

# Observations on Provincial Administration : Orient Four

By William A. Sommers

## INTRODUCTION

What follows in this paper is a series of observations on selected elements of provincial administration in Thailand. However, the method used is different and personal. I present these observations not because they afford concrete conclusions but because the method used, being decidedly subjective, may stimulate discussion on an important subject. I have summarized key influences that act upon the administration of services at the province and characterized the services, or functional units, as a focal of these influences. The latter are expressions of whether a service given at the province is dominated by considerations imposed by the central government or whether the facts at the provincial level are more compelling; expressed also are the character of the services performed, defined as either definitely administrative or largely project directed. Is the functional unit "oriented" toward its parent department in Bangkok or is its face more fully turned toward the needs of the province? Is the functional unit concerned primarily with the administration of laws, regulations and directives or is its emphasis placed on projects that serve people in the province? I have expressed this tendency or "orientation" on a relative scale from zero to one hundred. But the basis for each judgment, each orientation, is personal and based on a comparative assessment of each service. It is no more than an experienced guess.

From a consideration of twenty five functional units at the provincial level I turn to the tasks of the Department of Local Administration at the province and the amphoe. The same method is used and the same type of characterization of influence, of orientation, is employed as with the functional units. The "orients", however, are different for they stem from different considerations.

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Finally, I have excerpted nine criteria, nine factors that are useful in estimating the value of the functional units at the provincial level. Again, the characterizations are personal and stem from my own experience in working with local administration in Thailand. I have rated each of the functional units chosen against these nine items to give a general idea of relative worth.

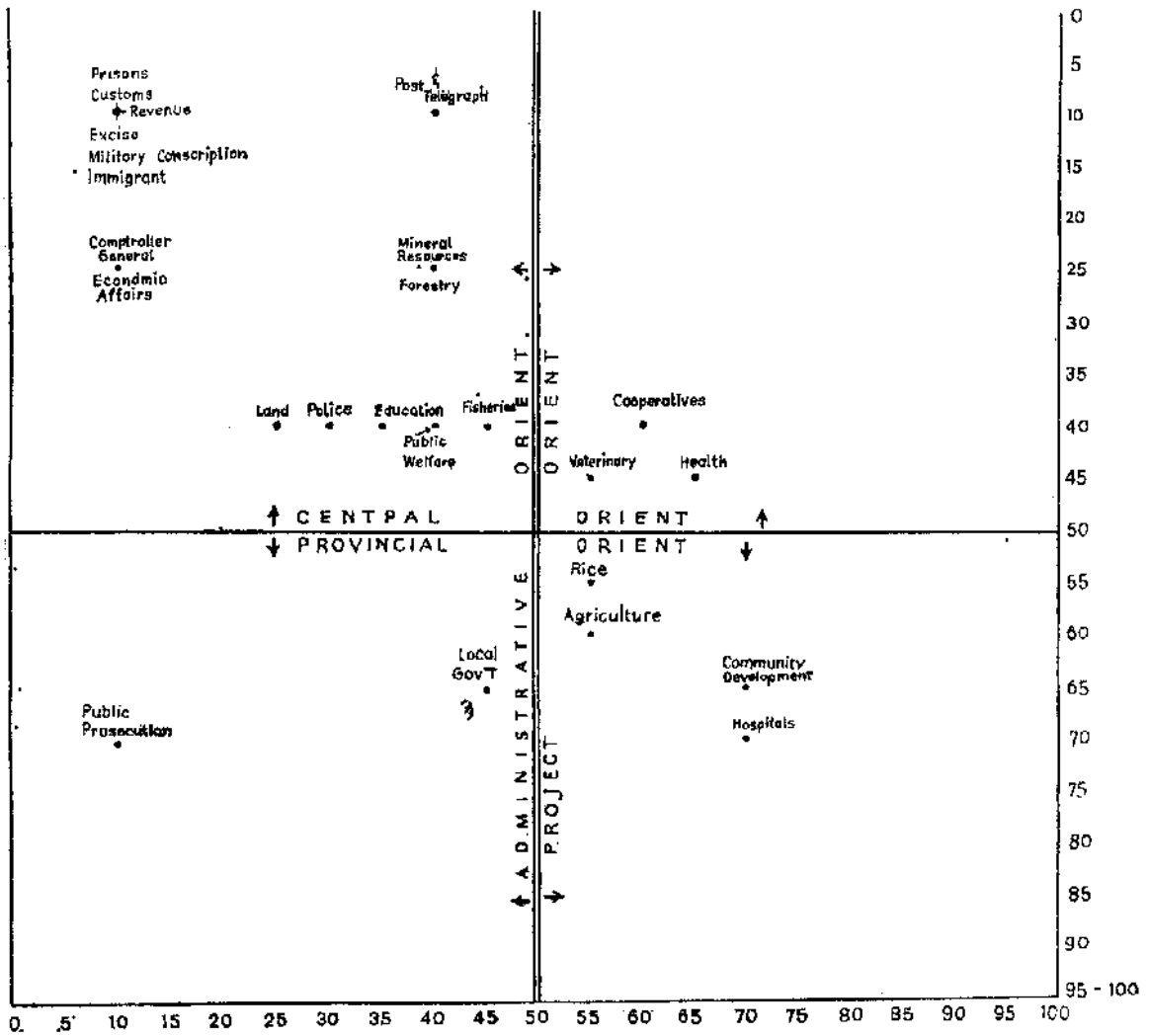
#### CHARTING METHOD

The method used is based on orientation. An analysis is made of certain influences, the "pull" or "orientation" of the influence upon the object analyzed. The extent of this orientation is rated and placed on the chart in line with the numerical scale. To have a graphic presentation a linear "fix" is necessary. Thus each chart locates two orients. Orientation is expressed in polarity; one moves from north to south, from east to west. Each orient expresses a pull toward and a move away. Chart I sets out observations on twenty five functional sections at the province. The first orient is *provincial*; the second is *project*. But the first implies an opposite, in this case *central*. The opposite of *project* becomes *administrative*. The mark, or rating, given for each unit is expressed in its relation to the *provincial* and *project* orients. It is assumed that a functional section completely oriented to both *province* and *project* would be rated at one hundred on both orients. A mark of zero delineates a functional section wholly oriented toward *central* and *administrative*.

None of the ratings is couched in absolutes. Even the extremes contain some element pulling in the opposite direction. Revenue collects money for the central government but it may also collect surcharges remitted directly to the provincial budget. Finance is largely administrative yet it may participate in surveys or feasibility studies about a project, a road to be built, a health center to be erected. Moreover, the ratings, the expressions of seventy points or thirty points or fifteen points, are only observations so expressed. There is no formula for their derivation; they are guesses balanced by experience and translated numerically as a "shorthand" expression of an opinion.

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CHART I  
 TWENTY FIVE FUNCTIONAL UNITS,  
 PROVINCIAL / CENTRAL AND  
 PROJECT / ADMINISTRATIVE ORIENTS



ORIENT RATINGS FOR TWENTY FIVE FUNCTIONAL UNITS  
/USED WITH CHART I

<i>Functional Unit/Section</i>	<i>Provincial Orient</i>	<i>Project Orient</i>
1. Health	45	65
2. Hospitals	70	70
3. Customs	10	10
4. Revenue	10	10
5. Excise	10	10
6. Comptroller General	25	10
7. Community Development	65	70
8. Public Prosecution	70	10
9. Prisons	10	10
10. Immigration	40	30
11. Land	40	25
12. Police	40	30
13. Public Welfare	40	40
14. Military Conscription	10	10
15. Economic Affairs	25	10
16. Education	40	35
17. Post and Telegraph	40	10
18. Mineral Resources	40	25
19. Cooperatives	40	60
20. Fisheries	40	45
21. Forestry	40	25
22. Veterinary	55	45
23. Rice	55	55
24. Agriculture	60	55
25. Local Administration	65	45

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## CHART I : PROVINCIAL/CENTRAL and PROJECT/ADMINISTRATIVE ORIENT

We have taken twenty five functional sections at the provincial level and rated them on two major orient: provincial/central and project / administrative. Not all of these functional sections are in every province. Some exist only where a circumstances requires their presence, i.e. mineral resources in mining areas, immigration at frontier passage points. Notable units such as highway, public works and irrigation are not included because they are distributed by region and only incidentally by province.

The ratings should be understood within their context. The Government of Thailand is unitary; the function of the lower levels is dependent on higher levels. Central direction is paramount and provincial operations exist only in this surrounding. The rating on a provincial/central orient is therefore relative. Even a functional unit with a mark of seventy would be closely subscribed by central controls; the mark would have its validity in relation to the variation of central controls on the other functional units. With this in mind we have set up two general statements against which to judge the provincial orient of the functional units.

- a. Serving or administering to provincial needs
- b. Operating within the technical requirements of the functional speciality as these requirements show up in the province.

These statements can be explained in extremes. Military conscription does not serve provincial needs; it serves a central need and uses the province and its administrative apparatus as a convenient system to take young men for military service. Hospitals, on the other hand, serve people in the province and the care given is whatever is immediately available. The two units appear at nearly opposite points on the provincial orient. The other functional units appear in varying degrees between these extremes.

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Some functional units, such as military conscription, cannot be judged for being what they are not, for doing what they cannot. Prisons, customs, immigration are central operations using the territorial division of province and district because they are suitable. Their function does not usually hinge upon a provincial base. However, being at the province, they may coordinate with other units especially when an incident occurs. Overt rice smuggling may immediately bring together rice, police, customs, immigration.

The chart does not estimate the worth, the effectiveness of the work done. That, however, could be done and with a degree of numerical sharpness. It is not impossible to measure the service responsibility with the service level and to make equivalents using budgets, personnel, projects, etc. Even so, there are a few implied judgements of effectiveness in the charts. The forestry unit should be a provincially oriented function; in operation it puts most emphasis on the enforcement of central regulations rather than on advice, seedling distribution, conservation. This characterization is generally true of mineral resources and, to a lesser extent, of fisheries. However, the last section of this paper gives a more detailed estimate of the value of the functional units.

Turning to the project/administrative orient, a similar context for the ratings should be established as that for province/central. Most of the functional units are administrative fingers of the central arm. Administrative control is extensive, reporting work is heavy while money and manpower for project operations at the province is scarce. Personnel costs are high and consume the bulk of central allocations. There is little left for equipment and materials. In most cases the functional units act as administrative handymen in carrying out purely administrative functions such as tax collections, land regulations, birth registrations, or act as operational middlemen in centrally decided projects of two crop rice, cattle inoculations, well drilling. Again, it is within this context and in relation to one another that judgements on the extent of project or administrative orientation are made.

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Two general statements guide the analyze in the project orient portion.

- a. A service is given to the province through the functional unit which adds to the value of the province as a sustaining unit, and increases the capacity for living and responds to definite needs.
- b. Conversely, the functional unit, in carrying out item a, has a relatively simple, direct relation with central parent organization.

It is not surprising that most of the functional units end up on the administrative side of the orient, but the degree of their orientation is also of interest. Land, for instance, is largely an administrative unit oriented toward the center, yet its potential is significantly greater. This is intimated by a rating of forty five on the provincial orient and twenty five on the administrative orient. Education is more difficult. Although the schools as such are provincial and project oriented, the provincial educational office is an administrative unit, sometimes unrelated to the functional needs of schools. However, the recent transfer of elementary schools to the provincial local government will make the educational sections decidedly on the higher side of the provincial orient. This is not, one hastens to add, a judgment concerning the quality of education expected by such a transfer.

A quick examination of Chart I and its explanation raises an important question. Can functional units be validly rated? Yes. People working in this area do it all the time. They don't always put it on paper or rate a large number together or do it with a conscious effort to work out a system. But can such a rating be realistically assigned numerical values? Though the rating is both relative and subjective it is no more so than a personnel rating or a fire insurance rating system applied to cities. If one made a detailed study of the work of each functional unit and assigned values with numerical weights for each value, one could arrive at a rating system which, although relative and subjective, would have meaning because it would give coherent expression to the organizational forces playing upon provincial functional units.

Charts II and III illustrate these possibilities.

#### CHARTS II, III: MAJOR TASKS, LOCAL ADMINISTRATION SECTION, PROVINCE AND AMPHOE

We have taken twenty six major tasks performed by the Provincial Local Administration Section and rated them on the orient chart. The tasks are

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listed on the accompanying data sheets and are referred by numbers on the chart.<sup>1</sup> A slightly different orient description has been used. Though we use the provincial/central orient the second orient is divided between administrative-routine/administrative-project. At the provincial level the functional units are usually totally immersed in administrative work. Most project operations stem from the amphoe. People don't register guns at the provincial office but at the amphoe; ID pictures are taken at the amphoe, not at the provincial office. Administrative control through reports and inspections are, however, kept at the provincial office while orders and directives from the central department come through the provincial office to the amphoe. The provincial function is thus characterized as completely administrative but the objects of this zeal may be classified as *routine oriented* or *project oriented*. Routine would be administrative matters that assist internal housekeeping or apply to central records, reports, etc. Project, on the other hand, is administrative work involving or related to services being performed for the benefit of a project, program or service carried on within the province. Task Three, done for the civil service subcommittee, is on the provincial orient; its sole object is that of officials and employees at the province. The work is restricted to defined limits by central rules and regulations. Such work does not assist projects of the province nor does it add any service given to people or institutions within the province. Task Nine has a high rating on both the provincial and administrative-project orient. The preparation of budget requests is work directed toward provincial affairs and it is likely that, after personnel costs are worked in, the main concern will be requests and allocations for projects in each of the amphoes.

Chart III exhibits a similar exercise. The major tasks of the Amphoe Local Administration Section are rated on two orients: service/internal and housekeeping/regulatory.<sup>2</sup> The orients have been modified to fit the circumstances at the amphoe. Work at the amphoe may be done either for the benefit of people, organizations,

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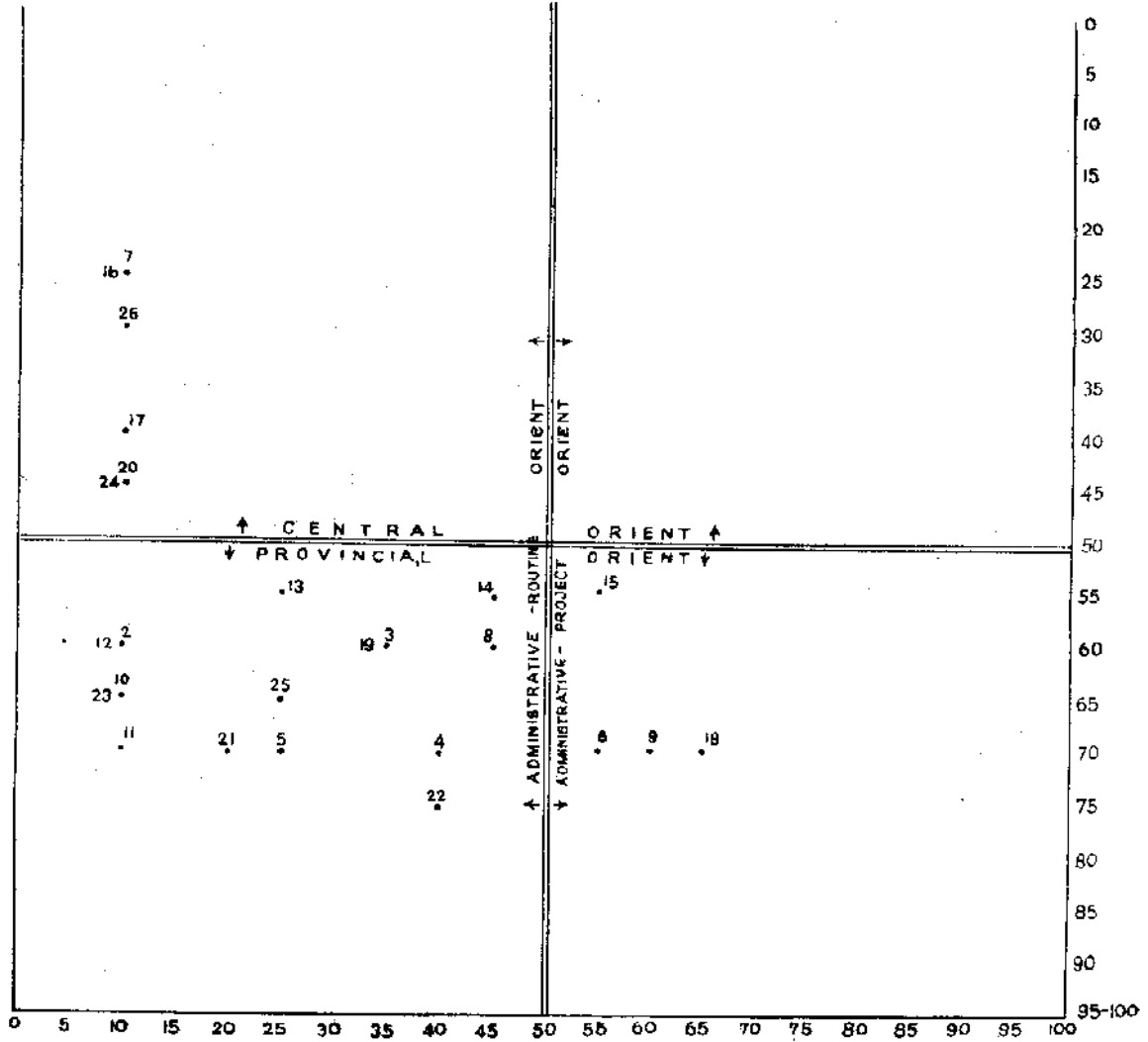
<sup>1</sup>Task list from *Office of the Governor*, William A. Sommers, June, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>Task list taken from *Report on Amphoe Administration*, by William A. Sommers, April, 1966.

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CHART II  
 MAJOR TASKS OF PROVINCIAL  
 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION SECTION  
 PROVINCIAL / CENTRAL  
 ADM - PROJECT / ADM - ROUTINE

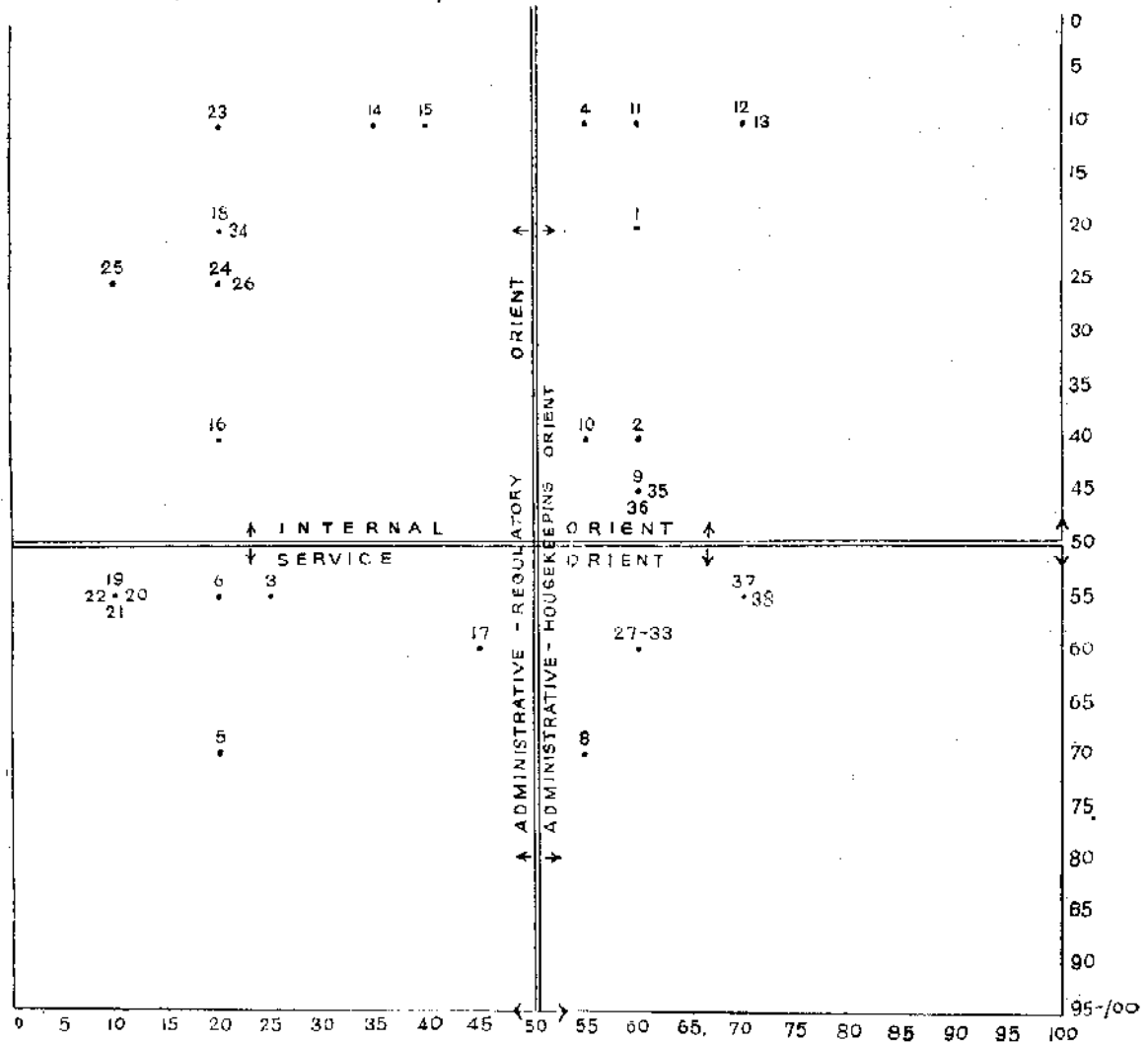


ORIENT RATINGS FOR TWENTY SIX MAJOR TASKS/DEPARTMENT OF  
LOCAL ADMINISTRATION FOR CHART II

<i>Task Title</i>	<i>Provincial</i>	<i>Administrative/Project</i>
1. Regulation of Fire Arms, etc.	25	35
2. Correspondence	60	10
3. Civil Service Subcommittee	60	35
4. Secretary to the Provincial Board	70	40
5. Public Relations, People's Information	70	25
6. Bid Committee Members and Treasurer's Key	70	55
7. Royal and State Ceremonies	25	10
8. Local Accounting and Disbursement	60	45
9. Prepare Amphoe/Changwat Budget Requests	70	60
10. Order/Disburse Supplies for Amphoe/ Changwat Offices	65	10
11. Supervise Janitorial Services	70	10
12. Receive/Disburse funds for Pension Funds	60	10
13. Administer Funds for Buddhist Era Commemoration, Red Cross, Lottery	55	25
14. Local Unit Supervision : Municipalities, Sanitary Districts, Tambol Administrative, etc.	55	45
15. Industrial Location Inspection	55	55
16. Reception of Official Visitors	25	10
17. Classify, Receive, Transmit Official Documents	40	10
18. Field Trips	70	65
19. Documents Coming from Functional Officers to Governor	60	35
20. Identification Card Work	45	10
21. Regarding Kamnan, Puyaiban, Medical Aide, etc.	70	20
22. Varied Security Work	55	40
23. Permits for Gambling, Games of Chance, etc.	70	10
24. Passport Matters	45	10
25. Fuel Pump Regulation	65	25
26. Registration/Birth, Death, Household	30	10

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CHART III  
 MAJOR TASKS OF AMPHOE  
 LOCAL ADMINISTRATION SECTION  
 SERVICE/INTERNAL ORIENT  
 ADM.-HOUSEKEEPING/ADM.-REGULATORY ORIENT



ORIENT RATINGS FOR THIRTY EIGHT MAJOR TASKS DEPARTMENT OF  
LOCAL ADMINISTRATION FOR CHART III

<i>Task Title</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Adm. Housekeeping</i>
1. Kamnan and Puyaiban Affairs	20	60
2. Volunteer Defense Organization	40	60
3. Check on Insurance Companies	55	30
4. Promotional Records	10	55
5. Issuance of Gambling Licenses	70	20
6. Administration of Price Control	55	20
7. Fire Prevention	70	55
8. Control of Smuggling	45	10
9. Guarding Official Buildings and Business Areas	45	60
10. Reception of Visitors; Public Relations	40	55
11. Check of Employee Working Houses	10	60
12. Bookkeeping for Amphoe, Sanitary District	10	70
13. Equipment Requisitions	10	70
14. Financial Reporting	10	35
15. Collect Fees and Permits	10	40
16. Oversight of Govt Pawnshops	40	20
17. Arbitration in Civil Cases	60	45
18. ID Card Program	20	20
19. Birth, Death, Name, Family and Will Registration	55	10
20. Marriage and Divorce Registration	55	10
21. Child Adoption Registration	55	10
22. Registration of Beast of Burden	55	10
23. Horse/Elephant Survey	10	20
24. Gasoline Registration	25	20
25. Gun Registration	25	10
26. Mosque, Chinese Temple, Archaic Building Registration	25	20
27. Promotion of Orchards	60	60
28. Promotion of Livestock, Cattle Raising	60	60
29. Promotion of Upland Crops	60	60
30. Promotion of Fisheries	60	60
31. Promotion of Coffee Trees	60	60
32. Private Irrigation	60	60
33. Two Crop Rice	60	60
34. Registration of Commercial Enterprises	20	20
35. Oversight on Unemployment, Occupations Reserved for Thai Citizens	45	60
36. Oversight of Development Projects under Budget of Sapha Changwat	45	60
37. Collection of Project Requests and Forwarding to Changwat Office	55	70
38. Handling Financial Paperwork with respect to above projects	55	70

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groups at the amphoe or for the amphoe an administrative unit of itself or in relation to its being a sub unit of the central operation. At the same time tasks may be done to carry out regulations or to carry out the housekeeping necessities of budgeting, personnel time checks, accounting, etc. Task One, Kamnan and Puyaiban Affairs, rates twenty on the service/internal orient because it deals with pay, promotion, rewards, records of semi-official employees; it adds very little to the amphoe as a performing unit. The same task, however, rates sixty on the housekeeping/regulatory orient for the work concerns the "housekeeping" of amphoe administration, dealing as it does with employees of the amphoe and their personnel problems. It is only indirectly related to regulatory tasks in that such a task is performed in some measure according to rules set down by the central department. But the discretion in acting on local situations for a particular kamnan for a particular reason is overriding. Task Twenty Five, Gun Registration, is classified as internal for it adds nothing to the amphoe as a service unit; people do not gain by having their gun registered. The amphoe as an administrative unit gains—it knows who has the gun and receives a fee for the registration. At the same time the nature of the task is regulatory, carried out under specific regulations from the central unit applied similarly throughout the kingdom; the task is not managed by the amphoe as a local unit.

#### SUMMARY NOTES

What has gone before is highly experimental, in need of better definitions and specified relationships. More can be done to evaluate amphoe and provincial tasks, ordering them in importance and using their ratings to judge more precisely the functional units within whatever orients are chosen. With more precision, the outcome would be more tenable.

While this may be an interesting exercise, does it have any useful application? Even in the rough form presented much more is ventured about important relationships and pressures at the provincial level than will be found in the usual organization chart. Moreover, an assessment has been made of certain organizational forces. Opinions on the play of these forces have been arranged as a pattern. Many of these pressures, as expressed in the definition of orients, influence the planning and

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appraisal of programs for ARD, DDP, farmer improvement programs etc. They apply also to departmental programs for internal, administrative improvement. To know more about these forces might illuminate the planning. Similarly, this approach would assist the discussion of provincial operations in introductory briefings. It might also be possible to use this method in O and M work, especially if the goals to be achieved would be expressed in the orient. A well worked guess could be given on whether or not individual units within the organization were meeting the goals. Their ratings would be fixed on the goal-orient.

#### CHART IV: ANOTHER VENTURE INTO THE APPRAISAL OF FUNCTIONAL UNITS

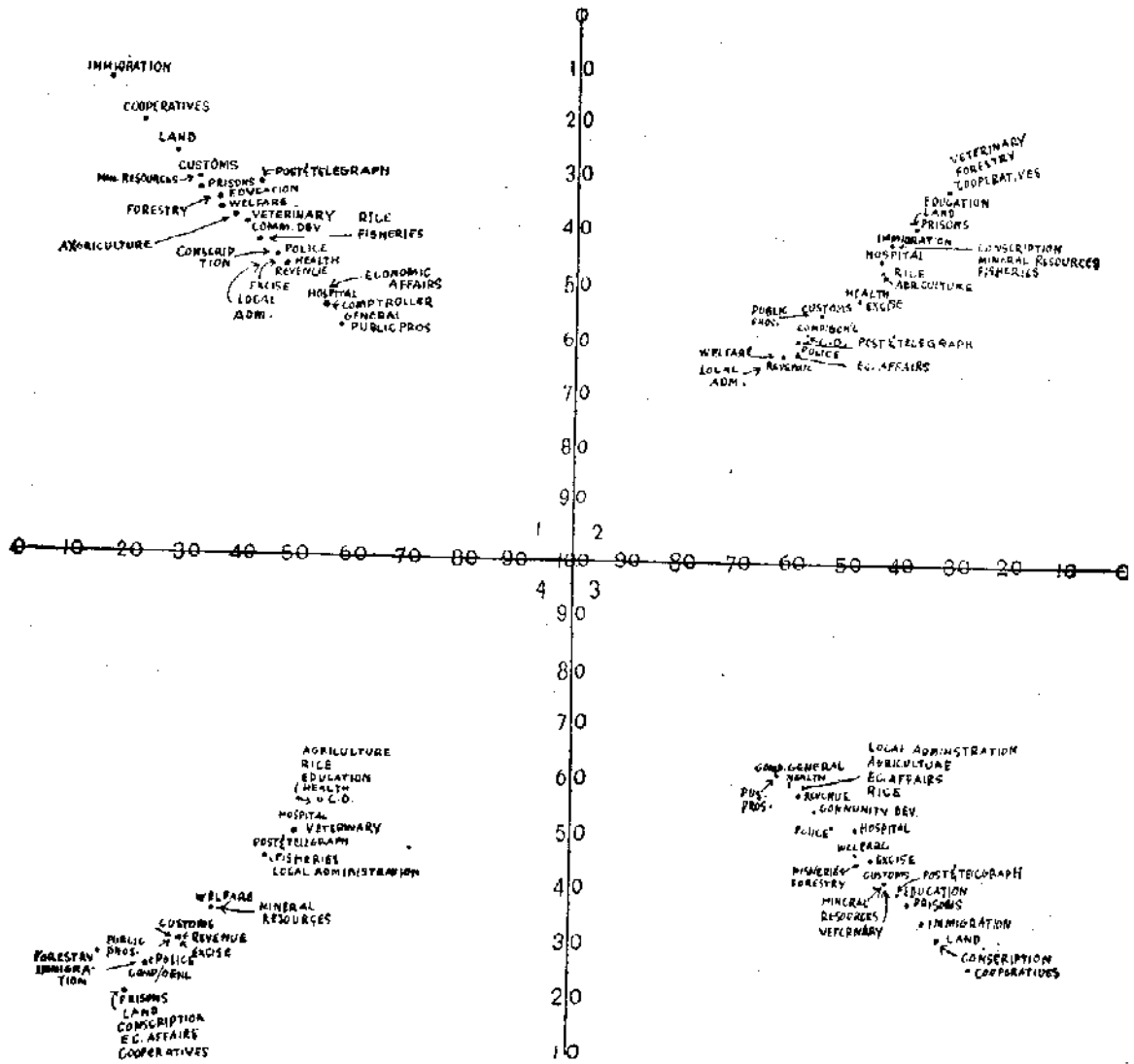
The material gathered together in Chart IV is not directly related to the orient method just discussed. But the speculations aroused in ruminating on the orient method led to further discussion about the value, the effectiveness of work performed by the functional units. And this, in turn, engendered some very baldly subjective approaches. They are presented without the justification behind more scholarly investigations. The approach, again, is an attempt to offer opinions within a pattern based on an estimate of the essentials behind provincial administration.

One might list a great many points upon which to judge whether or not a service given at the province was of value, effective. These points would certainly depend upon the field of interest, upon the influences associated with one's contact with provincial administration. We have listed nine factors, grouped into four general categories, which in combination underlie the effectiveness of the functional unit at the provincial level. The latter is thought of as the sum of effort at the province and the amphoe. Again, these items are relative to the context which has already been emphasized.

##### Group 1 Administrative Strength

1. Ability to act crucially without reference or referral to a higher level
  2. Backing of a strong department at the central level
  3. Clear administrative channels easing the flow of reports, directives and controls.
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CHART IV



Group 2 Operating Strength

1. Sufficient budget allocations so that projects, programs services assigned to the unit can be carried through
2. Staff is adequate to assist in following through in collaboration with budget.

Group 3 Personnel Strength

1. Sufficient room for advancement within the organization to encourage people, officials to stay and become professional.

RATINGS OF TWENTY SIX FUNCTIONAL UNITS BY NINE ITEMS, SUMMARY

BY FOUR GROUPS / FOR CHART IV

	Action	Backing	Clear	Group 1	Budget	Staff	Group 2	Advance	Train	Knowledge	Group 3	People's OK
1. Health	55	50	40	48	55	50	52	55	65	60	60	55
2. Hospitals	65	60	50	55	40	45	43	45	50	50	48	50
3. Customs	30	55	10	32	60	50	55	40	40	45	41	30
4. Revenue	30	70	45	48	60	65	62	45	65	60	57	30
5. Excise	30	70	40	47	50	55	52	40	45	50	45	30
6. Comp/General	40	70	55	55	65	50	57	55	65	65	62	25
7. Community Development	55	50	25	43	60	55	51	45	70	50	55	55
8. Public Prosecution	60	60	55	58	60	50	55	30	40	65	62	30
9. Prisons	20	35	45	33	40	35	37	30	25	20	37	20
10. Police	45	70	25	46	70	50	60	50	60	45	52	25
11. Immigration	10	30	10	16	45	40	42	35	30	40	35	25
12. Land	45	30	10	28	45	30	37	35	25	35	32	20
13. Public Welfare	45	50	15	36	60	65	62	45	55	40	47	35
14. Conscription	10	70	60	46	40	45	42	30	25	40	32	20
15. Economic Affairs	50	55	60	55	60	60	60	50	65	60	58	20
16. Education	40	40	25	35	45	30	37	35	40	45	40	55
17. Post and Telegraph	10	30	55	32	60	60	60	35	25	60	40	45
18. Mineral Resources	10	35	50	32	45	40	42	40	50	35	42	35
19. Cooperatives	25	10	30	22	30	35	32	30	20	30	27	20
20. Fisheries	45	30	50	42	45	40	42	30	50	55	45	45
21. Forestry	45	35	30	36	35	30	32	35	40	55	43	25
22. Veterinarian	55	20	45	40	35	30	32	35	45	45	42	50
23. Rice	60	30	40	43	45	45	45	50	65	60	58	55
24. Agriculture	55	30	40	38	45	45	45	50	65	60	58	55
25. Local Administration	55	60	30	48	60	65	62	55	65	60	58	45



2. Emphasis on in-service training is such that officials are given the knowledge to carry on their work.
3. High level of technical competency based on good recruitment, academic training while in employment, assimilation of new techniques.

Group 4 Acceptability

1. The people, the clientele of the service given, accept the unit as one that services their needs.

On the data sheet, which accompanies Chart IV, we have listed the twenty five functional units and given them a rating for each of the nine items described. For the first three groups we have inserted an average score while for the last group, which consists of only one item, we have used that score to represent the group. Chart IV locates each functional unit, based on the rating, within each group, one the quarter section for each group. The perfect rating, one hundred, is at the center of the chart and we visualize a movement of the functional units toward this center.

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