and early eighties, competing for dominance for the market. VHS was victorious in the end in spite of the fact that Betamax was arguably a better

²¹WHO. (2010). *Set of recommendations on the marketing of foods and non-alcoholic beverages to children*. Geneva: WHO. Page 4.

²²Terence Chong. (2005). *Modernization trends in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. Pages 59-61.

²³Chua Beng-Huat. (2000). *Consuming Asians: ideas and issues*. In *Consumption in Asia; Lifestyles and identities*. London: Routledge. Page 15.

format, both smaller and with stereo sound, while VHS was larger and with mono sound. There were great many factors that contributed to the fact that VHS came out on top, one of them being that the sex industry chose the VHS format. In the end the public was left with market dominance of a product with less quality.²⁴

Roman Meinhold points out that many of the products being marketed and pushed on to Thai consumers are not necessarily products that are of the best quality or in the public's best interest. To substantiate he takes the example of the Western style toilet. The use of western toilet has been spreading, and can be found in most new buildings, hotels and shopping complexes in Bangkok. For some reason the constructors or the owners of the new buildings in Bangkok choose the western style over the Asian Squat toilet. The Squat toilets usually come with a small water sprayer, sometimes called a bum gun. Meinhold argues that the Asian squat toilets are better in almost every way compared to the Western sitting toilets. According to him the Squat toilet uses less water when flushed, individuals use less toilet paper, because of the water sprayer, the water sprayer provides better hygiene and it takes shorter time to use a squat toilet, but often people spend long time on the toilet and find it comfortable to read while taking care of business.²⁵

²⁴Dave Owen. (1. May 2005). *The Betamax vs VHS Format War*. Retrieved 15. September 2010 from [mediacollege.com](http://www.mediacollege.com):
<http://www.mediacollege.com/video/format/compare/betamax-vhs.html>.

²⁵Roman Meinhold. (2009). Popular culture and consumerism Mediocre, (schein-) Heilig and Pseudo-Therapeutic. In D. I. Yusuf, & C. Dr. Atilgan, *Religion, politics and globalization: Implications for Thailand and Asia* (pp. 51-65). Bangkok: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. Pages 55-56

The increased consumption of alcohol in Thailand is similar to the two examples above, in that way the Thai public is buying into a trend or behavior, which is of poor quality and does not serve any particular use, except for short time self fulfillment.

5.4 The Mass media and alcohol consumption in Thailand

Globalization can be described as a process which regional economies, societies, and cultures become integrated through a global network of communication, transportation, and trade.²⁶

Neil A Englehart argues that the forces of globalization had considerable impact on the democratization in the 1990's in Thailand. The country had been moving toward a steady integration into international trade and financial networks since the mid-1980's. One of the side effects being increased vulnerability to international public opinion, especially with the foreign investors. The fact the investors were worried about political instability and preferred democratic governing system paved the way for Thai democracy activists to push for the passing of the new constitution.²⁷

It is highly logical that globalization has had a similar effect on the Thai public regarding to the consumption of alcohol. For the modernization of the country can in many ways to be seen as a form of westernization, for the public

²⁶Christopher Barbara, *International legal personality: panacea or pandemonium? Theorizing about the individual and the state in the era of globalization* (Berlin: DVM Verlag, 2008). Page 3

²⁷Neil A. Englehart, „Democracy and the Thai middle class: globalization, modernization, and constitutional change,“ *Asian Survey*, 43, nr. 2 (March 2003): 253-279. Page 267

are not simply getting more modern, they are adopting to lifestyles of the more developed parts of the world, with alcohol consumption being one of those adopted elements.

The media environment in Thailand is considered to be one of most liberal among the Southeast Asian countries, though it has a history of governmental interference especially in the in the 1960's and 70's as well as having a tradition for being corrupt, but various forms of gifts to the members of the press where common practice especially in the 1970's. Fortunately these practices have decreased considerably.²⁸

Thailand was the first country in Southeast Asia to start television transmissions in 1955, since then the media operations of the country have grown immensely. With a variety of government run television stations and a few privately owned, as well as a cable network. Thai television mostly transmits commercial and popular entertainment, ranging from news to soap operas. Domestic productions are popular as well as foreign shows mostly originated from china, Japan, America and England.²⁹

Ever since birth of mass media, companies have used this means of communications to let a large number of people know about their products. . However, as the years have progressed, the sophistication of advertising

²⁸ Kavi Chongkittavorn. (2002). The media and access to information in Thailand. In R. Islam, *The right to tell: the role of mass media in economic development* (pp. 255-266). Wahsington DC. Page 255

²⁹ Kavi Chongkittavorn. (2002). The media and access to information in Thailand. In R. Islam, *The right to tell: the role of mass media in economic developmen* (pp. 255-266). Washington DC. Page 255

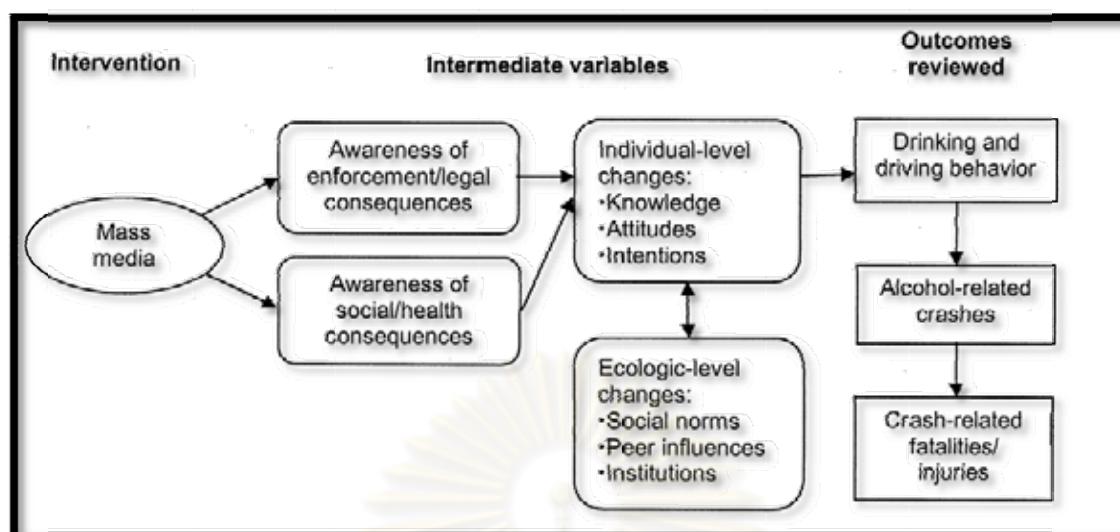
methods and techniques has advanced greatly, creating needs where there were none before, or turning luxuries into necessities.

The alcohol companies put a considerable amount of effort in to the branding of their alcohol beverages, as shown in chapter four. They align their beverages with desirable and positive elements such as sport and entertainment. The branding of an alcohol beverage is carefully molded so it mirrors the image of its intended target group. Moreover the Thai alcohol industry conveys messages in their advertisements and promotions that certain activity calls for the usage of alcohol and they encourage many forms of socialization to involve drinking of alcohol.³⁰ As if people are not capable of socializing without drinking. To stimulate people towards these behavioral or consumer changes, the alcohol industry uses the power of the mass media.



³⁰ Bantid Sornpaisarn, „The impact of Alcohol advertisement on Youth,“ í *The 3rd National Alcohol Conference; "Alcohol No Ordinary Commodity"*, 33-40 (Bangkok: Center for Alcohol Studies, 2007). Page 39

Figure 13: Mass media and alcohol



Source: TFCPS. ³¹

Figure 13 portrays in a very clear manner how the mass media can affect the behavior of an individual. The messages from the media effect knowledge, attitudes and intentions relating to the individuals drinking behavior.

5.5 The Thai alcohol paradox, Buddhism and modernization

Theravada Buddhism in large part can be summarized as follows: the four noble truths, the concept of transmigration, the doctrine of Karma, the concept of merit, salvation from rebirth or nirvana and the eight precepts. The precepts. The eight precepts are assorted in to the five and three, the latter ones are considered for the more serious practitioners of Buddhism such as monks and nuns. To live ones life in accordance the precepts is to follow rules of abstaining

³¹Task force on community preventive services, *Effectiveness of mass media campaigns for reducing drinking and driving and alcohol involved crashes*, (New York: American journal of preventive medicine, 2004). Page 3

form behavior that is determined harmful to one self, other or the environment.

Following are the eight precepts:

1. To abstain from killing
2. To abstain from stealing
3. To abstain from sexual indecency
4. To abstain from lying or falsehood
5. To abstain from intoxicants and over consumption
6. To abstain from eating food at an inappropriate time
7. To abstain from indecency associated with music, dancing, entertainment, bodily adornments and decorations
8. To abstain from using large and high sleeping place (which is generally seen as a statement of luxury in Thailand).³²

One of the most significant aspects of the modernization process in Thailand is the ideological clash between the traditional or a Buddhist ideology and of the modern consumerism ideology. It is plain to see that these ideologies are clear opposites of each other. In fact consumerism can be interpreted as the vital component one should avoid in order to follow the fifth precept of Buddha. The moral of the fifth precept is to counter suffering caused by mindless consumption, more so the precept also specifically instructs the followers of Buddha to avoid the usage of mind altering substances, such as drugs or alcohol.

When asked about the recent trend in alcohol use of Thais and the clash with the fifth precepts. Thai monk and director of the addiction treatment in the Watt Thamkraborg, Prah Kong Suk, enlightened the researcher on the practice of Buddhism, especially tolerance and non-judgment. According to his explanation,

³² Paul James Rutledge. (1992). *Central Thai Buddhism and modernization*. St. Luis: Dhammpradipa. Page 10-11

Buddhists are given freedom to choose how they follow the teachings of Buddha. The most important thing is that one is trying his best is on the way to improving oneself. The precepts are ways to improve one behavior toward other and the nearest environment, but usually it takes time and experience to follow them, their objective is more to be suggestive than strict laws that Buddhist follow. Even monks are not required to follow the precepts to the fullest, it is simply expected that they try there best. While staying at Watt Thamkraborg, the researcher observed that mostly all of the monks there smoked cigarettes, some of them had girlfriends and even drank alcohol on a regular basis.³³ Therefore it is not the understanding of Thai people that Buddhism forbids the use of alcohol, as in Islam, it is just a recommendation.

Practitioners of Buddhism always emphasize on anti material value. In fact it is considered to be one of the main characteristics of Buddhism. It is believed that the pursuit of material possessions, limits the capability for spiritual growth and the possibility to become enlightened. In reality, however Thai behavior does mirror those values completely, In the later part of the 20th century it has become a social norm to simultaneously pursue abstaining material possessions as well as regularly practice Buddhist faith³⁴

Western values particularly those relating to materialism and consumerism are considered to be the source of the decline of Buddhism in

³³Prah Kong Sak (25. July 2010). Director of addiction therapy at Watt Thamkraborg. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer).

³⁴Paul James Rutledge (1992). *Central Thai Buddhism and modernization*. St. Luis: Dhamm pradipa. Page 29.

Thailand. Paul James Rutledge states the following paragraph on attitudes towards modernization in Thailand in his paper on *Central Thai Buddhism and modernization*:

“For the monks in the central provinces, there is a nefarious aspect to modernization, which to large extent negates whatever good modernization has, to the point in time, brought to the provinces. The allure of commercialism and the temptations of consumerism are considered being the handmaidens of social evils which are a part of western development.”³⁵

Some of the social evils Rutledge mentions are elements such as age discrimination, increased violence and drug use and a more impersonal society, where monetary transactions are valued more important than interpersonal relationships. These effects of modernism are mainly felt by the younger generations of Thailand.³⁶

The increase of alcohol use certainly belongs with the above-mentioned westernized social evils. Prah Kong Sak monk of the addiction therapy Watt Thamkraborg , claims that the dangers of alcohol is far more dangerous and affecting more people with negative consequences than drug use. He underlines that he does not mean to belittle the drug problem, which he considers to be very

³⁵Paul James Rutledge. (1992). *Central Thai Buddhism and modernization*. St. Luis: Dhammpradipa. Page 38.

³⁶Paul James Rutledge. (1992). *Central Thai Buddhism and modernization*. St. Luis: Dhammpradipa. Page 38.

serious in Thailand, especially amphetamine. The element that makes alcohol use so more dangerous is the outspread belief that alcohol is relatively harmless and is a normal consumer product which is accessible almost everywhere. There is even a widespread belief that alcohol is a health product and is used in medical purposes, while the stigma of drugs is widespread in society.³⁷



³⁷Prah Kong Sak. (25. July 2010). Director of adiction therapy at Watt Thamkraborg. (P. A. Steinarsson, Interviewer)

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

The increase of alcohol consumption in Thailand is a fact. Moreover the increase is affecting certain groups more than others, mainly the youth and women, who show a staggering rise in the use of alcohol. Trends in alcohol consumption have also seen a huge turnaround in what alcohol beverages the Thai people are consuming, choosing beer rather than traditional spirits. In spite of the increase in alcohol consumption it is important to point out that, a majority of the Thai people are abstainers from alcohol.

An important aspect of this discussion is the correlation between alcohol use and modernity. Is rise in alcohol usage an inseparable variable of the modernization process? The thirteen characteristics of modernization of Martinelli do not imply that alcohol consumption should increase along with the economic growth of nations. Men such as Dr. Richard Smith and Dr. Griffith Edwards and have argued that a rapid social change and development should not automatically lead to increased alcohol consumption.¹ Unfortunately the experience of most developing countries is on the contrary to their argument.

¹ Richard Smith. (17. January 1982). Alcohol in the third world: a chance to avoid a miserable trap. *British Medical Journal* ,(pp183 -185). Page 184

WHO has repeatedly pointed to the emerging dangers of alcohol consumption in developing societies, which they have described as an epidemic. Almost all developing societies have figures of a large increase in alcohol consumption and an increase in alcohol related problems.²

Samlee Plianbangchang, Southeast Asian regional director for WHO, puts most of the blame on the increase in alcohol consumption in the region of Southeast Asia on external marketing forces. He argues that they have been focusing more on pushing their products in developing countries, while the markets in developed countries mainly North America and Europe have been in decline or a status quo position regarding the consumption of alcohol.³

Thailand follows another pattern with its alcohol development, where two Thai corporations control the majority of the market. These two corporations have been able to keep a strong hold on the alcohol market, and these two corporations are the two largest beneficiaries of the alcohol market expansion. It is therefore safe to come to the conclusion that the major determinants of the increased alcohol consumption of the Thai people are internal factors, rather than external factors.

The unconstrained marketing efforts of the Thai alcohol industry are the play a largest role in the increase of Thai alcohol consumption. Even so the Thai authorities have been countering this development the alcohol industry seems to

² David Jernigan. (2002). *Alcohol in developing societies : a public health approach. Summary*. Helsinki: WHO. Page 6-8

³ WHO. (2006). *Public health problems caused by harmful use of alcohol - gaining less or losing more?* Bangalore: WHO. Page 7

be ahead in the fight, with estimates of a rise in Thai alcohol consumption being between 7-13 percent on an annual basis.

The effects of the ever shrinking globalizing world also play a large role in the increases alcohol consumption by introducing new trends related to the consumption of alcohol beverages. Globalization introduces a lot of other ideas and products to the people of Thailand, than alcohol. But they don't get the same kind of promotion in the mass media and the community. For globalization is merely a bridge of ideas, the Thai people choose what ideas are welcome to adjust to their society. They seem to welcome alcohol for its pleasurable effects, unaware of its consequences.

The largest determinates for the increased alcohol use in Thailand are the fore the ones who benefit most financially form the increased alcohol use of the Thai people, and they do so with extensive marketing.

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จุฬาลงกรณ์มหาวิทยาลัย