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A Comparison of Secondary School Systems in Thailand and the United States

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A COMPARISON OF SECONDARY SCHOOL SYSTEMS
IN THAILAND AND THE UNITED STATES

A Field Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
University of Nebraska at Omaha

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Education Specialist

by
Charus Komutdang

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Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College of the
University of Nebraska at Omaha, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree Specialist in Education.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The educational system of any country is determined by the need of its people, and that in turn is based mainly on culture, economy, and politics. It is unlikely that there will be a standardized educational system that is applicable to every nation. The solution to a particular problem in the school can be a valuable reference source for another school experiencing similar difficulties.

American and Thailand educational systems, as well as other countries, have changed and are continuing to change rapidly. Although Thailand is one of the countries which believes in a general education, this tradition is also related to stability. In every situation one needs to weigh both stability and the need for change. There are situations in which more stability and less change is desirable. Many schools in deprived neighborhoods, for example, do need to change, but they need a sense of continuity and stability. In 1967, Richard I. Miller wrote on The Overview of Educational Change:

Change for change's sake may be both good and bad. If it causes tradition bound school systems and communities to loosen up and to take a fresh look at educational innovation and implementation, then change for change's sake is good. If, on the other hand, change is looked upon as "the thing to do" and as a symbol of progress as an end in itself then it is probably undesirable.¹

¹Richard I. Miller, The Overview of Educational Change's, 1967, p. 9.

It is important to understand that control is much more than a legal concept; the variables affecting the school are many and complex formal and informal, obvious and subtle. The more knowledge school administrators have about the school's organization, the better chance they have of functioning effectively.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to compare the organization of the Thailand Secondary school system and that of the United States. The study will present the hierarchy of both systems.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

Education in Thailand is changing as a result of a change in social conditions in the country. The war in Southeast Asia and the liberal attitudes of young people brought on by the war has made it necessary to examine the traditional authority of the school organization in Thailand. The influence of the American school, which is a more democratic system, is being felt in Thailand and the examination of the organization in each country will help to clarify the future directions which that role may take in Thailand.

In 1973, there were 8,599,457 students enrolled in schools in Thailand.² There were 32,079 schools which divided into 31,235 elementary schools and 844 high schools.³ Hopefully this study will

²Data from the yearly report in Education. Department of Education, Thailand, 1973, p. 220.

³Ibid., p. 18.

contribute ideas which will be helpful to a democratic school system in Thailand.

THE DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS IN THAILAND

In 1935, the government of Thailand issued a law which states: "The children between the age of 8-11 must be in school."⁴ From that law, the government has the responsibility to provide financial support for the education of those children. Thailand has always organized its educational program as a centralized system, with the Minister of Education as the chief executive of the Department of Education for the country. There are seventy-two provinces in Thailand, with each province politically controlled by the governor and twelve regions of education with each of these controlled by the region's superintendent.

The school curriculum, textbooks, and support come from the Department of Education. Children learn arithmetic, reading, and writing of their native language. When the children finish this school they are able to continue their studies in the secondary schools, however, an entrance examination is required for the government schools. In secondary schools there were six grade levels and the students were required to pass the final examination from one level to another. The Department of Education controlled all of the government secondary schools including the private schools that are subsidized by the government. The curriculum of the secondary program was divided into two areas. First, the common area which is similar to the college preparatory courses in American education. The goal of the students was to try to pass the

⁴ History of Education in Thailand, p. 16.

entrance examination in order to continue at the high school level.

Second, the vocational area which depended on the student's interest or the parent's occupation.

EDUCATION AND ITS EFFECTS UPON THE SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY OF THAILAND

Although there is no tuition in the government schools, Thailand does not have free education. The cost of textbooks, uniforms, transportation, and lunch are the expenses of the parent. Thailand, as an agricultural country, depends on agriculture for its families' incomes.

However, since the fields are not able to produce for approximately eight to nine months of the year, the income from three to four months of work must provide for a year.

From the financial standpoint, the government schools are solely dependent on the commercial tax system of the country.

Politically, all schools are operated in a centralized manner, including curriculum, examinations, and the opening and the closing date for each semester.

A DESCRIPTION OF THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN THE UNITED STATES

Unlike countries possessing central ministries of education, the public schools of the United States exhibit great differences one from another. Since the Constitution of the United States contains no direct reference to education, this decentralized power system as expressed by the Tenth Amendment implies education to be the function of each state. In addition, forty-nine states have provisions for education outlined

in the constitution of the state. Moreover, the statutes of most states stipulate in considerable detail how schools are to be governed. Much of this control is delegated to district boards of education and to other bodies, all of which become a part of the state system of education. In a sense, then, America has fifty systems of education, but in many respects these various systems are similar. All public schools of the United States commit themselves to a program of free public education. Freedom from tuition costs through the twelfth grade is the pattern in every state.

American public schools have established clearly defined expectations for school attendance. All states have established minimum attendance laws requiring that every person between specified ages attend school. Likewise, the states have stipulated that the years of attendance shall be of certain minimum length.

Another legal aspect, currently undergoing a great deal of testing, in which all schools are similar is that their operation must not conflict with existing state or national law. Although the state laws may vary, the United States Constitution is common to all states, and constitutional decisions arising from the United States Court are binding upon all districts.

From the political standpoint, schools are similar in that a representative body governs their educational affairs. Throughout the country, boards of education or their counterparts serve communities as the developers of operational policy.

Financing of public education is a partnership of the local school district, the state, and the federal government. On the average in 1975 the federal government contributed seven percent; the state,

forty percent; and the local district, fifty-three percent.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is delimited as follows:

1. The hierarchy of the secondary school program in both Thailand and the United States.
2. The governmental, economic, and cultural factors affecting the role of the secondary school program.
3. The decentralized secondary school in the United States and the centralized secondary school in Thailand.

PROCEDURES OF THE STUDY

This comparative study will be based on two major facts; first, the information summary report of secondary schools in Thailand and the economic reports which involve education in Thailand. Secondly, the description of the organizational pattern in Thailand will be compared with a description of the organization of education in the United States. The main study will compare the systems of secondary schools in Thailand and the United States.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 contains the introduction, the statement of the problem, the description of the education in Thailand and the United States, the importance of this study, and its limitations. Chapter 2 will glean related literature. In Chapter 3 a comparison of the secondary school organization in Thailand and in the United States will be made. Conclusions and recommendations will be presented in the final chapter.

Chapter 2

RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter will be divided into two areas; first, the history, organization, and developmental patterns of education in Thailand. Second, the history, organization, and developmental patterns of education in the United States, which will include the federal, state, and local systems.

HISTORY, ORGANIZATION, AND DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS OF EDUCATION IN THAILAND

Education in Thailand began in 1656. Children were taught to read and write by Buddhist monks in the temple, with main emphasis on Buddhist religion.

In 1828, the King of Thailand opened the first formal school in his own palace. The school was only for sons of royal families and high government officials. Later, the Queen felt that girls should be given the same opportunity as the boys in education. Hence, in 1880, the first school for girls was built.⁵

People in Thailand became more interested in sending their children to school to learn. Thailand, as a nation, was growing rapidly.

⁵History of Education in Thailand, Government Document, 1942,
p. 4.

More educated people were needed in order to deal with foreign trade effectively and to keep up with the national growth. The King saw the need for educating his people, and, therefore, more public schools were built for children in the country who wished to attend school.

As the number of schools increased, the Thai government decided to set up an organization whose duty was to organize the overall educational system in Thailand. This organization became the Department of Education in 1892.⁶

At present, Thailand is experiencing such a rapid national growth that it staggers the imagination of its most optimistic citizens. This accelerated development may be noted in the opening of new roads, the greater output of electrical energy, the building of new irrigation projects, and the increase of exports. All of these bode well for the future of the Kingdom, provided the growth momentum is not inhibited by lack of trained citizens who can move the nation to new levels of attainment. The training given these citizens must not only be of the highest calibre, but it must be planned to provide sufficient numbers to meet the priorities of greatest need. This, of course, is an easy generalization to make. It is somewhat more difficult to implement because it requires extensive adjustment in the present educational system, adjustments which will require not only realignments in the existing educational services, but also the addition of new dimensions. It is true that the achievement of such adjustments will sorely try the imagination and flexibility of the educational bodies; to ignore the

⁶Ibid., p. 6.

necessity for the adjustment is to doom the future growth of the country to a low level of accomplishment.

Educational Organization

The Department of Education in Thailand administers grants for education and provides certain services for local, national, and international educational agencies. The Department of Education is administered by the Ministry of Education.

There are twelve educational regions in seventy-two provinces of Thailand. These regions are divided according to geographic factors, religions, and social backgrounds of the people. The map on page 10 shows how the educational regions are divided.

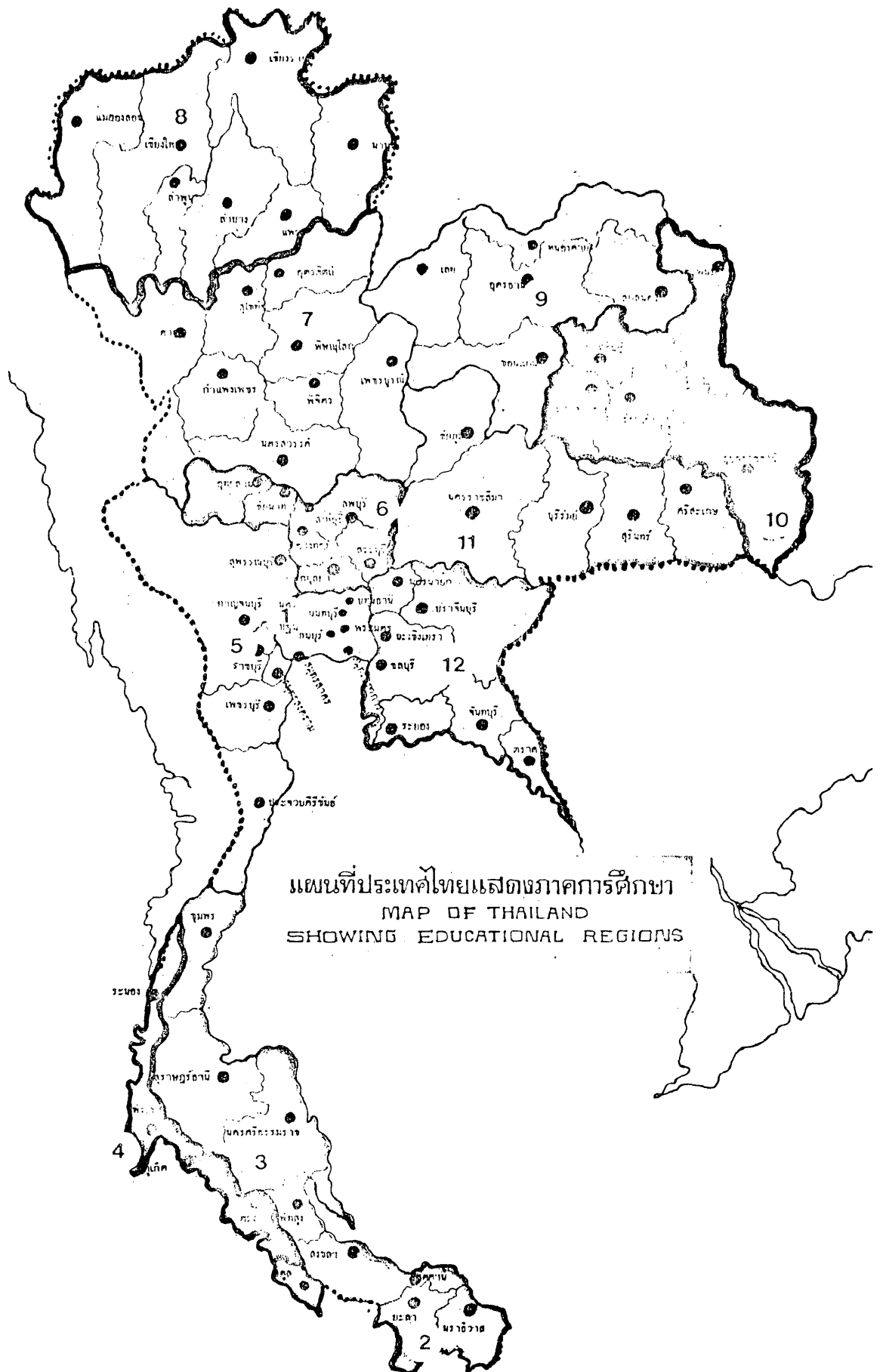
The superintendent of each region meets with the schools' principals in his region regularly to find out the needs of each school and bring that information to the Department of Education.

Educational Development

Between the years 1895 to 1901 the educational system in Thailand was organized into three major levels. Level one consisted of the first three years of elementary school; level two consisted of the last three years of elementary education, and the third level demanded five additional years of study. Its successful completion fulfilled the state's educational requirement.

In 1898, six years after the Department of Education had been formed in Thailand, the Ministry of Education created a plan to expand the educational system, and this program was implemented in 1902.⁷

⁷History of Education in Thailand, Government Document, 1942, p. 12.



The 1902 design was used until 1936, when the government of Thailand issued the law that all children from ages 9-12 must attend school.⁸

Instruction on the elementary level was extended, and a new vocational program was initiated. Students enjoyed a greater variety of instruction, and they were able to change their program from the college preparatory to the vocational. These innovations resulted from the spread of democratic ideals in the early 1930's.⁹

In 1951, the secondary school changed its program. More elective courses were offered to the students. As well as college preparatory and vocational programs, a new program was introduced which was called the Common Area. This new program allowed students to transfer from one program to another.

The National Education Planning in 1960

American education greatly influenced Thailand in 1960, especially in the area of the comprehensive school. The government and the Department of Education in Thailand worked together and drew a plan for an educational system which is still in effect. This system has the following goals:

1. To provide instruction in the common learning and opportunities for the development of those skills, habits, attitudes, and character traits.

⁸Ibid., p. 72.

⁹David K. Heenan, Democracy and Thai People, 1960, p. 19.

2. To assist people to understand the idea of democracy.
3. To provide experiences that will lead people to become good citizens, critical thinkers, and contributing members of their societies.
4. To assist people to understand their roles and responsibilities as members of the community.
5. To promote keen mental alertness, vigorous physical fitness, good moral characters, love for home and country, and respect for authority.
6. Provide experiences that foster vocational preparation.

The levels of education are divided into four (4) areas:

1. Kindergarten: This level provides the basic education and prepares the students for the elementary school. This level is divided into two steps; the first step is one to two years in pre-school. The second step is one year in Kindergarten.
2. Elementary: The objective of the elementary school is to provide basic skills in languages, mathematics, social studies, and art. The elementary school is divided into two levels: the first level is grade one to grade four; the second level is grade five to grade seven.
3. Secondary: The goal of this level is for the individual student to decide what area he will continue to study in. The three major areas are provided, and each of the areas does not take more than three years of schooling. The first area is the college preparatory; the second area is the comprehensive school. This area provides the students with many elective programs for those who wish to use their acquired skills after graduation. The third area is the vocational program. This program might take one to three years, depending on the student's interest and his field.

4. College and University is the field of higher education. College-bound students spend four to five years of study in their fields.

The Educational Planning

The national program of education in Thailand is federally operated and controlled. The federal government administers grants for education, conducts and stimulates research, provides certain direct services for local, national, and international educational agencies, develops a national curriculum, and has the total control in organization of all the schools in Thailand. Private schools must operate according to the order and recommendation of the government's Department of Education. The government has the right to evaluate and accredit all the private schools.¹⁰

The Curriculum of the Secondary School in Thailand

As indicated before, the education in Thailand has changed rapidly, and this aspect of change affects the school curriculum. This study will show the change in secondary curriculum since 1913.

Table 1 on page 14 presents the curriculum of the secondary school during 1913. The length of the secondary program at that time was six years.

The secondary school students took one hour a week of moral education which was taught by the school administrators or the monks. In the area of mathematics, the student learned arithmetic and constructive geometry during the first three years and changed to algebra and Euclid geometry during the last three years. In social

¹⁰The Government Report, Government Document, 1965, p. 78.

Table 1

The Secondary School Curriculum in 1913, Including
the Number of Classroom Hours Per Week¹¹

Subject	1	2	3	4	5	6
Moral	1	1	1	1	1	1
Thai & English Language	10	10	10	12-1/2*	12-1/2*	12-1/2*
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5	5
Social Study	2-1/4	2-1/4	2-1/4	2	2	2
Art	2	2	2	1	1	1
Sciences	2	2	2	2	2	2
Boy or Girl Scouts	2	2	2	1-1/2	1-1/2	1-1/2
Total	25	25	25	25	25	25

*The last three years the curriculum for language divided into 5 hours in Thai and 7-1/2 hours in English.

studies, subjects taught in the first three years were Thai history and Thai geography. These subjects were changed to world history and world geography in the last three years. Art could be in the form of any art which met the need, the facility, and the equipment of the school. Sciences were divided into the general sciences for the first three years and biology, chemistry, and physics respectively for the last three years. Thai public schools were separate for boys and girls. Boy Scouts was required in boys' schools and Girl Scouts in girls' schools.

¹¹Ibid., p. 122.

In 1928, the secondary schools were divided into two levels. The first level was 1-6; the second level was 7-8. Students were required to take all the subjects offered during the first level of secondary school (1-6). The second level (7-8), however, was divided into three areas: general area, language area, and science area. Moral education and physical education were required for the same number of hours in all three areas. The subjects in each of the three areas and the number of hours required were indicated as in Table 2.

Table 2

The Curriculum Requirement for the Last Two Years of
Secondary School, Including the Number of
Hours Per Week in 1928¹²

Subjects	General Area	Language Area	Science Area
Moral	1	1	1
Thai Language	5	5	4
Foreign Language	9	13	7
Social Study	3	3	-
Mathematics	6	2	7
Sciences	2	2	7
Physical Education	1	1	1
Total	27	27	27

¹²The History of Education in Thailand, Government Document, 1929, pp. 116-117.

During the years 1937-1950, education in Thailand changed rapidly with the national growth. Communications with foreign countries became necessary in order to keep up with international affairs and trades. English became an international language and was used as a second language in non-English speaking countries. Therefore, the number of hours required for the English language was increased in schools in Thailand.

At the same period, the secondary school's program changed from three areas: general, science and language to two areas: science and language. Although the general area was dropped from the program, more elective subjects were offered, and students had more choice of elective subjects to meet their needs.

American education became very popular in Thailand from the year 1960. The Educational Program changed from 4-6-2 years to 7-3-2 years. The new curriculum for the basic comprehensive secondary school came into operation in 1967. Several optional subjects were offered, and the aptitudes and interests of pupils of this age group were also taken into account. Teaching methods and all subjects taught were carefully considered and discussed in the light of the pupils' needs and interests. In its revision of the curriculum of the comprehensive school, agriculture was added to the secondary education department. This included the study of the following subjects: plants, soil, fertilization, animals, and farm mechanics.

Teaching Staff

Another aspect of education is teachers. The Thailand National Education Planning did a survey in 1968-1969 on the teachers in Thailand,

and the statistics are as follows:¹³

1. The average number of teachers in each rural secondary school was 20-21 and 12-13 in each private school.

2. The teacher-student ratio for public school was 1-19, and 1-24 in private school.

3. The educational qualifications for the secondary school teachers for both public and private schools is indicated in the following table:

Table 3

A Distribution of College Degrees Which Teachers
In Thailand Possessed in 1968-69

Degree	Number of Teachers
Master	90
Bachelor plus Professional Training	3,494
Bachelor	26,298
Associate Degree	53,069
Vocational	6,400
High School	1,108
Secondary School	11,075
Another Diploma	2,585
Not Identify	33,481

4. The average age of the teacher was 29.

¹³Thailand National Education Planning, 1969, p. 126.

5. The ratio between male and female teachers was 1.4:1.

6. Seventy percent of the teachers had teaching experience of one to nine years.

7. The monthly teachers' salaries ranged from 500-4,000 bath.¹⁴ Ten percent of the teachers ranged from 500 bath, one percent received 4,000 bath, and eighty-five percent of the teachers ranged from 500-2,000 bath. In private schools, teachers received a smaller monthly salary than in public schools. One fourth of the teachers in private schools received less than 500 bath, while the others received between 500-2,000 bath.

HISTORY, ORGANIZATION, AND DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS OF EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES

America was settled by the greatest migration in the history of mankind--a migration of poor and oppressed people discontented with the tyranny and inequality of opportunity abroad. Immigrants came to America with vastly different languages, religions, cultures, political faiths, racial and national backgrounds, and social and economic status. To the public school fell the task of making 30 million new American citizens. No other nation ever assimilated such a heterogeneous population as rapidly and as completely. These people came to America in search of a classless society in which there would be equal opportunity. Throughout America's history, visitors from other lands have been struck by the general equality of conditions achieved by the American people. The

¹⁴The exchange rate between bath and dollar was 20 bath equals one dollar; Economics in Thailand, Government Document, 1969, p. 117.

public schools, through their great contribution to public knowledge and understanding, have strengthened and perpetuated the ideals of American democracy. American schools have helped their people to make democracy work. Hubert Humphrey has warned:

Education is the keystone in the arch of democracy. Ignorance breeds only slavery. Enlightenment liberates the human mind and spirit as a free people--as a democratic people we must accept the moral obligation of providing the means whereby every American--regardless of race, color, age, religion, income, or educational achievement--has an equal opportunity for education and training limited only by his own capability and initiative.¹⁵

Despite the fact that education is not mentioned in the United States Constitution, indirect justification for a national program of instruction may be found in several of its provisions, the general welfare clause, and the preamble. That the central government is not to control education is evident from the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, which by implication definitely leaves the subject of education to the individual states. The implied prohibition against the establishment of a centralized system markedly influenced the direction and scope of federal participation in education.

Unlike most countries, the United States has no national system of education but rather fifty systems, as each state operates its own school systems.

Federal support for education has historically been directed toward several major purposes: development of manpower, defense of the nation, provision of school facilities and services, rehabilitation of handicapped and disadvantaged persons, and eradication of poverty. The

¹⁵R. Wynn, American Education, New York, 1968, p. 65.

federal government has granted funds for education at all academic levels: pre-elementary, elementary, secondary, higher, and adult. It has provided this aid to both public and private schools and colleges.

Calvin Grieder states in the American Education:

American democracy cannot flourish in isolation from other ideologies and way of life practiced by mankind. Indeed, it is increasingly questionable if any of these doctrines can long survive other than through intelligent cultural interaction. The concept of one world is gradually becoming a reality, particularly in a physical sense. A world society, however vague its direction, diverse its elements, and tenuous its ties, is in the making. Education therefore, must attend to the preparation of people to participate in the building of this world society.¹⁶

The Office of Education is administered by the United States Commissioner of Education. The Commissioner, appointed by the President with the consent of the Senate, upon the recommendation of the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare and its Assistant Secretary of Education, serves an indefinite term. Sometimes a change in presidents is followed by the appointment of a new Commissioner. The Commissioner performs many duties and conducts a wide variety of activities. As a chairman of the recently created Federal Interagency Committee on Education, he serves as coordinator of more than forty federal programs bearing on education, but administered by agencies other than the United States Office of Education.

Basic Policies and Proposals

There are four basic policies and principles to guide the future developments of the federal program in education as a service of primary importance:

¹⁶Calvin Grieder, American Education, 1965, p. 128.

(1) The federal government, within properly defined limits and without federal control, should continue to exercise educational functions demanded by changing national needs.

(2) The federal government should limit its action in the states to two broad functions: financial assistance, when and where needed, and leadership of a stimulating but non-coercive character.

(3) The decentralized pattern of public education in the United States, involving basic control and administration of education by the States and localities, is sound democratic policy and should be continued and improved.

(4) The heterogeneous pattern of administration needs to be better coordinated so that education receives from each political unit--federal, state, county, intermediate unit, and local district the maximum contribution that it can and should make in a dynamic democracy.¹⁷

State Systems of Education

The Tenth Amendment of the federal Constitution delegates the function of education to the states. Although local districts assume much of the operational responsibility for schools, education is a legal function of the fifty states. Today nearly all states and territories are contributing members of the Education Commission of the States, either by state legislation or by executive orders of the governors. Since education is a responsibility of the various states, its control is said to be decentralized. The federal government may promote the general welfare and may contract with the states. It may, indeed, establish and support schools or offer contributions in aid to education; but its legal status seems to be that of an outside party contracting with the state, for it may not levy on state property for the support of such schools, nor may it attempt to guide the state-approved administrative machinery.

¹⁷ Jim B. Pearson, Education in the States, 1969, p. 241.

Since the United States is composed of fifty states, one must speak not of the "American School System," but rather of fifty school systems. Although all of the states are organized into some form of local school districts, these districts differ according to local conditions and the cultural and historical backgrounds of the states. State school laws list as many as sixty different names for school districts and authorities have classified them under seventeen different headings.¹⁸

The state legislature, which represents the people, enacts broad educational policy through statutes. The legislature is the most important and influential agency for educational policy making in the United States. It establishes the general organization for education, determines the scope of education, provides the means for the financial support of the schools, appropriates money for state aid to education, and approves or denies plans to extend or alter the educational system in any major way.

Control over education is also exercised by the executive branch of state government. The governor, the state board of education, commissioner of education, the staff of the state department of education, and other state agencies all participate in school government. The governor exercises influence over legislation, and also has the power of veto over educational legislation as he does over other legislation.

The state courts also exercise considerable influence over educational practices and policy. Courts are frequently called upon to protect the legal rights of individuals and organizations, to clarify the legal prerogatives of schools, and to interpret the law.

¹⁸Walter S. Monroe, Encyclopedia of Educational Research, MacMillan and Company, 1950, p. 1083.

The local school district is the basic governmental unit through which the schools are administered. According to school law, the board of education is the legal authority which represents the state. It is a body created by a general or specific law to maintain a system of public education in a certain territory. A state attorney general says, "A school board is a body politic and corporate. It is purely a creature of the state. Its power may be enlarged, diminished, modified, or revoked by the legislature."¹⁹

Educators have tended to treat school districts as something unique, almost to the point of attributing some degree of divinity to the operation of schools and the conduct of school affairs. Political scientists on the other hand have resisted, philosophically, the setting apart of school districts from other units of local government and have pleaded the case for incorporating education into the broad range of public services provided locally. Consequently, with the definition of education by educators and the reinforcement of this position constitutionally, the political scientists have, by and large, ignored the structures of school government in their examinations of governmental structures and political behaviors. As a result, the study of school districts has until recently remained the province of professional educators working in some cases with interested laymen on the problems of district organization and intergovernmental relationships.²⁰

¹⁹Wynn, American Education, p. 122.

²⁰Martin, Government and Suburban School, 1963, p. 102.

Admittedly, some of the control of public schools that heretofore resided with local school district officials has been shifted to another level of government or is being shared to some extent with agencies and interests outside of government. Campbell has described some of the evidences of shifts in the control of American education:

It is quite clear that the public schools of this country have always operated within a framework established by the various states and that federal influences of some kind have always been prevalent. In recent cases, state controls over schools have been strengthened and federal activities in education, widely dispersed among many agencies, have multiplied. Federal influence has been piecemeal, haphazard, perhaps even surreptitious and often inevitably the national stake in education and the growing social economic interdependence of the nation have required congressional action and the United States Supreme Court's interpretation on educational questions. The time seems ripe for a realistic view of circumstances as they are and the forging of honest local-state federal partnership in education.²¹

The board of education is the top of the organizational hierarchy for the public schools. In most states the members of local boards of education are elected by the people. The major functions of the board of education include the development and improvement of the educational program, the selection of the chief administrator and the professional and nonprofessional staff, the provision of funds and facilities, and the maintenance of good relations between the school and the community.

The superintendent of schools is the executive officer of the board and is appointed by the board. The superintendent, principals, and other administrative officers are responsible for the administration of the educational program, personnel, funds and facilities and school-community relations.

²¹Campbell, The Folklore of Local School Control, The School Review, LXVIII, 1959, p. 15.

The internal organization of school systems is undergoing several significant changes in the direction of larger, better-prepared central staff, more democratization in the use of lay committees, teachers' councils, and other cooperative efforts, and more orderly assignment and function through written rules and regulations.

The Secondary School in the United States

The secondary school program is broadened and lengthened to include all the curricular and co-curricular activities of the pre-adolescent, adolescent, and post-adolescent youth. Theoretically, it spans the period covering the junior high school and the senior high school. It adds to the general education of the youth and often provides some degree of specialization.

Secondary education reaches a larger proportion of youth in the United States than in any other country.²² Federal aid programs, such as the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, are helping to increase high school attendance and to reduce the number of dropouts.²³

The comprehensive high school is a peculiarly American phenomenon. It is called comprehensive because it offers, under one administration and under one roof, secondary education for almost all the high school age children of one town or neighborhood. It is responsible for educating the boy who will be an atomic scientist and the girl who will marry at eighteen; the prospective captain of a ship and the future captain of industry. It is responsible for educating the bright and the not so bright children with different vocational and professional ambition and with various motivations. It is responsible in sum for providing good and appropriate education, both academic and vocational, for all

²²Robert C. Craig, American Education, 1963, p. 16.

²³Philip Meranto, School Politics in the Metropolis, 1970, p. 143.

young people within a democratic environment which the American people believe serves the principles they cherish.²⁴

Secondary education in the United States serves many purposes. It provides general education for all, prepares gifted students for college, and provides practical preparation for the problems of life that will confront those who do not attend college.

There are many types of secondary schools, among them the general comprehensive and vocational-technical four-year high school; the three-year senior high and the three or two year junior high; the technical post-elementary school; and in between elementary and secondary education, the newly developing middle school.

The Secondary School Curriculum

The curriculum has been defined as the sum total of the experiences the student has under the direction of the school. Education has been defined as the transmission of the accumulated knowledge of human civilization and its application to contemporary and future problems of the individual and society. This concept emphasizes the life-centered curriculum, which includes the learner and society and the knowledge necessary for the full realization of both. It holds that education, ideally, is more than subject, more than the individual learner, more than society. Education is life itself.

The continuing explosion of knowledge and the radical revolution in technology are producing many changes in the curriculum and in the methods and materials of instruction in the secondary schools.

²⁴James B. Conant, The Comprehensive High School, 1967, p. 3.

Curriculum research and instructional innovations have been stimulated by federal fiscal grants through the National Defense Education Act and subsequent legislation. National professional organizations, regional education laboratories, and independent foundations are also catalytic agents producing numerous curricular change through experimentations and innovations.

A revolution has been taking place in the American school curricular during the past two decades. Far-reaching changes, precipitated by forces on the domestic and world scene, have already taken place in many schools, and even more dramatic reformation is in prospect.

Curricular patterns in American education range from the traditional type to extremely experimental types. Richard Wynn groups the curricular patterns into five categories:

(a) The subject curriculum. This is characterized by a large number of subjects taught independently of one another. Most of the student's time is spent in learning from books and other written and printed materials in various subjects in which the accumulated wisdom of experts in that field has been recorded. The emphasis is upon the learning of subject matter selected long before the students appear in the classroom.

(b) The correlated curriculum. The correlated curriculum can be carried out in numerous ways, which can be conveniently arranged on a scale. At the bottom would be located the casual and incidental efforts to show relationships between subjects.

(c) The broad fields curriculum, is composed of a few fields rather than a large number of individual subjects. In this pattern,

under the subject philosophy, the learning area is restricted, although definitely broader than what would be expected as a summation of various subjects.

(d) The core curriculum. This includes subjects or a common body of experiences required of everyone, but with variability of content and activities to meet the varying needs of individuals. This pattern is used to cover a wide range or type of curriculum practice.

(e) The experience curriculum. This type of curriculum is very compatible with progressive, reconstructionist and existentialist philosophies of education because learning is thought of as the reconstruction of experience.²⁵

²⁵Wynn, American Education, 1972, p. 364.

Chapter 3

A COMPARISON OF THE SECONDARY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION IN THAILAND AND IN THE UNITED STATES

This chapter will be divided into two major parts in comparing the secondary school organization in Thailand and in the United States. The first part will look at the similarities of the school organization in both countries. The second part will show the differences of the school organization in Thailand and in the United States.

SIMILARITIES OF THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION IN THAILAND AND IN THE UNITED STATES

1. Educational goals in both countries are similar in the following ways:

(a) Both countries encourage the schools to provide experiences which will lead people to become good citizens, critical thinkers, and contributing members of their society.

(b) Both assist people to understand the idea of democracy.

(c) Both provide people opportunities in learning the fundamental processes.

(d) Both provide experiences that foster vocational preparation, self-actualization, and keen mental alertness.

(e) The schools in both countries are social institutions in themselves.

2. In an automated and cybernetics economy there is very little attractive employment for persons without a high school education. Therefore, the choice of whether to complete high school or drop out and get a job is disappearing in both countries.

3. There are laws for compulsory school attendance age in both countries. The total number of years required to complete high school education is the same in Thailand as in the United States. That is, each student in both countries spends at least twelve years in school.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE SCHOOL ORGANIZATION IN THAILAND AND IN THE UNITED STATES

1. Education in Thailand is centrally operated and controlled. The federal government develops a national curriculum, and has total control of the organization of all the schools in Thailand. Private schools in Thailand must also operate according to the order and recommendation of the government's Department of Education. The government has the right to evaluate and accredit all the private schools.

Thailand organized its education in a centralized system, therefore, the school curriculum, role, textbooks, and support come from the Department of Education. All the schools in Thailand must operate according to the order and recommendation of the government's Department of Education. This means the textbooks and the curriculum are the same in every school because all the students are required to take the final state examination in order to graduate from high schools.

Unlike most countries, the United States has no national system of education but rather fifty states school systems influenced variously by the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the federal

government. Under the provisions of the "General Welfare Clause," Article I, Section 8, Clause 1, the federal government has implied power to assist the states for the general welfare. However, the Tenth Amendment implies that education is a state function. The implied prohibition against the establishment of a centralized system markedly influenced the direction and scope of federal participation in education. Since education in the United States is a responsibility of the various states, its control is said to be decentralized. The federal government may promote the general welfare and may contract with the states. It may establish and support schools or offer contributions in aid of education; but its legal status seems to be that of an outside party contracting with the state, for it may not levy on state property for the support of such schools, nor may it attempt to guide the state approved administrative machinery.

Although the Tenth Amendment of the Federal Constitution delegates the function of education to the states, the local districts assume much of the operational responsibility for schools.

2. Although there is no tuition in the government schools, Thailand does not possess free education. The cost of textbooks, uniforms, transportation, and lunch are the big expenses of the parents. From the financial standpoint, the government schools are solely dependent on the commercial tax system of the country.

However, all the public schools in the United States commit themselves to a program of free public education. Freedom from the costs of textbooks, school supplies, and tuition fees through twelfth grade is the pattern in every state. From the financial aspect, almost all American public schools are financed from revenues collected from local citizens. The most common single source of revenue is the local property tax.

3. In Thailand, when the students finished their elementary school, they are able to continue their study in the secondary schools provided that they take an entrance examination which is a requirement in the government schools.

The students in the public schools in the United States are not required to take any entrance examination when they transfer from elementary schools to secondary schools.

4. There are no standard requirements in educational qualification for school teachers in Thailand. Educational qualifications of school teachers ranged anywhere from high school graduates to Master's degree or higher.

In the United States, a license, certificate, or permit to teach in the elementary and secondary schools is required in all states. Four years of college-level preparation is required by virtually all states for certification of teachers. Most of the states require a statement of recommendation of the candidate for certification by his college or employing officer. Approximately half of the states require an oath of allegiance and a certificate of good health.²⁶

5. Buddhism is the leading religion in Thailand, therefore all the schools in Thailand are required to teach Buddhism. However, this does not mean that teaching about other religions is prohibited in Thailand. On the contrary, Thai Buddhist tolerance has made it possible for different faiths to co-exist peacefully even in Catholic schools.

The principle of separation of church and state and the role

²⁶ Chris A. De Young and Richard Wynn, American Education, Seventh Edition, McGraw-Hill, 1972, p. 103.

of religion in the public schools has been an extremely emotional and troublesome problem in the United States since its inception. The leaders of American democracy, left little doubt of their intentions to protect the rights of individuals where religion was concerned. The First Amendment to the Constitution reads in part, "Congress shall make no laws respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof" ²⁷ The Supreme Court decisions clearly prohibited the practice of religion in the public schools and clarified the public school's role with respect to teaching about religions.

²⁷David E. Engel, History and Analysis of Religion in the Public Schools, 1974, p. 174.

Chapter 4

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thailand is mainly an agricultural country, whereas the United States is highly industrialized. By and large, Thailand's school organization and curriculum need drastic changes at all levels when compared to the present American Educational System.

Both countries claim to enjoy democratic rule, but academic freedom in Thailand is, in fact, severely curtailed by dictatorship.

Thailand's centralized school system impedes effective communication between any given institution and the seat of control, since those schools closest to the capital occupy modern buildings and use better equipment, while more distant schools are deprived of these necessities. On the other hand, the decentralized school system in the United States affords each school district immediate assistance whenever necessary.

The requirements for teacher certification in Thailand are very low, with a high number of teachers holding only high school diplomas, whereas American standards demand a university degree and subsequent graduate hours in the major field.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM IN THAILAND

1. Secondary schools in Thailand, as now organized, do not meet the needs of all students in many schools. The program can be diversified

by providing experiences which meet the general and special educational needs, interests, and abilities of all students. More elective courses should be offered to fulfill individual requirements.

2. Four years of primary schooling is now compulsory in Thailand, and this should be extended to seven years by introducing an extra three years of upper primary before the commencement of secondary education.

3. Students should be able to continue their study in secondary schools without passing an entrance examination.

4. With twelve superintendents for seventy-two provinces, each superintendent is responsible for six provinces. The communication between the school and the Department of Education would improve greatly if a superintendent were provided for each province.

5. The responsibility for determining the content of the curriculum should rest principally with the local community, since the local group knows better than the others the needs, abilities, and interests of their students. Although the local community could profit by advice and suggestions from others, the final decisions should be made locally.

6. If the local community determined the content of its school's curriculum, students should not be required to take the state's final examination in order to graduate from high schools. When students are required to take the state examination, school learning becomes frustrating and even impossible for a sizable proportion of students, since their only goal is to pass the state examination.

7. There should be standard requirements in educational qualifications for school teachers in Thailand.

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