

THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY

A CASE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN THAILAND'S HIGHER EDUCATION*

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Thammasat is one of six universities in Thailand.** It has the largest student body, and it is almost exclusively the institution of higher learning in the social sciences. As Thailand is now striving for the rapid national development, it is in great need of professionally competent men and women, especially oriented in the social sciences, to provide leadership in both the public and private sectors of national economic and social life. In order to understand the quality and quantity of home-grown social scientists, appraisal of Thammasat University is a necessity.

While it is not the aim of this research to suggest new avenues for the improvement of social sciences in Thailand's higher education or of the University itself, for that matter, it is a fervent hope that this study will serve as an additional stimulant to current public interest in university education.

I

Thammasat University was founded in 1934 when the leadership of the newly formed constitutional government thought it was high time to indoctrinate the people in democratic ideas. Under their direction and close supervision, Thammasat

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**The others are : Chulalongkorn, Agriculture, Medicine, Fine Arts, and Chiangmai Universities.

University (formerly known as the University of Moral and Political sciences) was operated in a very liberal manner. It admitted almost any person with a minimum of restrictions as to educational background. Government officials and career people were encouraged to enroll, since class attendance was not required, nor was there a limit on the amount of time taken to complete a degree. Students could study any number of courses, and register for examinations. They could obtain degrees only after successfully passing a series of strictly administered examinations in every course offered in a program. Under this open-market policy, there was a large number of part-time students but only a small fraction of them could successfully obtain degrees. This was justifiable since the stated purpose of this institution was to give a large number of people a chance to learn about politics and the newly won democratic government. It was felt that those who were unable to graduate could still learn something. Those who were successful could look forward to brighter careers, particularly in the government service.

It should be noted, however, that during this early period, the top leadership of the government was really interested in the University and appreciated its contributions to the country. This was responsible for the fact that instructors, both full-time and part-time were said to have more prestige and be more dedicated than their present-day counterparts. A large amount of teaching material was developed at this time. The growth of new faculties was rapid; by the end of world war II, Thammasat had the following faculties: Law, Commerce and Accountancy, Political Science, and Economics.

After a brief involvement in political struggle, Field Marshal Pibul Songkram, the then Prime Minister, took the post of Rector of the University and attempted to liberalize the radical elements in the University. Two faculties were added—namely the Faculty of Social Administration, and the Institute of Public Administration. These two schools added color to the college as they were more or less patterned after American models, especially the Institute of Public Administration. It

was established in 1955 as a joint effort of the Thai and American governments with Indiana University as project Administrator. Its master of public administration program resembles its counterpart in the United States. Full-time attendance and several other features of American graduate schools appeared for the first time in this University which up to that time was strongly European in orientation. The founding of the faculty of Liberal Arts in 1961 further transformed the University's outlook from European to American patterns, though a great deal is left to be desired.

Furthermore every new student has to spend his freshman year in the Faculty of Liberal Arts before entering a specialized program of study. The number of students admitted to the University is now limited as a result of the termination of the open-market policy.* The new policy does not effect the privileges of students who began under the old program, however, and five of the seven schools are still operating under the traditional large lecture room, stringent final-examination system.

II

In order to comprehend the nature of its services and programs, a brief account of the University's structure is necessary.

The University has a general administration unit called the Secretariat which is headed by a Secretary-General who is directly responsible to the Rector and indirectly to the University Board (equivalent to a Board of Trustees). Within the secretariat, all administrative matters are concentrated. These include admissions and records, treasury, supply, student affairs, general library, University Press, and a clinic. Recruitment and other personnel work also fall under its jurisdiction.

Aside from the Secretariat, the University has seven faculties with various kinds of programs as follows:

The Faculty of Law which was the forerunner of the University offers the bachelor of law degree as well as master's and doctoral programs.

* In October 1964, a movement to bring back the "open-market" system is gaining wide support from many quarters including the new University leadership.

The Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy offers two bachelor's degrees, one in commerce which has a strong business administration emphasis, and one in accountancy which stresses accountancy and auditing. It also offers two master's programs and a doctoral program.

The Faculty of Political Science offers programs leading to the degrees of Bachelor of Political Science, Master of Political Science, Master of Political Science in Diplomacy, Doctor of Political Science, and Doctor of Political Science in Diplomacy.

The Faculty of Economics offers the degrees of Bachelor of Economics, Master of Economics, and Doctor of Economics.

The Faculty of Social Administration offers a curriculum leading to bachelor's degrees in social administration and journalism. It also offers master's and doctoral programs in social administration.

It should be noted that the program of these five older faculties are similar requiring four years of study for a bachelor's degree. For a Master's degree, course work at the graduate level and a thesis are required, while a doctoral program involves no further course work but only an acceptable dissertable dissertation. In fact, few graduate degrees are given, with the exception of the degree of Master of Political Science.

The Institute of Public Administration, on the other hand, provides an altogether different program. Academically, it offers a program leading to the degree of Master of Public Administration. It also has the only In-service Training Division in the country, which offers courses for the lowest to the highest government officials throughout the government. Its Research Division is the only research unit in Thai universities, and it has the only specialized library at Thammasat.

The Faculty of Liberal Arts is in its third year of operation. All first-year students of the university must take general arts, science and humanities courses in this faculty. In the sophomore year, students can choose to go on in the program leading

to a general Bachelor of Arts degree or to a degree with majors in the fields of history, languages, general sciences or mathematics. Otherwise they may chose to be sophomore in any of the five faculties.

In terms of students, the following table will show the number of students in the academic year of 1963, by faculty and sex (see Table I).

Table I
Thammasat University: Number of Students, by Sex and Faculty
in Academic Year 1963

Degree Applied for	New Students			Old Students			Total	
	Male	Female	Sub-total	Male	Female	Sub-total	Male	Female
Bachelor's Degree								
Law	—	—	—	8,863	506	9,369	8,863	506
Com. & Acc.	—	—	—	4,412	3,227	7,639	4,412	3,227
Political Sc.								
— Political Sc.	—	—	—	389	38	427	389	38
— Diplomacy	—	—	—	90	58	148	90	58
Economics	—	—	—	1,876	410	2,286	1,876	410
Social Adm.								
— Social Adm.	—	—	—	1,449	1,107	2,556	1,449	1,107
— Journalism	—	—	—	278	81	359	278	81
Liberal Arts	588	334	922	634	343	977	1,222	677
Total	588	334	922	17,991	5,770	23,761	18,579	6,104

Degree Applied for	New Students			Old Students			Total	
	Male	Female	Sub- total	Male	Female	Sub- total	Male	Female
Master's Degree								
Law	28	—	28	1,789	26	1,815	1,817	26
Com. & Acc								
—Business Adm.	6	9	15	78	89	167	84	98
—Accountancy	13	8	21	85	42	127	98	50
Political Sc.								
— Political Sc.	39	—	39	1,076	9	1,085	1,115	9
— Diplomacy	4	2	6	202	9	211	206	11
Economics	22	2	24	541	51	592	563	53
Social Adm.	—	—	—	2	12	14	2	12
Public Adm.	39	5	44	360	46	406	399	51
Total	151	26	177	4,133	284	4,417	4,284	310
Doctor's Degree								
Law	—	—	—	11	—	11	11	—
Political Sc.	—	—	—	5	—	5	5	—
Diplomacy	—	—	—	1	—	1	1	—
Economics	—	—	—	19	—	19	19	—
Total	—	—	—	36	—	36	36	—
Grand Total	739	360	1,099	22,160	6,054	28,214	22,899	6,414

It should be noted that the number of students in the Faculty of Liberal Arts indicates quite accurately the real number of students since they are full-time students who have to take a set number of courses. The students of the Institute of Public Administration, though full-time, can register to attend only as many courses as they wish, and a large number of them are registered while writing their theses only. The official number of students in other faculties is unrealistic since only a handful of them are full-time students with any reasonable chance to graduate, while a large number are registered for few courses. The fact that now the University admits fewer freshmen and requires that all bachelor's degree candidates must graduate within 8 years, will soon decrease the number of Thammasat students. According to one study, if Thammasat students were figured on a full-time basis there would be about 4,000 students against the present astronomical figure of 29,313.

In terms of its mission Thammasat University is, therefore an academic institution granting degree in a variety of social science fields with the exception of the Faculty of Liberal Arts which offers courses but few majors in the natural sciences and humanities. The number of graduates from this University in 1962 and 1963 is given below (see Table II).

Table III
Thammasat University:
Number of Instructors and Students by Faculty

Faculty	Number of Instructors			Number of Students		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total	Undergrad.	Graduate	Total
Law	8	26	34	9,369	1,854	11,223
Com. & Acc.	8	34	42	7,639	330	7,969
Political Sc.	13	54	67	575	1,347	1,922
Economics	6	37	43	2,286	635	2,921
Social Adm.	11	46	57	2,915	14	2,929
Public Adm.	23	10	33	—	450	450
Liberal Arts	51	—	51	1,899	0	1,899
Total	120	207	327	24,683	4,630	20,313

Taking the face value of the data in Table III, the ratio of students per instructor is as follows.

Law	= 1 : 330
Commerce and Accountancy	= 1 : 190
Political Science	= 1 : 29
Economics	= 1 : 68
Social Administration	= 1 : 51

Public Administration	= 1 : 14
Liberal Arts	= 1 : 87
University-wide average	= 1 : 90

From the above figures it is striking that the larger faculties have fewer instructors. The average teacher-student ratio of 1 to 90 is, by any standard, very poor. However, it should be noted that in the first five faculties, there is a large number of part-time students as well as many part-time instructors. The ratio for the Institute of Public Administration is unrealistic because only about half of its faculty members teach, and about half of the students are not in classes, but engaged in thesis writing and other phases of their program that do not require regular attendance. The figures for the Faculty of Liberal Arts are more realistic, since all students and faculty members are full-time.*

It is clearly visible that faculty members of the University, taken as a whole, are quite productive in terms of students taught. But this might not be true if we compare the ratio of instructors to students graduated at all levels — which was about 1 : 4 in the 1963 academic year.

Let us now turn to the nature of instructors at Thammasat University. Like any large university, Thammasat has many categories of instructors. For the purpose of this study, they are divided into two main groups, full-time and part-time instructors. Each group is in turn divided into more specific categories.

* The list of instructors of the Faculty of Liberal Arts does not give the number of part-time instructors at all, while in fact it enlists about twenty foreigners to teach part-time in its language classes as well as a few Thais for other courses.

First, the full-time group may be classified into two types. The first category is comprised of these instructors who are permanent civil servants employed by the University and assigned to do academic work in the various faculties. Since Thammasat is a government university, all its functions, including personnel administration, are administered as any regular government agency. Therefore a university teacher is also a government employee, governed by regular regulations of the government, including being classified into one of five classes. The special class is the highest, and the fourth the lowest. Those special grade instructors with necessary qualifications may be appointed to the "rank" of professor.

The second category of full-time instructors includes those who are not qualified to become government officials, such as those who are over 60 years of age, a mandatory retirement age, or those who are aliens. They are hired as non-permanent employees from special funds but are assigned to teach full-time. If they are qualified they can be appointed "professor." Hence this report will consider them as full-time instructors.

For a clearer picture, please see the following table (Table IV).

Table IV
Thammasat University :
Teaching and Administrative Staff, 1964 ^a

Faculty	Total	Full-Time Teaching Staff ^b								Part-Time Instructors ^c			Administrative Staff					
		Prof.	Special Grade	1 st. Grade	2 nd. Grade	3 rd. Grade	Non-permanent	Prof. Emer.	Sub-total	Prof.	In-structor	Sub-total	1 st. Grade	2 nd. Grade	3 rd. Grade	4 th. Grade	Typist	Sub-total
Secretariat	91	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	5	16	25	33	12	91
Law	41	—	—	—	—	—	4	4	8	12	14	26	1	1	1	3	1	7
Com. & Acc.	51	—	1	6	1	—	—	—	8	—	35	35	1	1	1	4	1	8
Political Science	70	—	2	3	5	1	—	2	13	9	45	54	1	1	—	1	—	3
Economics	50	2	—	2	1	—	—	1	6	1	36	37	1	1	1	4	—	7
Social Adm	63	—	3	5	1	1	1	—	11	—	46	46	1	2	1	1	1	6
Public Adm	59	—	2	10	10	1	—	—	23	—	11	11	1	3	4	6	11	25
Liberal Arts	58	1	—	8	37	3	—	—	49	—	—	—	—	—	3	1	5	9
Total	483	3	8	34	55	6	5	7	118	22	187	209	11	25	36	58	31	156

Notes ^a Not included are rector, non-permanent dean, secretary-general, and temporary employees.

^b Teaching Staff includes permanent officials, and non-permanent and retired instructors.

^c Part-time instructors means to a particular department, therefore one man may teach in several faculties. They are invit. to teach when needed. A full time instructor of one faculty may be invited to teach part-time at another faculty.

Sources : 1) *List of Officials of Thammasat University 1964*. Mimeo. in Thai.

2) *Thammasat University : Names of Officials and Authorities*, Mimeo. in English.

Part-time instructors on the other hand, are selected from qualified persons outside regular University personnel. Since all faculties separately invite outsiders it could happen that one person might be invited to teach in several faculties. Also, a full-time member of one faculty can be invited to teach part-time in another faculty. This makes the job of tabulating statistics on University personnel a rather difficult one. A look at the modified table below may give a clearer picture of the actual situation (see Table V).

Table V
Thammasat University :
Part-time Instructors : Kinds and Number, by Faculty

Faculty	Number of Part-time Instructors.			
	Teach in One Faculty Only	Also Teach in Other Faculties ^a	Full-Time Member of Other Faculties ^b	Total ^c
Law	17	8	1	26
Com. & Acc.	25	9	0	34
Political Sc.	37	12	5	54
Economics	27	10	0	37
Social Adm.	34	10	2	46
Public Adm.	6	3	1	10
Total	146	52	9	207

Note ^a The breakdown of those part-time instructors who teach in more than one faculty is: 15 part-time instructors teach in 2 faculties = 30 positions
 6 " " " 3 " = 18 "
 1 " " " 4 " = 4 "

Therefore, there are 22 part-time instructors who teach in more than one faculty for a total of 52 positions.

^b All nine of the full-time instructors of the University who engage in part-time teaching, teach in only one other faculty.

^c Therefore, even though there are 207 (=146+52+9), part-time instructors if counted by faculties, there are in fact only 177 men involved of these 168 are part-time instructors from outside the University.

Because of this complexity, 207 part-time instructors will be used for all tabulations in which classification is made by faculty, while 168 instructors will be basis of tabulation for "outside" instructors

IV

Earlier we noted that detailed biodata was available on each instructor. In order to facilitate an understanding of the personal qualities of these instructors, the following tables are supplied;

- Table VI, Number of Full-time and Part-time Instructors by Faculty and Sex.
- Table VII, Comparison of Age of Full-time and Part-time Instructors.
- Table VIII, Level of Education of Full-time and Part-time Instructors by Faculty.
- Table IX, Country of Training of Full-time Instructors.
- Table X, Country of Training of Part-time Instructors.
- Table XI, Publications of Full-time and Part-time Instructors, by Faculty.

Table VI
Thammasat University:
Number of Full-time and Part-time Instructors by Faculty

	Full-time Instructors				Part-time Instructors		
	Total	Male	Female	Sub-total	Male	Female	Sub-total
Law	34	8	—	8	26	—	26
Com.&Acc.	42	6	2	8	32	2	34
Pol. Sc.	67	10	3	13	49	5	54
Economics	43	6	—	6	33	4	37
Social Adm.	57	7	4	11	37	9	46
Public Adm.	33	15	8	23	10	—	10
Liberal Arts	51	12	39	51	—	—	—
Total	327	64	56	120	187	20	207

Table VII
Thammasat University:
Comparison of Age of Full-time and Part-time Instructors
by Birthyear

Birthyear	Full-time	Part-time
Before 1900	6 ^a	2
1901-03	2 ^a	2
1904-06	5	1
1907-09	3	9
1910-12	2	15
1913-15	6	8
1916-18	4	9
1919-21	3	8
1922-24	9	12
1925-27	13	9
1928-30	8	13
1931-33	25	18
1934-36	14	3
1937-39	17	0
1940-42	3	0
Total	120	109 ^b

^a. Full-time instructors over 60 years of age are hired as employees, not as permanent officials.

^b. Birthyear of 59 part-time instructors is not available.

Table VIII

Thammasat University:
Level of Education of Full-time and Part-time Instructors by Faculty

Faculty	No. of Full - time Instructors				No. of Part - time Instructors			
	Less than B.A.	B.A.	M.A.	Ph.D.	Less than B.A.	B.A.	M.A.	Ph.D.
Law	—	7	1	—	—	10	15	1
Com. & Acc.	—	4	3	1	1	8	21	4
Political Sc.	—	7	3	3	—	18	22	14
Economics	—	1	5	—	1	12	21	3
Social Adm.	—	4	5	2	1	16	23	6
Public Adm.	—	3	17	3	—	4	4	2
Liberal Arts	—	26	21	4	—	—	—	—
Total		52	55	13	3	68	106	30

Table IX
Thammasat University :
Country of Training of Full-time Instructors by Faculty

Faculty	Country Where Highest Degree Obtained						Total
	Thailand	Asia	France	England	U.S.	Unknown	
Law	1	—	—	7	—	—	8
Com. & Acc.	1	1	—	1	4	1	8
Political Sc.	5	—	3	1	4	—	13
Economics	1	—	4	—	1	—	6
Social Adm.	3	—	—	—	7	1	11
Public Adm.	7	—	—	—	16	—	23
Liberal Arts	15	1	2	4	21	8	51
Total	33	2	9	13	53	10	120

Note: According to available data none of Thammasat University instructors obtained their highest degree from other European countries, Africa or Canada.

Table X
Thammasat University :
Country of Training of 168 Outside Part-time Instructors

Country of Training	Number of Instructors	
	All Training	Part of Training
Thailand	21	81
Other Asian Countries	3	5
France	2	9
England	15	34
Other European Countries	3	7
The United States	16	53
Total	60	189

- Note : (1) There are relatively few part-time instructors who received their entire higher education in any country. Most of them studied in various countries. The usual practice is to obtain a bachelor's degree in Thailand before going abroad.
- (2) The number of part-time instructors in this table is 168. They are people from outside the University, and the statistics are based on the number of men regardless of the number of faculties in which they teach.

Table XI
Thammasat University:
Publications of Full-time And Part-time
Instructors, by Faculty
(Books or Articles excluding own Thesis)

Faculty	Number of Instructors			
	Full - time		Total	Part - time
	Total	Number who have published		Number who have published
Law	8	2	26	9
Com. & Acc.	8	2	35	13
Political Sc.	13	7	54	17
Economics	6	3	37	9
Social Adm.	11	6	46	13
Public Adm.	23	15	10	4
Liberal Arts	51	2	—	—
Total	120	37	208	65

Note : Data in this chart is rather incomplete.

V

While there are many possible interpretations of all these tables, it is pertinent to note the following observations.

1. In the older faculties there are fewer full-time instructors. It is interesting to note that the oldest faculty, the Law School, has the fewest instructors despite the largest enrollment. Besides almost all instructors are part-time, and those who are full-time are, incidentally, non-officials, (see Table IV). The newest school, Liberal Arts, relies totally on full-time instructors who comprise almost 40 % of the University teaching staff.

2. Equally interesting is the fact that almost half of the full-time teaching staff are ladies. They are more predominate in the newer schools while there are none in the Law School. In the part-time category the percentage of women-teachers is only 10 %

3. In terms of age or seniority, part-time instructors are generally older, especially if one takes non-official full-time instructors out of the calculation since all of them are retired government officials from outside the University itself.

This clearly reflects the policy of the University to invite only those outsiders who have the greatest experience and have made achievements in their government and business worlds.

4. If we analyse in terms of proportions, the part-time instructors tend to have a higher education. This could be taken as an important indicator which is consonant with general believe that the highest educated people do not work in the University. They work full-time elsewhere, while teaching on the side. This in turn will obviously reflect in the quality of the students.

5. Table IX clearly indicates the orientation of Thammasat's various faculties. The school of Law is predominantly British oriented, while the Faculty of Economics is French. The American influence is obvious in the Institute of Public Administration and in the Liberal Arts and Social Administration faculties, Table X on part-time instructors shows the preponderent influence of English and American Universities among those educated abroad.

6. While data on publications by instructors is rather incomplete, it is safe to generalize that there are few research-minded instructors in the University.

This probably results from the indifferent attitude of the University itself, as promotion is almost automatic and based entirely on seniority rather than academic excellence.

Aside from these aspects of personal qualifications, it is pertinent to this study to take a look at the influence of social scientists on the academic programs of this University. Earlier and in Table I we pointed out that the University has programs in law, commerce and accountancy, political science (including diplomacy), economics, social welfare, journalism, public administration, and liberal arts which includes social ~~sciences~~ ^{sciences}, natural sciences, arts and humanities. In carrying out these programs the University relies upon 120 full-time and 168 part-time instructors. Many of these instructors have several fields of specialization. In the seven social science programs there are instructors with specializations in 16 different social science fields as well as in the natural sciences, humanities, arts, and professional fields. The largest number in the latter category are in the field of education. However, there are more than three times the number in the social sciences that there are in other fields. For details see the following table (Table XII)

Table XII
Thammasat University:
Fields of Specialization of Full-time and Part-time Instructors

Fields of Specialization	Number of Instructors		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Anthropology	0	1	1
Business Administration	13	30	43
Community Development	1	1	2
Economics and Statistics	8	29	37
Geography	0	1	1
History	1	2	3
International Relations and Diplomacy.	2	9	11
Journalism	4	6	10
Law	35	76	111
Library Science	4	—	4
Political Science	15	11	26
Public Administration	20	14	34
Social Psychology	0	2	2
Social Welfare and Works	7	6	13
Sociology	3	1	4
Other Social Sciences	5	7	12
Total Social Sciences	118	196	314

Fields of Specialization	Number of Instructors		
	Full-time	Part-time	Total
Biology	2	2	4
Chemistry	1	1	2
Engineering	0	3	3
Mathematics	0	1	1
Medical Science	2	2	4
Physics and Astronomy	0	1	1
Total Natural Sciences	5	10	15
Humanities, Education, Arts.	46	34	80
Professional Fields	11	5	16
Grand Total	180	245	425

Note: There are some instructors who have more than one field of specialization.

VI

The foregoing material unmistakably points toward the fact that social scientists have played a major role in the development of the University. One other important factor in the development of the university needs to be discussed—that of administration.

Most universities are preoccupied with teachers and students while the administration plays a lesser support role. In Thailand, particularly at Thammasat University this is not necessarily the case.

Looking back to Table IV on Teaching and Administrative staff one is instantly impressed by the fact that the administrative staff of the Secretariat is much larger than ~~than~~ any faculty. In fact the administrative staff of the Secretariat is a larger than the administrative staff of all faculties combined.

Not only is the Secretariat impressive in terms of numbers, but also in terms of personnel rank. The Secretariat has 21—first and second class officials which is a larger number than all faculties except that of Liberal Arts. Since the administrative

staff controls and administers appropriations, promotions and many other matters, it, in fact, has a stronger hand in the operation of the university than does the teaching staff.

The University leadership, by the same token, is comprised of assorted types of persons but practically no instructors. The most important formal structure in the University hierarchy is the University Council (equivalent to a Board of Trustees), none of the members of which are engaged in teaching. The second most important body is the Council of Deans, which is composed of the Rector, the deans of all faculties, and the Secretary-General. This council is responsible for considering most matters before they are submitted to the University Council. To really understand the importance of the University's leadership, it is necessary then to study the background and current positions of the deans.

Among seven deans, one of whom concurrently holds the job of Secretary-General, only two are actively engaged in teaching; only two are Ph. D. degree holders; two have degrees equivalent to the American M.A.; and the rest have equivalent of a B.A. degree. All except one of them are over 50 years of age. Five of the deans are permanent officials of the University through positions they hold as professors. The other have important outside positions. The Rector is also a deputy prime minister. Two deans are ministers of cabinet. From all of this the major conclusion is that there is an absence of real interest in the top leadership concerning University affairs. Thammasat is not their bread and butter. Regular instructors have little chance to be of significant influence in University affairs. They have even less of a chance to be promoted to "professorship." At present (September 1964) there are only three permanent official instructors who are professors, against seven professors emeritus and twenty outside part-time professors.

Under such circumstances it is only too apparent that the University has given undue emphasis to the administrative labyrinth and dilettantism with a consequent neglect of students and scholars. Therefore, the mission of orientating Thai people in the social sciences has been less effective than it could have been if the social scientists were permitted to take the steering wheel themselves.
