

## Addiction Policies and Siam Nation-Making Process

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賭博、薬物、アルコール、性産業に関する政策と近代タイ国家形成過程

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### Abstract

This study incorporates addiction policies in order to provide a comprehensive understanding on Siam nation-making process. It argues that addiction re-administrating and policing process also significantly brought about changes toward modernization in various state institutions and society in addition to economic gains. In stead of naming them just social vices, the work will discuss four addictive features in Siam on how they were managed by Siam government in socio-political settings, together with state's attitudes and policies toward recreational activities in the late nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.

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## 1. Siam Nation-Making Process and Addictions

Transformations in late nineteenth century Siam has long been treated by scores of researchers as the transitional period from the system of princely trade monopolies and farming to tax-oriented state along with country's integration into the global economy. Numerous subjects such as, people administrative system, taxation, the abolition of slavery, the nation-making process, etc., have been studied to broaden the understanding on Siam society.

In this paper, 'Liquor, opium smoking, gambling, and prostitution' will be put as another factor that brought about concrete formation of nation-making process and significant developments in the late nineteenth century. The term "nation-making" refers to a process of state's attempts to consolidate power over a defined territory through modern bureaucracy and social administrative system. According to Pasuk and Baker, the nation-making process of Siam comprises two processes: a process of enforced retirement of local lords and nobilities who controlled the economic prosperity by replacing them with a modern and centralized administrative system; and, the import of Western concept of territorially-defined state<sup>1</sup>. In this paper, I will put an emphasis on the first process based on Pasuk and Baker's statement by illustrating how addictions were treated, administrated, and comprehended by Siamese ruling class.

Under this process, many scholars term it as a "civilizing mission" of Bangkok elites toward modernization<sup>2</sup>. In one sense, the process was undertaken when the traditional controlling system of manpower became unproductive for the King's pocket, which led to the gradual termination of the traditional system under the lordship control. Wallerstein argues that this kind of nation-state making process is a way in which "states try to reinforce their authority and to become stronger and diminish the role of mafias"<sup>3</sup>.

In Siam case, we can notice this process in the late 19th century under country's transformation projects initiated by King Chulalongkorn starting from fiscal reform. The rights to control over tax farms, such as gambling and liquors were transferred to the hand of the King. From 1895, revenue from gambling, lotteries, opium, and liquors doubled from around 9 to 22 million baht in just a decade<sup>4</sup>. This amount accounted for 50 per cent of total tax farming run by the government at that time.

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<sup>1</sup> Pasuk Phongpaichit and Chris Baker, *Thailand: Economy and Politics*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, p.211.

<sup>2</sup> More detail see Thongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A history of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, University of Hawaii Press, 1997; David Streckfuss, *Truth and Trial in Thailand: Defamation, treason, and lèse-majesté*, New York: Routledge, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *World-System Analysis: An Introduction*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2004, p.54.

<sup>4</sup> Sumalee Bamrungsuk, 'The consolidation of government revenue in the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1873-1910)', MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1982, p.201.

Therefore, 'Liquor, opium smoking, gambling, and prostitution' composed an amount of money in lubricating the country's nation-making process. In this study, instead of naming these four addictive "vices" and tease out the topic in just socio-economic perspective, which marks the originality of this paper, I will incorporate addiction policies in order to understand them through a perspective rarely touched by previous studies on Siam nation-making process: the study on leisure.

## 2. Addictions in the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century Siam

In order to understand addictions and their significance in Siam nation-making process, there are two concepts to mention: leisure and recreation. From theoretical concept of "leisure" and "recreational activity", these two concepts are linked to personal preferences and contain a sense of addiction in themselves. However, compared with leisure, recreational activities are addictions created and bound up with more cohesive ties, productivity, and continuity of communal life<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, what we could understand from recreation is that it contains the sense of community and socialization rather than just personal choice of pleasurable hobbies or activities.

In Thai case, there exists an article written by the noble people about traditional recreational games recognized as good for young people<sup>6</sup>. For example, role-playing indoctrinates the children how to behave and to live in the society, and provide an understanding in social responsibility, which relates to the making of strong nation. On the contrary, leisure has no 'essential function for the community, and it will not add anything to social order or predictability. Recreational activities are linked to an aspect of citizenship. Normally, citizenship in itself is a concept defined by age and other legal eligibility. However, in some sense, recreation indicates whether who can or cannot do something contexted by social norms and morality.

In Thai, these two concepts were slightly different from Western ones. The concept of leisure and recreation is replaceable depending on speaker's usage. However, there is another concept of recreation and leisure that should be discussed. It is the word "*Len*" or literally "play" in English. From the periodical journal written and published among the elite society in Siam, the definition of "*Len*" was interestingly defined by the elite writers who wished to publish their ideas in this high-ranked Vajirayanavises journal. "*Len*" can be divided into three aspects; (1) to gamble, the act where one needs venture capital to compete with the others. To *Len*, therefore, is related to a kind of game that comprises winners and losers; (2) to make fun of something, to dance, and make people laugh; (3) to collect something as a hobby and exhibit in public. Nevertheless, the most useful meaning of *Len* is

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<sup>5</sup> Thelma McCormack, 'Politics and Leisure', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 12, 3 (1971), p. 171

<sup>6</sup> 'Rueang Kanlalen' [Amusement], *Vajirayanavises*, Vol. p.26.

that of 'to gamble'. To gamble also can be categorized into three types; (1) contests determined by the win and loss on animal bodies such as cock race, cockfighting; (2) contests determined by personal thoughts and skills; (3) games based on chance and luck of the gamblers. Sometimes, the verb 'len' or to play could also be used in terms of getting involved in sexual intercourse with prostitutes. A person whose action relates to these "len" activities is called "nak-len" or as we call them "nak-leng" until today. For example, 'Nak-leng stamp' refers to a person who has postage stamp collecting as a hobby. 'Nak-leng pooying' refers to a womanizer or a playboy. Thai elites who published their work in Vajirayanavises periodical journal stated that 'the disadvantages in 'len' happened specifically when a person '*len duay panan*' or 'gambling'. Len Duay Panan also creates a nuisance and is even more despised when it is conducted among friends.

Therefore, in Thai society, the word *len* or play connotes various nuances both in positive and negative meanings and has no clear division between leisure and recreation. Len can be used for both leisure and recreational activities. If a person gets involved in 'len', leisure or recreational activities, too much, he will get addicted to it. This is how these three terms are linked. Since len is also perceived and defined by social norms and morality, it is the task of the government to control or define how people should spend their non-working time.

Another concept is about addiction. In Western context, addiction occurs when a person shows a strong inclination toward a kind of things or conducts no matter how bad or good it is. This preoccupation is described as "being addicted". In the late 19th century, German physician Levinstein stated that in case of opium addiction, he saw "addiction as a human passion, such as smoking, gambling, greediness for profit, sexual excesses, etc."<sup>7</sup> Addiction might be personal preferences, and a kind of individual considerations at its first glance, despite the fact that there are cases that society influences and arouses addictive actions.

In Thai case, addiction is translated to '*sep-tid*'. The concept of addiction is slightly different from the Western one. From this nuance, to *sep* is to partake, consume or take particular things for some time such as drugs, tobacco, liquors, and sometimes women. '*Tid*' is to addict to something one consumes. We can also say *sep-ya* or *len-ya*, which share the same meaning as to take drugs. Therefore, in Thai, the definition of len, which relates to leisure and recreational activities are interrelated to addiction, but it does not always relate to negative meaning.

From this point, the work will show two perspectives to understand addiction in Siam. First is a perspective that defines addictive activities as a vice. However, the revenue from these vices was a critical component for state's financial status that Siamese government was having a hard time launching immediate abolition policy. Secondly, addiction from

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<sup>7</sup> More detail see Reuven Dar and Hanan Frenk, *A critique of nicotine addiction*, Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000.

previous studies that follow the argument that the promotion and taxation of addictive activities, or mostly defined as tax on evils, played a crucial role in the transformation of the semi-feudal Siamese Kingdom into the modern nation-state as a source of government revenue.

Gambling, opium, liquor, and prostitution as social vices

In the reformation period of Siam, apart from modernizing administrative organizations and enhancing state's revenue for these projects, coping with the widespread of gambling dens, opium, liquor, and prostitution was also one of the great concerns for the ruling class. Actually, it was not only in Siam that these features were treated as vice to the society. Works from previous scholars show that in many societies, there exists the concept of vice embedded in addictive consumption. In a broader sense, what previous studies referred to as vice was not linked to only economic field of study, but the topic of criminalization, social disorder and the welfare for the people.<sup>8</sup>

In Thai case, there is a number of scholars in Thai studies that include liquor, gambling, opium, and prostitution together by posing them as problematic for Siamese rulers. In his study, James A. Warren terms these four features as 'Siamese vice', and studies the criminalization process as a result of the wide-ranging socio-economic changes that Siam underwent<sup>9</sup>. Although Warren questions the assumed causal connection between gambling and crime, his work's main argument is still set on the assumption that addictive activities are recognized as vice, despite the fact that the meaning of vice changes over the period of time. He argues that gambling provided the Thai government with a convenient scapegoat for the country's stagnancies and allowed the ruling class to ignore other deeper structural factors that hampered country's development.

In the same fashion, other Thai scholars tend to follow the vice-study-pattern by recognizing addictive consumptions as a habit that needs more attention or control from the state and society. In the case of opium smoking, for example, numerous studies link opium smoking habit with individual disorganization which leads to social problem and crime.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For more information see Reuven Brenner and Gabrielle A. Brenner, *Gambling and Speculation: a Theory, a History, and a Future of Some Human Decisions*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991; David P. Allen, *The Nature of Gambling*, New York: Coward-McCann, 1952; Nechama Tec, *Gambling in Sweden*, Totowa, N.J.: Bedminster, 1964; D.B. Cornish, *Gambling: A Review of the Literature and Its Implications for Policy and Research*, London: H.M.S.O, 1978.

<sup>9</sup> James A. Warren, 'Troublesome spirits: alcohol, excise and extraterritoriality in nineteenth and early twentieth century Siam', *South East Asia Research*, 21, 4(Dec,2013), p.583.

<sup>10</sup> Siriwat Osathanukroh, 'Opium Smoking and Social Problems in Thailand', MA thesis, Thammasat University, 1960, pp.1-31 ; Vichai Posayachinda, 'The Lesson from Opium Problem in the beginning of Rattanakosin Era' in *Vejjasarn*, Bangkok: Chulalongkorn University Press, 1982, pp.1-22 ; Supaporn Jarunpattana, 'Opium Revenue and Fiscal Policy of Thailand 1824-1925', MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1980, pp.1-66.

In the book “Chauytua Lae Chuay Chart [Rescue Yourself and Nation]”, published in 1926, the author discusses the inherency of “liquor, gambling, and women”, describing these addictive activities together as perilous<sup>11</sup>. Even though the author does not directly define them as vices, this book is one of the examples that show how each addictive thing is grouped together and recognized by the high-ranked people. According to this work, what we can further understand is the underlying rationale on how each addiction was related to social status and filial piety. For example, gambling requires money from parents which may lead to destitution of the family. Drinking results in losing control of oneself and is considered harmful to the society. Therefore, parents have the responsibility to educate and prevent their children from trying these addictions. At the same time, state must also take part in managing recreational activities that may develop into addictions of the people.

On liquor, we might also notice how previous researchers render alcoholic consumption as problematic and speak of its ill-effect on the society. In his writing on the history of alcohol consumption in Thailand, Prapisal Visalo poses liquors as the origin of moral decay and unhealthy society, especially against five precepts of the Buddhists<sup>12</sup>.

Another study that shows a linkage between vice and state’s concern is Dararat’s study on prostitution. In the work, prostitution was studied as an affront to the sense of decency, that sometimes creates nuisance and spreads venereal disease. Siamese government’s policies toward prostitution were argued in her work as an adverse affect on the society, especially on children comparing with other parts of the world.<sup>13</sup>

Actually, the concept of vice and four addictive features has long been treated in the Thai society as mutually intertwined. As cited in some studies, “abaiyamuk” is a Buddhism concept about ‘the way to hell’. In the secular world, Warren shows that King Chulalongkorn and the elites referred gambling as a vice and an evil thing that led people to utter ruin.<sup>14</sup> Another example that explains how Western practices on vice and civilization were proposed to the Siamese court during King Chulalongkorn’s birthday ceremony in 1880. American citizens in government service and living in Bangkok presented to the King a letter stating that prosperity and civilization in Siam would never be secured as long as the state did not abolish the gambling-stalls, the spirit-shops, and the sale of opium.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Tussayanrangsan, Phraya, *Chauytua Lae Chuay Chart* [Rescue Yourself and Nation], cremation volumes, Bangkok: Sponpipattanakarn Press 1926.

<sup>12</sup> Pisal Visalo, Phra, *Prawatisart Kaan Baripok Sura Nai Prathet Thai* [The History of Alcohol Consumption in Thailand], Bangkok: Health Systems Research Institute Press, 1994, pp.5-57.

<sup>13</sup> Dararat Mettarikanon, “*Sophenii Kap Nayobai Ratthaban Thai Pho So 2411-2503*” [Prostitution and Thai Government Policy, 1868-1960], MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1983.

<sup>14</sup> James A. Warren, *Gambling, The State and Society in Thailand, c.1800-1945*, London and New York: Routledge, 2013, p.70.

<sup>15</sup> Mary Lovina Cort, *Siam: Or, The Heart of Farther India*, New York: A. D. F. Randolph & Co., 1886, p. 112.

Referring to Thongchai's concept, Warren also adapts the concept of the quest for siwilai (civilization) to understand how anti-gambling policy was initiated when Siam encountered with Western world.<sup>16</sup> What globalization and foreign presence brought to Siam was not only structural changes in economic and political administration, but also pressure on full range of government activity and attitudes on social matters. In this sense, some gambling practices particularly traditional games like Thai cock-fighting were described "uncivilized" compared with Western gambling activities which were seen as more civilized.<sup>17</sup>

#### Social vice as a source of government revenue

In previous studies on Siam nation-making process, the overall image of Siam in the late nineteenth century was explained through the changing social, economic and political phenomenon led by Bangkok-based elite. During this period, social and political contours of Thailand began to take shape as the ruling class began to lay tangible and intangible foundations for the modern state. Most scholars aimed at understanding socio-economic and political changes and tried to explain taxation and revenue system as a crucial fund for country's transformation into the modern nation-state<sup>18</sup>.

In the case of revenue from social "vices" or "evils", we could learn from studies on the rapid growth in state revenue from tax farms on each addictive consumption after state's attempts to turn these lucrative economic surpluses from former farm bidders into their pocket. Before the major political and economic reformation in the late nineteenth century, there were numerous tax farms in existence. Revenue from tax farms related to addictive activities such as opium, liquor, gambling, and prostitution ranked third after poll tax and revenue from agricultural sectors.<sup>19</sup> Followed by unequal treaties with Britain and other western countries after 1855, most studies narrate in the same fashion that Siam cut its traditional sources of state revenues from trade monopolies and import duties. Additional revenues were then raised mostly from tax farms, especially opium and gambling. Tax farms were monopolized and granted by the state to individuals and syndicates, or some may term "tax farmers", who then paid back to the state through auction process. However, King

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<sup>16</sup> Thongchi Winichakul, 'The Quest for "Siwilai": A Geographical Discourse of Civilizational Thinking in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Siam', *Journal of Asian Studies*, 59, 3 (August 2000), pp. 528-49.

<sup>17</sup> Warren, *Gambling*, p.69.

<sup>18</sup> For more information see Kullada Kesboonchoo Mead, *The Rise and Decline of Thai Absolutism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2004; Thongchi Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-body of a Nation*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

<sup>19</sup> Damrong Rachanuphap, Prince, *Latti Tamnian Tangtang Park tii 15 : Tamnan Paasii Arkorn Bangyang* [Collected Chronicles, Part 15: Certain Legends on Taxation], Bangkok: Cremation Volume, 1960, pp.172-75; Sir John Bowring, Sir, *The Kingdom and People of Siam*, Vol.1, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 268; Jean-Baptiste Pallegoix, Monsignor, *Description of the Thai Kingdom of Siam: Thailand under King Mongkut*, trans. Walter E.J. Timps, Bangkok: White Lotus, 2000, pp.291-94.



Chulalongkorn's main goal after his ascendancy was to seize control of revenue from pockets of the nobles and the indirect farming system into the King's hands.

In her comprehensive account of Opium revenue and Fiscal Policy of Thailand around 1824-1925, Supaporn Jarunpattana divides the evolution in opium revenue policy into three phases (1) prohibition period until the last year of King Nangklao in 1850, (2) policy major transitional period from 1851-1868, and (3) revenue maximization period in King Chulalongkorn reign to King Vajiravudh reign. It was in the first year of King Mongkut reign, the fourth king of Chakri dynasty, that Siam started taxation on opium, and the first revenue from taxation was high as 160,000 baht. However, taxation on drugs was under several conditions. For example, the government must act as a guarantor for opium transaction, while other opium sellers were not allowed to compete with legalized farmers since farmers could buy opium from foreign merchants directly. Additionally, opium imported from abroad must be sold to legal farmers, mainly Chinese ethnic.<sup>20</sup> Actually, this initiative was raised from Chinese-ethnic tax farmers in order to allow more free trade on opium and was accepted by Siam government to a certain level as long as it posed no harm to the locals. However, local Siamese and some other ethnicities were also able to consume opium under two conditions: that is, if they wear pigtailed like Chinese; and, if they paid for poll tax in higher rate than normal Chinese. For example, the Chinese paid one tamlung triennially, but the Siamese were to pay at a higher rate.

This unprecedented boom in opium procured Thai state the revenue for funding the administrative, fiscal and other reforms toward modernization. Despite the amount of this revenue, Siam ruling class realized the social effects these activities caused, and tried to limit their extent. Starting from the late nineteenth century onwards, numerous laws were introduced and subjected gambling, opium and prostitution to increased regulation and eventual prohibition. However, Siam could not immediately abolish its big amount of revenue and postponed the criminalization of opium into at least the late twentieth century. Therefore, in the case of opium, state's main concern over tax farming was not only the problem of extraterritoriality or foreign subjects, comparing with its harmful social effects and reluctance to abolish it despite the revenue to the state.

In the case of gambling, many works study growth in taxation revenue which erupted in the early nineteenth century, as a result of Chinese immigration and Siam's integration into the world economy, such as tax from opium. Gambling was one of the major components in state's tax farming, especially for funding nation-building programs. However, as the government's policy to show a "civilized" face to the western powers, in the late 1870s, the state launched several policies to limit the number of gambling dens. Until 1917, most of

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<sup>20</sup> Suphaporn Charanphattana, *Phasii Fin Ghap Nayobai Daan Kaankhlang Khong Ratthabaan Thai Pho So 2637-2468* [Opium Revenue and the Fiscal Policy of the Thai Government, 1824-1925], MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1980, p.33.



gambling was made illegal and the last gambling dens stopped the business.

Regarding prostitution, Dararut's study also examines prostitution business and taxation. It was not until early King Chulalongkorn reign that Siam gained benefit from "Street Tax", which also operated under farming system. In 1909, Siam established a license system for the registration of prostitutes and brothels together with the Contagious Disease Act which gave the state a direct control over tax collection<sup>21</sup>. However, it was evident that comparing with opium and gambling, Siam government did not gain as much benefit as it could.

Another case that notes vice as a great concern of the government due to its economic benefit for nation-making process is to discuss the topic of liquor. Alcoholic consumption reached its peak as a great concern for the state in the late nineteenth century, despite the fact that drinking was not widespread among Siamese residents. Some Western observers described the change in drinking culture in the Thai society over a short period of time, both in consumption and production, from a more tea-drinking society to a city where alcoholic consumers were apparent at every corner of the street. The level of public drunkenness was arguably most problematic in the King Mongkut reign (1851-1868) after the state launched an act prohibiting people from excessive drinking and from leaving home during traditional New Year's festival. However, growth in alcoholic revenue rose sharply from 190,000 baht to 280,000 baht in a few decades starting from the 1810s. According to Warren, most of the increase in drunkenness took place in Bangkok and surrounding areas, given that these areas were among the first to witness socio-economic changes that transformed the country in that period.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, some studies suggest that the total revenue from addiction amounted to almost half of government's revenue.<sup>23</sup> However, economic concern was not the only cause for state's policy formation and implementation. For example, David Wyatt categorizes the rationale behind government's modernization and reformation into a dual purpose: (1) an

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<sup>21</sup> For more information about prostitution in Thailand see Dararat Mettarikanon, *"Sopphenii Kap Nayobai Ratthaban Thai Pho So 2411-2503"* [Prostitution and Thai Government Policy, 1868-1960], MA thesis, Chulalongkorn University, 1983.

<sup>22</sup> Frederick Arthur Neale, *Narrative of a residence at the capital of the kingdom of Siam*, London: Office of the National Illustrated Library, 1852, p.150; Thawi Suanmali, *'Phasi sura nai Prathet Thai'* [Alcohol taxes in Thailand], MA thesis, Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1962; B.J Terwiel, *Through travellers' Eyes: An Approach to Early Nineteenth Century Thai History*, Bangkok: Duangkamol, pp. 121-220; Thaksaphon Thamarangsi, 'Thailand: Alcohol Today', *Addiction*, 101, 6 (June, 2006), p.783; James A. Warren, 'Troublesome Spiritues: Alcohol, Excise, and Extraterritoriality in Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Siam', *South East Asia Research*, 21, 4 (Nov, 2012), pp 575-599.

<sup>23</sup> For more detail see Hong Lysa, *Thailand in the Nineteenth Century: Evolution of the Economy and Society*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1984.

effort to centralize power in the hands of the Bangkok ruler; and (2) an effort aiming at foreigners and an effort to end extraterritoriality.<sup>24</sup>

For further comprehension in addition and the modernization of Siam, the next part will focus on policies toward addiction, especially gambling and opium smoking, under social and cultural contexts within Siam society. The restabilized and restructured forms of pre-modern forms of addictions under the administrative reform and nation-making process in the late nineteenth to early twentieth century will be linked to changes in daily life of the Siamese both in tangible and intangible ways.

### **3. Addictions and Administration Policy on Leisure in Siam**

This part will observe state practices concerning addiction management and the modernization process of Siam. Instead of handling gambling and opium as vices, this work will treat them as a kind of addictive consumption that should be understood more broadly than its advantages on economic gains and disadvantages on morality. The work will focus addiction on the strand of state policies especially state's attempts to define and institutionalize, and on how these activities reshaped and engendered a new concept for Siam society. It intends to understand government's role as a choice provider in recreational activities for its people, and how changes in time and space along with nation-making process could be recognized in Siam.

In the nation-state making projects, an attempt toward civilization concurred with the desire to prevent uncivilized/undesirable effects while promoting desirable ones. Peter Jackson studies Siamese government's discursive behaviors in a Foucauldian sense by proposing that, to legitimize the power of the state and monarchy, Siamese government had a great concern on 'public behaviors' and how country's image is recognized by the outside world<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, the management on its people's behaviors was a crucial factor in policy formation process, including in the case of leisure activities.

However, Siam was not only the case that addiction was linked to the civilization concept. According to British official documents, addiction such as gambling and opium in Burmese society was an activity that needed prohibition as part of their civilizing mission<sup>26</sup>. Not so long after the British final conquest of independent Burma in 1885, both upper and lower Burma opium consumption were banned.

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<sup>24</sup> David K. Wyatt, *The Politics of Reform in Thailand: Education in the Reign of King Chulalongkorn*, New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1969, p. 210.

<sup>25</sup> Peter A. Jackson, 'The Thai Regime of Images', *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia* 19, 2 (October 2004), pp. 181-218.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Saha, 'Colonization, Criminalization and Complicity: Policing Gambling in Burma c.1880-1920', *South East Asia Research*, 21, 4 (Dec, 2013), pp.655-72.

In British Burma, there was also a debate on opium use within the country especially for medicinal purposes. The advocates of the continuance of opium consumption proposed that ‘consumption of opium for relaxation, improvement of concentration, facilitation of work and recreation could be legitimate as long as no physical, moral or social harm resulted<sup>27</sup>.’ Nevertheless, compared with Burma, this controversy had never become a big debate in Siam at least until King Vajiravudh reign.

However, what Siam ruling class and Burmese governors under the British rule shared in common was the relevance of opium consumption, productivity, and the development toward modernization. This perspective was also been observed by Mr C. Findley, manager of a mill in Rangoon in 1893.<sup>28</sup> Unhealthy population means unhealthy state and the loss in wealth, also the prolific sources of poverty, theft, and disloyalty. To British officials, the use of opium was acceptable to some extent, but ‘should be determined by the ethnicity of the opium user’. Actually, the idea that the smoke of opium is harmful to indigenous citizen’s productivity was raised by the British colonial officials in Burma around the 1880s.

For the British, it was clear that Burmese men were vulnerable to opium addiction. Charles Aitchison, chief commissioner of British Burma, “affirmed a theory of racial difference that justified the continuance of governmental opium sales in British Burma.” In other words, the British commissioners, as well as some elder Burmese citizens considered that opium consumption was problematic and found it important to control certain types of opium smokers<sup>29</sup>. For them, Burmese men who were relevant to opium use were prone to misbehave. In most cases, the opium consumers were described as thieving or gambling to obtain money to buy opium.

Therefore, similar to the case of Siam, opium consumption was not immediately abolished. In both cases, certain groups of people were asserted by the state as feasible and required special administration to protect them from disastrous consequences of addiction. In Siam, only the Chinese residents were allowed to buy and consume opium. While opium consumption was not allowed for only Burmese citizens in Burma, in Siam, except for the Chinese, all the Thai, Mon, Lao, Khmer, Indian, Dawei, Vietnamese, Brahman, European, and former Portuguese descendents were all prohibited.<sup>30</sup>

Wright observes the reform of opium system in British Burma that British administration had two options for policy formation: (1) safeguarding the welfare of the Burmese population by restricting Burmese consumption of opium; (2) prioritizing the demands of the Chinese and Indian populations in Burma. However, in Siam, the state’s attention concerning opium

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<sup>27</sup> Ashley Wright, *Opium and Empire in Southeast Asia: Regulating Consumption in British Burma*, Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014, pp.14-31.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp.14-31.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p.35.

<sup>30</sup> Damrong Rachanuphap, *Latti Tamnian Tangtang*, pp.172-75.

was to maximize the revenue, to deal with daily problems with tax farmers, and to show off civilized face to Western powers as a process of modernization, rather than to balance the additive needs from various groups of people.

It is therefore a paradox to the perception that leisure should be free choice of activities as mentioned in the first part of this article. The Siamese government's definition of "len", which literally means leisure or games, was not completely a freedom of thoughts and actions, but rather similar to recreation. The feature of leisure is socially and discursively defined, constituted, and linked to the process of modernization, similar to the study of Stanley. He argues that state acts as a demand shaper, a controller, and a choice provider for recreational activities in the society<sup>31</sup>. In a similar fashion to re-organizing political administrative system, Siam ruling class determined the range of recreational and leisure opportunities of the residents.

In the case of gambling, there was a division in types of game environment in order to prohibit certain people from participating in the activity. Under the provisions of the Gambling Revenue Act in 1902, Siamese state listed gambling games into four groups. Among them were those completely forbidden and those permitted subject to license. The most interesting was Group III which comprises Chinese games similar to dice called "po".<sup>32</sup> Po was not recognized as forbidden gambling but as originally Chinese origin. As Prince Chaturongrassami, the Minister of Finance, stated, the Chinese descendants usually played this game in Siam like they did in their homeland. When they asked Siamese citizens to play this game, it resulted in devastation both in time and business opportunity. Therefore, he suggested that gambling dens that provided 'Po' be gradually demolished.<sup>33</sup>

The implication of Prince Chaturongrassami's order was not merely a state's reaction by launching the abolition law against gambling activities, but also a demonstration on how gambling was linked to race, social order, and freedom of choice in choosing leisurely activities in Siam. Considering the name of his announcement, we can see that it directly targeted at the Chinese games as it was stated as "*Restrictions of the number of Po gambling den in order to prevent Thai people from Chinese Abaiyamuk [portals to hell]*". As for the Siamese ruling class, compared with traditional games such as cock fighting, torturing animals, speed or other physical competitions, Chinese games were deemed more

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<sup>31</sup> For more detail on state's role as a supplier on leisure see Chapter 10 of Stanley R. Parker, *The Sociology of Leisure*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1976.

<sup>32</sup> Thailand, 'Prarachabanyan Arkorn Kaanpanan Ror Sor 111' [Gambling Act R.S. 111], *Royal Gazette*, Vol.10, Sec.6, p.75.

<sup>33</sup> Thailand, 'Prakard Horrassadakorn Jamkad Bon Panan Tua Po Lae Wayla Perd Len Panan Nai Kor Tor Mor Pong Kan Kon Thai Muamao Abaiyamuk Khong Jeen' [Announcement from Ministry of Finance Restricting the number of Chinese Gambling Dens and Opening Hours in Bangkok Area in Order to Prevent Siamese from Chinese vice], *Royal Gazette*, Vol.4, Sec.36, p.288.

sedentary, requiring more time to ponder, and causing economic gain and loss in a larger scale.

What the Gambling Revenue Act in 1902 brought into to the Thai society was not only the increasing state revenue, but also mindsets on what was or was not Thai. This has a strong impact on the concept of nation later in the recent Thai history. At the beginning of the state reformation, there was no concrete conception of national ideology. However, it is arguable that this case marked the beginning of the formation of Thai national characteristics. In this process, ethnicities started to be re-defined through official categorizations. It was the first time that what self identification was introduced. The regularization of gambling thus laid the basis for the forthcoming idea of nationalism to erupt not so long after.

Additionally, reformation in gambling system had a profound impact on Siam in transitional period: changes in the comprehension of time and space. Concerning “time”, we can see the first example in gambling law, which was one of the documents that mentioned clock time and work-discipline in Siam history.

In ancient Siam, time use in both high ranking official and peasants was not compulsory. In Vajirayanavises, an article discusses modern working time of the ruling class around the beginning of the twentieth century. Most of the government offices usually set their official time in the morning to afternoon as in the Western society. However, for some high-ranking people, they still preferred to start working at night. In the same article, there was also a debate on the opening hours of gambling houses whether they should be opened in the morning or at night.<sup>34</sup> However, after the enactment of the law, the opening hours of gambling dens started to fix by clock time, starting from 7 am. to 12 am. Prior to that, the concept of time related to gambling was not strict. For example, in the pawnbroking law in 1741, pawnbroking-related activities were not allowed at night time with an exception of transactions with acquainted relatives and friends.<sup>35</sup>

In terms of space, the modernization that took place in Bangkok area had a profound impact on the modern concept of space in the Thai society. For example, foreigners living in Bangkok presented a petition to the King stating that they were used to ‘going out in the open air, riding carriages or riding horseback for pleasures’<sup>36</sup>. But those kinds of space for leisurely activities did not exist in the mindset of the Siamese. The King responded to this petition with a myriad of road construction. This implies importance of roads in determining the future spatial configuration of Bangkok.

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<sup>34</sup> ‘Tam Karn Klangwan Kab Klangkuen Nai Ja Dii Kwa Kan’ [Which is better? Working in the morning or at night], *Vajirayanavises*, Vol.8, 1902, p.15.

<sup>35</sup> *Kodmai Tra Saam Duang Lem 4* [Three Emblems Law Vol.4], Bangkok: Kurusapha Business Organization, 1962, pp.315-16.

<sup>36</sup> Thiphaakorawong, Chaopraya, *The Dynastic Chronicles Bangkok Era the Fourth Reign B.E. 2394-2411 (A.D. 1851-1868)*, trans. Chadin Flood (Kanjavanit), Vol. 1, p. 260.

However, in this work, my study on space management related to addiction will scrutinize through pawnbroking business, an institution still peripheral within Thai studies yet influential to the civilized face of Siam as much as "new roads". Siam increasingly adopted territorial strategies through pawnshops, a business related to addictive activities, to control "what people can do inside national boundaries"<sup>37</sup>.

The oldest known official pawnshop in Siam was established in 1866 by Chinese nobleman of Hong family on Bamrung Muang Road.<sup>38</sup> His pawnshop was known as the pioneer of pawnbroking business for the pawnbrokers in the later generation. Hong was also known as a noble tax farmer in other business such as gambling dens, lottery, opium, and also owned a steamboat and passenger liners business in the same time.<sup>39</sup>

The first licensed pawnshop business in Thailand began in 1901 after the promulgation of Pawnshop Act. Under the provisions of this law, pawnshop owners were required to register for a license and pay permission fees in order to get a legal right to run the business. It was Hua heng, the Chinese-Thai businessman, who first established a legally licensed pawnshop in the Thai history.

However, for Siamese ruling class, pawnbroking business was more than an economic institution which lubricated the flow of capital in the changing society from semi-feudal chiefdom system to a more monetized society. Pawnbroking business was seen strongly related to gambling dens, prostitution, and opium saloon. Previous studies point out that, in Siam, pawnbroking business were linked to two prominent social problems: (1) proof of ownership of the goods on whether they were stolen ones; and (2) the interest rate problem.

In the same fashion, King Vajiravudh once observed that the prosperous pawnshops in Southern area of Siam could expand their business, because the Chinese workers spent their time after work in opium saloons and gambling dens.<sup>40</sup> This confirms Nantana's study on the nature of the pawnbrokers in the Thai society. She categorizes pawnbrokers, or lenders, into three types: low-income consumers who have inadequate credit to conduct any transaction in bigger institutions; persons who urgently need cash; and gamblers, drunkards, and opium smokers<sup>41</sup>.

In economic sense, pawnbroking business in Thailand is similar to that elsewhere as it relates to an activity of a small lender who lends money and a borrower, or a way for

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, 'Territorialization and State Power in Thailand', *Theory and Society*, Vol.24 (Jun, 1995), p. 385.

<sup>38</sup> 'Rueang Rong Jamnam' [The story of Pawnbroking] , *Vajirayanavises*, Vol.6, p.220.

<sup>39</sup> Srichai Somwang, 'Rongrab Chamnam: Stannukroh Khon Yakjon' [Pawnshops: An institution for the low-income people], *Khaosankaanpanich*, Vol.28 (Jun,1961), p.19.

<sup>40</sup> Vajiravudh, King, *Phrarachanipon tii Naa roo Khong Lon Klao Rachakal tii 6* [Royal writings from King Rama VI], Bangkok: Fueangaksorn, 1963, p.259.

<sup>41</sup> Nantana Chotivettamrong, 'Pawnshops and Some Socio-economic Aspects of the Thai Society 1895-1955', MA thesis, Silpakorn University, 1985, p.92.

struggling people to get cash in hands. Although, comparing with other forms of farming, pawnbroking business did not prove as profitable for the government; pawnshops were used to help investigate crimes and maintaining social order, especially in helping victims to find their stolen property and in helping the police to track the record of the pawnbroker, or the thief.<sup>42</sup>

To this point, some might question the existence of police in Siam. Despite the fact that Siam had established modern police force since the mid-nineteenth century, it shared investigation duties and agents of enforcement with other institutions.<sup>43</sup> Warren's in-depth study on this topic shows that gambling tax farmers also equipped their own networks of spies and private armies due to the absence of effective police force to deal with criminal offences.<sup>44</sup>

Nevertheless, in most cases, the government considered pawnshop as fences for stolen items. In Petchaburi, a province west of Bangkok, the abolition of pawnshops resulted in a decrease in crime rates. Therefore, the establishment of pawnshops was limited by conditions under government's order. For example, pawnshops were suggested to be built in the district where policemen or state surveillance was firmly guaranteed<sup>45</sup>. This was a reason why pawnshops were usually located near commercial centers and gambling dens.

Regarding works that provide a clearer image of cluster addiction facilities and government's territoriality, Nuttya studies how gambling dens were designed as hubs or entertainment centers, with a theatrical performance, an opium saloon next door, and the brothel available for the gamblers.<sup>46</sup> In Western concept, Stanley Parker terms this government control as a policy of getting people into boxes, as seen in cinemas, dance halls, etc. Additionally, Western observers visiting a gambling establishment in nineteenth century in Bangkok also narrated how well-functioned the system of the gambling buildings was and how zoning according to the government's policy was managed. According to the document, near the entertainment hub were the musicians and the play-actors and a paper screen, and puppet-shows for the amusement of the spectators. All facilities were said to be contributing to the fascinating power of the gambling shop. Pawnshops were also another

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<sup>42</sup> Satian Lailak et al., 'Pawnshop Act R.S. 114' in *Prachumkodmaiprachamsok* [Collected Law in Chronological Order], Vol.15, Bangkok: Dailymail Press, 1935, p. 27.

<sup>43</sup> For more information on limitations and difficulties of Thai police force see Pussadee Chantawimol, *The Vietnamese in Thailand*, Bangkok: Thammasat University, 1998.

<sup>44</sup> Warren, *Gambling*, p.90.

<sup>45</sup> National Archives of Thailand, R.5 N8.9 K/267 'Praphakdii Rachapak letter to Minister of Local Government, 25 March R.S.125'.

<sup>46</sup> Nuttaya Ussavapongnat, 'Bonbia nai sangkhom Thai BE 2367-2460: Kansuksa cheong sankon wattanatham' [Bonbia- Chinese gambling in Thai Society 1824-1917: A Socio-Cultural Study], MA thesis, Thammasat University, 2005, p.45.



kind of facility that could be found nearby. These kind additive establishments were located not only on the street, but mostly down the river and were licensed by the government.

As we have seen, state practices concerning addiction management along with the process of modernizing Siam brought about various social impacts, rather than just economic gains. The use of time and territorialization strategies which attempted to control people's addiction activities and thoughts had effects on people's every day life. Through the lens of addiction, changes in distinctive features of Siam in the nation-making process were not only political and economic reformations, but also but also the broader society.<sup>47</sup>

#### 4. Conclusion

The work has shown that, through the lens of addiction, an analysis on Siam's nation-making process can be perceived in a broader sense. Firstly, the article suggests that opium and gambling, the main addictive features in Siam, should not be considered merely a vice, but also another form of recreational activity with various social consequences. This exemplified what people should, or could do under the provision of government's time and territorialization management policies. Secondly, the work discusses series of government policies and attitudes toward addiction in the nation-making process. The main argument of the work is that addiction was another crucial factor that eased Siam's development process toward modernization and civilization. Lastly, in order to show how the new concept of time and space was reshaped due to the government's development schemes, addiction together with its adjacent institution, pawnbroking business, is also included as a part of this study.

(Received 8th May, 2015)

(Accepted 25th July, 2015)

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<sup>47</sup> For more information on how Siamese rulers borrowed a model of territorial control from the British colonies. see Peter Vandergeest and Nancy Lee Peluso, Territorialization and State Power in Thailand, *Theory and Society*, 24, 3(Jun., 1995), pp.385-426