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CENTER IN THE MARGINS:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN A THAI UNIVERSITY
FROM THREE ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

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CENTER IN THE MARGINS:

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By

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ABSTRACT

CENTER IN THE MARGINS:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S STUDIES IN A THAI UNIVERSITY
FROM THREE ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVES

By

Shirley J. Miske

This study explores the processes of organizing Center for Women's Studies (CWS) in the margins of a regional Thai university from three perspectives: the structural, the political, and the cultural. These perspectives view organizations as bureaucracies bent on maintenance and survival (structural), arenas of competing ideas where conflict pervades daily life (political), and cultural entities, microcosms of the broader culture in which they are embedded (cultural).

The researcher utilized an interpretive methodological approach; The data consist of 50 individual interviews, focus group interviews with undergraduate students, Thai and English documents from the CWS and the university and observations of seminars, university classes, and daily life in the Center. This portrait of Thai women's studies reveals professors engaged in training programs with women village leaders, conducting and encouraging research on women and development, and occasionally integrating of women's issues into existing courses.

From the structural perspective, CWS professors negotiate the bureaucracy of the central ministry and the university to carry out women's studies programs. Loose coupling of the Center to other units illuminates questions of the impact of women's studies on the university. From a political perspective, two cases of organizational conflict illustrate the ordinary nature of conflict through competition for limited resources, productive uses of power, and marginalized discourses competing with the dominant discourse. The cultural perspective explores women's studies as a cultural practice in the university and implications of choices about activism, classroom teaching, and theory generation for other cultural members, particularly university students.

Considering the margins and centers of the CWS from three organizational perspectives reveals enduring dilemmas of women's studies within the university which cannot be resolved and therefore must be managed. Key dilemmas include gaining access to resources, negotiating the bureaucracy, and enacting goals and priorities of women's studies, such as training, curriculum development, and theory generation, in the context of higher education.

DEDICATION

In memory of
my mother, Hilda,
and
my sister, Sharon,
whose courage, support and
joie de vivre inspire me still.

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Rita Gallin wisely urged me to do this study. She carefully read my work and offered incisive, always-useful comments about feminisms,

women and development and women's studies in Asia. Doug Campbell always was ready to reflect with me on new ways of thinking about the data from his own sensitive, cross-national understanding of Southeast Asia. Anna's probing questions pushed me to think more deeply about organizing, about women's studies, and about whose knowledge is valued in higher education. Jack's scholarly insights helped me understand the complexity of international contexts and raised important questions about national contexts. I was delighted that he and his family visited me on-site in Thailand and offered their encouragement to me in person. My special thanks to University of Iowa professor and long-time student of Thailand, Scott McNabb, for his generous comments on the dissertation draft and to MSU professor, Chris Wheeler, for his helpful insights.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE QUESTION, THE METHODOLOGY AND THE RESEARCHER

> Empowering women is a key aim of women's centers around the world....And though many of these centers and programs are small, they represent a voice and provide both hitherto unavailable laboratories for experimentation and vehicles for engineering social change. Collectively, they make a difference.
>
> --Rao (1991; p. 4)

Introduction

The Center for Women's Studies of Thailand's Regional University (RU) is one center that represents not just one voice but many voices of Thai women and men.[1] The voices call for equality among women and men, for including women in rural development decisions, and for incorporating women's experiences in the academy. At times the voices are discordant, at times harmonious, and at times they are silenced--but collectively, they can make a difference.

In this case study I examine the development of Regional University's Center for Women's Studies (CWS) from three organizational perspectives. Each perspective--the structural, the political, and the cultural--illuminates different facets of organizing women's studies at the margins of Thai higher education. Examined together, the three perspectives on organizations highlight dilemmas encountered in organizing women's studies. The analysis also offers insight into and

[1] The name "Regional University" and the names of all individuals in this study are pseudonyms. See Appendix A for a list of acronyms and Appendix B for a list of key actors in the study.

raises questions about the organization of women's studies in a developing country and internationally.

The CWS is one center of many women's studies centers around the world--centers which, as Rao (1991, p.4) observes, collectively "make a difference." This chapter begins with a discussion of women's studies centers and programs in an international context. I consider discussions of women's studies from an organizational perspective, and I note some differences that have been identified between women's studies in industrialized and non-industrialized countries. Next, I position this study within the Thai context, briefly discussing the condition and position of women in Thailand, the women's movement and feminism in Thailand, and the development of women's studies within Thai higher education.

Having laid this groundwork, I proceed to discuss both early assumptions from which I developed my research question and the evolution of that question. In the discussion of methodology, I articulate my research assumptions, describe my location in the study and explain my choice of methods. Then I explain my data collection methods and the challenges of analyzing the data, including the dilemma of using western theories of organizations and feminist critiques of these theories. I close with a discussion of some of the dilemmas I faced in writing this dissertation and with an overview of the next five chapters.

The Organization of Women's Studies in International Perspective

The enterprise of women's studies differs in technologically advanced and developing countries. The differences include the relationship between women's studies and women and international development (WID); whether highest priority should be given to academic

research/theory generation or activism; and the use of "gender" or "women" as analytical categories (Rao, 1991). Subsequent to the United Nations (UN) International Decade for Women (1975-85), US and European scholars devoted greater attention to issues of women and development (Acosta-Belén and Bose, 1991). Staudt and Jaquette (1983) assert that in the US WID is grounded in an application of the social sciences, whereas women's studies is grounded in the humanities, is more cross-disciplinary and more theoretical. Women's studies and women and international development do not necessarily constitute separate areas of study in European universities; they are differentiated in US higher education, however (Rao, 1991).

In non-industrialized nations higher education is closely linked with matters of economic development. The condition of women in non-industrialized countries not only is linked but cannot be separated from the colonial experience, from more recent western "modernization" efforts or from present economic and political incursions into non-industrialized countries by multinational corporations centered in technologically advanced wealthy nation-states. Attending to matters of women and development in countries such as Thailand is synonymous with women's studies, not only in research but also in outreach work with "grass roots" women who suffer the most from inappropriate economic development activities.

While disagreements about WID and women's studies, activism and theory generation also are debated within individual countries and particular institutions, the differences are brought into sharp focus when viewed in cross-national perspective. This union of or division between women's studies and WID constitutes a significant point of difference between the development of women's studies in industrialized and non-industrialized countries. Here I provide a brief overview of women's studies primarily in Asia, the US, and Europe.

Studies which examine the organization of women's studies in higher education in both industrialized and non-industrialized countries most often focus on the history, structure and design of women's studies programs and centers. This literature usually describes the organizational structure and activities of one center or program within its national and political context (see, for example, Braidotti, 1993; Spender, 1978). Other studies describe programs at various universities in one particular national setting or examine programs within a region, such as Latin America, Southeast Asia or Europe (see, for example, Barroso, 1990; Karim, 1993). Descriptions of program design and structures of women's studies centers within their political and national contexts are an important starting point for understanding the enterprise of women's studies centers in an international perspective.

Karim (1993) describes gender studies in Southeast Asian universities within national and intellectual contexts, suggesting that most gender studies programs began with research centers. The establishment of university research units on women's issues in 1978 and 1979 marked the beginning of Malaysian women's studies; by 1991 most Malaysian universities also had developed undergraduate courses in women and gender studies. In Indonesia, senior social scientists from Jakarta's University of Indonesia administer the Yayasan Sri Kandi, a center for research and publications. Indonesia's national ministry also has proposed that each Indonesian university develop its own women's studies center to be administered directly by the vice-chancellor of the university. Karim notes that, under this proposal, universities are not compelled to develop centers but that this proposal does offer a "convenient strategy to expand post-graduate research in Gender Studies" (p. 105). The Philippine Women's Research Collective and the Institute of Philippine Culture formally established gender

studies as a specialized area of research and training.[2] Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, and Burma have not begun gender studies programs in universities, although Vietnamese social scientists have established the Centre for Women's Studies. It is located within the Social Scientists' Committee and, again, its focus is research.

Just as Karim describes the importance of research in Malaysia and Indonesia, women's studies centers in other parts of Asia also focus on research. Chung and Park (1982) recount that women's studies were introduced into Korea through the establishment of the Korean Women's Institute at Seoul's Ewha Womans University in March, 1977. While research was and is the mission of the Institute, the Institute also gave birth to women's studies courses and degree programs at Ewha.[3] Chung and her colleagues at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, started the Gender Research Programme, Hong Kong's first research and resource center in higher education in the 1980s. Through 1994 the university center continued its emphasis on research, seminars, and conferences. Under the auspices of the Hong Kong Women's Council, Chung and several colleagues also began a center for working class women as a "community approach to feminism in Hong Kong" (Chung, 1991, p. 99).

Women's studies in India grew out of the need to examine the impact of development processes on women (Mazumdar, 1991). Attention to research on women and development issues led to the establishment of the national Centre for Women Development Studies in 1975 and of research units at institutions of higher education throughout the country (Chamberlain & Howe, 1995). In Latin America and the Caribbean, feminist critiques of development paradigms also were key to the

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[2] Centers for Women's Studies in Manila and outlying provinces have emphasized recovering the stories of Filipina women and also are actively involved in WID activities.

[3] The Korean Women's Institute also established an Asian Center for Women's Studies in May 1995 with a region-wide conference on "Feminism in Asia."

emergence of women's studies as a field of academic inquiry in higher education (Acosta-Belén & Bose, 1991). Women and development issues became the focus of women's studies, and activism and outreach went hand-in-hand.

In contrast, the renascence of feminism and the women's movement in the US in the 1960s gave birth to women's studies as the academic "arm" of feminism (Gumport, 1987; Stimpson, 1986). Women's studies courses grew up quickly in state universities and colleges while most private, elite institutions established research centers but introduced curriculum and garnered a commitment to women's studies more slowly (Gumport, 1987). From the 1970s North American and European scholars were engaged in theory construction, developing theories which began from women's own experiences, focusing on the inextricable linkage between the political and the personal.

While most cross-national discussions of women's studies centers/programs are not explicitly comparative in nature, Zmrocek and Duchen (1991) offer an expressly comparative view of women's studies initiatives in twelve countries of the European Community. Their research frame divides the enterprise of women's studies into two parts: 1) degree programs, centers, and publications and 2) feminist research. They found great diversity among women's studies programs and in state support for the institutionalization of women's studies. In countries such as Spain and Greece, where women had long lived under repressive governments, women's movements were small and women's studies virtually non-existent. While women's studies was stronger in countries with more vigorous women's movements, women's studies scholars disagreed about various aspects of the enterprise of women's studies. Zmrocek and Duchen cite point to different understandings of the relationship between knowledge and politics as at the heart of the debate.

The above accounts provide a range of descriptions and analyses of women's studies in different national settings. My work challenges the assumption that we know what it is to engage in women's studies, for example, that women's studies consists of feminist research and curriculum development. This study provides a textured, "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) and analysis of the organization of one Thai university's women's studies center. The research illuminates how women's studies is defined and enacted in one Southeast Asian country. It illustrates that women's studies in a developing country may not consist of conversations about feminist pedagogy, theories, or challenges to the epistemological assumptions of male-centric disciplines. Rather, women's studies in this context focuses on research and work with rural and urban lower-class women and these foci feature prominently in curriculum initiatives as well. Simply put, women's studies is WID and they are inseparable. Through analyses of the Center's interactions with its environment, the political dynamics within and surrounding the Center, and RU professors' shared and diverse understandings of feminism and enactments of women's studies, this study offers insight into the challenges and dilemmas of organizing women's studies in a nation engaged in economic development.

Thailand: Women's Experience

Thai women account for approximately half of Thailand's 53.4 million people (Thailand Development Research Institute, 1988). Along with their counterparts throughout Southeast Asia, Thai women have an "unusually high" public profile (Eberhardt, 1988, p. 3). The involvement of Thai women in economic activities, traditionally and currently, together with traditional rights to equal inheritance and property ownership, contribute to perceptions of this "high profile"

position. A juxtaposition of this portrait, however, with women's "karmically inferior" position relative to men in Buddhism, the state religion, and the increased exploitation of Thai women in the sexual service industry give insight into the complexity of the position and condition of women and to gendered relations in Thailand (Eberhardt, 1988).

The tradition of matrilocality in Thai society prescribes that when the eldest daughter marries, she and her husband live with her parents. This allows a woman more authority and control, at least in the household, and, therefore, greater autonomy and flexibility than women enjoy in patrilocal cultures such as India or China (Archavanitkul & Havanon, 1990; Pongsapich, 1988). This matrilocal pattern does not always obtain for present-day Thai families, however, nor for Thai Chinese and other ethnic minority families. For girls[4] within the Thai family, as the students in my study describe, restrictions on and expectations that they contribute to household activities are much greater than for boys (Archavanitkul & Havanon, 1990). And for women, while high esteem is accorded mothers and motherhood, this esteem exists alongside the polygamous practice of men taking minor wives (mistresses) and frequenting prostitutes (Muecke, 1992; Supapeung, 1991), thus placing women in a paradoxical position, one which a professor of education probes with her students in Chapter Five.

Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1991) argue that the politico-cultural factors of Buddhism, matrilocality, and the monarchy contribute to the position and condition of women in Thailand and relegate women to varying degrees of power and autonomy. Until the late 19th century the

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[4] While I refer to the undergraduate university students I interviewed as young women, I use the term "girls" when the literature speaks of "girls" (see, for example, Archavantikul & Havanon, 1990). In focus groups interviews, women students often spoke of "girls and boys" in the family and I maintain that distinction in Chapter Five.

interplay of these three factors separated women into two categories: royal and aristocratic women and common peasant women. With modernization, the introduction of western education at the turn of the century, and Thailand's entrance into the international economy, this stratification became diffused and a small middle class emerged (Tantiwiramanond & Pandey, 1991).

The state's commitment to modernization and industrialization has brought about rapid and sustained economic growth in Thailand. The development of a Thai middle class and the growth of the national economy has led to more educational and professional work opportunities--and more for some women than for others. The rapid growth of the Gross National Product has ushered in a widening gap between urban and rural women. In 1985, 86 percent of the population lived in rural areas; rural women of the lower class are at a severe disadvantage to other women and to men in terms of education, health, and employment (see Tantiwiramanond & Pandey, 1991).

The reasons for a primary focus on women and development issues in Thai women's studies become apparent upon scrutinizing these issues. The rural population is decreasing as residents migrate to urban areas. For rural young women who migrate, the service industry is almost certain to become their line of work and, as Pasuk (1982) argues, this usually leads to prostitution.

Women constitute a large percentage of the work force--as high as 49% in some rural areas--but there are fewer women than men working as employers and government employees. The one category in which women do outnumber men is in the most disadvantaged group of unpaid family workers (TDRI, 1988). Despite the high regard for motherhood and women's high visibility in the work force, women occupy a low position in the family and society (Tantiwiramanond & Pandey, 1991).

In rural areas where water buffalo and elephants were the beasts of burden, a traditional metaphor for a woman, who was usually illiterate, was a buffalo. A man, however, was a person (*phu ying pen khwaai, phu chaai pen khon)*[5] (Tantiwiramanond & Pandey, 1991). A metaphor still used frequently with regard to the position of men and women--which several students mention in my study--is of men as the front legs of the elephant and women as the hind legs. That is to say, women are not the front legs which lead but rather they follow and carry the weight from behind. This position is reinforced in Thailand's Theravada Buddhist cosmology, which regards all women as inferior to men.

The Thai Women's Movement, Feminism, and Women's Studies

The 1934 Thai political movement that eclipsed absolute monarchical rule also marked the beginning of the Thai women's movement. The 1970s saw a fluorescence of the women's movement in the context of the broader farmers' and students' protests against oppressive Thai military rule and foreign (US) domination. Thus, the Thai women's movement always has been a part of larger Thai political movements (Pongsapich, 1988). Activists who were part of the 1970s radical movement concur that, although the women's movement has been strong in different periods of their history, there is no feminist movement in Thailand; that is, there is no independent movement for women's rights.

Rather than a feminist movement and feminist groups, some women and men who consider themselves feminists[6] work together with other activists and women's rights advocates. These groups cluster into three categories: conservative (nationalist), liberal (individual rights),

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[5] I use the popular transcription of Thai which is influenced by etymology of Pali and Sanskrit loan words.

[6] Feminism is defined and discussed in Chapters Four and Five.

and progressive--also called radical, since advocating for "rights" and "justice" labels one as a radical in Thailand (Tantiwiramanond & Pandey, 1991, p. 10). Thai women's studies has emerged out of this non-feminist, socio-cultural, political context.

Women's studies in Thailand began in 1981 with the establishment of the Program for Women's Studies in the Social Research Institute of Chulalongkorn University (Thailand's oldest university, located in Bangkok). Under the leadership of A. Amara Pongsapich[7] and her colleagues, the program developed into a highly regarded center for research projects that studied low-income urban women, women street vendors, rural women in agriculture, and workers in the Thai sex trade (Karim, 1991). At the initiative of an education professor, Chulalongkorn also offered one course on women's situations in Thailand (Eckachai, 1990).

In 1986, a second Bangkok institution, Thammasat University, established another women's studies project. That same year, Thammasat also became the Thai secretariat for an institutional linkage program between York University in Toronto, Canada, and three Thai universities known as the Women in Development Consortium in Thailand. Funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, until 1992 the consortium aimed to foster and support women and development efforts in Thailand (Van Esterik, 1991). While Thammasat professors successfully organized consortium activities, their efforts to establish a broader women's studies program within the university were unsuccessful, due to students' lack of interest and professors' concern about the absence of a Thai body of women's studies knowledge (Eckachai, 1990).

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[7] A. is the abbreviation for the Thai word aacaan, a title accorded those with bachelor's degrees and those who have special expertise in a particular area.

Public universities and at least one private university located in outlying provinces also established women's studies programs and centers in the 1980s. The attempts of some feminist academics to establish women's studies programs in their home institutions met with resistance, leading them eventually to join or establish their own non-governmental organizations for women through contacts with international donors.

It is in this socio-political context of Thai women, the Thai women's movement, and women's studies in Thailand that a small group of professors led by a woman law professor created the Center for Women's Studies at Regional University. I was privileged to study this program at close range over a 16-month period. Consistent with the experience of many fieldwork researchers, although I began the study with one set of questions, I left with a different set.

Genesis and Evolution of the Questions

The questions that guided this study grew out of the intersection of my intellectual interests in schooling, diversity,[8] and organizations; a commitment to equity for all people interwoven with an appreciation of our many differences; and the conviction that cross-national comparative studies in education provide critical insight into national, local, international, and even personal questions. My interests and commitments converged in graduate studies in education and in administrative work in Asian higher education following my doctoral course work.

For three years I worked as the "women's educational concerns" program director for a US-based organization that funds programs in Asian higher education. As I lived in Thailand and traveled around Asia from 1991 to 1994, I met college and university professors (primarily

[8] Diversity is defined here as inclusive of categories such as gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, age, religion.

women) and university administrators in nine countries of East, Southeast, and South Asia. I learned from these scholars and from their writings about distinctive viewpoints, dilemmas, and problems of women in Asian higher education and in specific national contexts. This work nurtured my interest in and pushed my thinking about cross-national comparative organizational questions in higher education.

Asian colleagues introduced me to an array of organizational arrangements of women's studies in Asian higher education. These include centers for research and information on women, an urban training center for working-class women, and a women's museum and women's college within a co-educational university. At the world's largest women's university, which is located in Seoul, Korea, a women's studies department offers courses to thousands of undergraduate students along with highly competitive women's studies master's degree and Ph.D. programs. In co-educational universities and in all-women's colleges and universities throughout Asia, departments such as history and anthropology offer select women's studies courses.[9] In India the central ministry of higher education, specifically, the University Grants Commission, established a Standing Committee on Women's Studies in 1985 and soon thereafter prepared a formal set of guidelines for the establishment of women's studies programs in higher education throughout India. Women's universities and colleges in India offer select courses as well as curriculum in women's studies and engage in Women and Development activities. In Southeast Asia, women's studies scholars and centers focus primarily on women and development projects and on WID research. I was particularly interested in the development-oriented organizational arrangement since it was a predominant organizational

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[9] Searching for equality: Resources on women in Asia (forthcoming) provides detailed descriptions of women's studies programs throughout Asia.

model of women's studies in Thailand, where I was living, and it differed significantly from women's studies as it was developing in Japan and Korea in East Asia and in countries of the west.[10] I developed a proposal and a set of questions that would enable me to explore this arrangement of women's studies.

Preliminary conversations with two CWS professors alerted me to resistance within Regional University to the introduction of the Center for Women's Studies. From my interests in diversity and organization, I developed questions that would enable me to explore how a Thai university deals with change and conflict in the organization through the case of the introduction of a women's studies program. Attention to instances of conflict and to the political dynamics of organizing women's studies remained constant throughout the study.

Other questions changed, however, in the course of data collection and even more during data analysis. I naively assumed in my earliest proposal that, in keeping with the hierarchical patterns and mechanisms of the Thai bureaucracy within which it is located, the development of women's studies would consist of top-down or center-outward infiltration of women's studies into the university. At the national level, the National Commission on Women's Affairs (NCWA) had initiated a major research project inviting public and private universities to identify and integrate women's issues into existing required courses of the undergraduate curriculum. I anticipated, therefore, that in keeping with this initiative from the top, a major goal of CWS professors would be systematically to integrate women's studies into departments of the university, particularly in the formal curriculum, and to engineer

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[10]Primarily I use the terms "west" and western since those whom I interviewed most frequently referred to the countries of North America and Europe in this way. I also refer to industrialized and non-industrialized nations, however, since "west" and "developing countries" are terms which originated in and focus inordinate attention on North America and Europe.

changes to benefit women that would have an impact on the broader activities of the university.

As the research progressed, and even more as I continued with the analysis, I began to develop images of the Center for Women's Studies as it was organized at the margins of the university and moving toward the center. My questions evolved from "How do individuals organize women's studies so that its influence radiates out into an institution of higher education within the Thai bureaucracy?" and "How does the university deal with the conflict a women's studies center generates?" to "How do Thai academics and staff organize a women's studies center at the margins of a university in the context of the bureaucracy, other interest groups, and the culture in which it is embedded?" Although changing the questions did not alter my methods of data collection, I did choose to cast my net more widely, interviewing more professors from different faculties and universities and attending meetings and seminars sponsored by other units (a research institute and a faculty) of the university.

Methodology

A discussion of methodology connects my research questions to the methods I chose to gather information for this study and the ways in which I analyzed the data. In this section I discuss my research assumptions, the case study method I selected and my methods of data collection. Following this I elaborate on the processes of data analysis: the challenges of interpreting the data; conundrums of selecting theoretical perspectives on organizations and writing within and across multiple perspectives; considering western feminist critiques of organizational theory; and dilemmas of writing the analysis. Consonant with the (western) feminist practice of acknowledging my self

and my location within the research process, I position myself within the processes of data collection, interpretation and writing.

Research Assumptions

Stating my assumptions about research is important for understanding how I designed this study and analyzed the data. From my standpoint, the processes of trying to make sense of our worlds and systematically learning something through research are situated in specific historical, socio-cultural, political contexts. Through internal dialogue and through interactions with others and with our world, we organize our worlds and make sense of life around us. Grounded in these assumptions, I engaged in research, data analysis and writing, not in pursuit of "one objective truth," but rather acknowledging my own subjective standpoint and trying to see what other standpoints people hold.

While I conducted this study to learn about Regional University's CWS from Thai instructors, administrators and others, I recognize that my own assumptions interacted with the ways in which I asked questions, made sense of the data and offered my interpretations from different theoretical perspectives. In acknowledgment of this, I describe my location within the study and the dilemmas I experienced as researcher below. Throughout the rest of the work, I continue to weave my voice in and out of the text.

Location

I conducted the research and analysis from my own particular political, historical, and intellectual location, as a middle-class, white western feminist educator trained in the US and who has lived and worked outside the US for eleven years in Asia and Central America. I

grew up in the midwestern United States during the civil rights and women's liberation movements of the 1960s and 1970s; these movements profoundly influenced my valuing of diversity and commitment to equity. At age 18 I worked as a volunteer in the highlands of Guatemala; this ignited a search to come to terms with diversity, inequity and equity from an international perspective.

Entering into research in Thailand, I was aware that for those I was interviewing who were resisting the press from the west to "develop" Thailand, my color, my nationality and my language associated me with the Colonizer. At the same time, because of my interest in women's studies and in feminism, I had aligned myself as an advocate with those who were engaged in women's studies.

I was continually aware of this tension and I struggled to minimize the distance between myself and those with whom I interacted. In conversations with university professors, I acknowledged and did not defend the negative effects of technologically advanced societies on the socio-economic development of Thailand. Throughout my stay in Thailand, I studied the Thai language in order to improve my communication with Thai people and to understand Thai cultural patterns. Through my actions I tried to behave in culturally appropriate ways, for example, by showing deference to elders and to those in high-status positions.

Despite these efforts to lessen the distance between myself and those whom I interviewed, I remained the "other" and I acknowledge that my location in the study was interwoven with the ways in which I collected and interpreted the data. Aware of this location, I paid close attention to its implications and tried to account for my location as I collected my data. With particular reference to language use, when I made the initial contact for an interview, I inquired if the individual would prefer to speak in Thai or in English. During the English interviews I encouraged the use of Thai whenever someone was

uncertain of a phrase or title or whenever she or he felt more comfortable speaking in Thai.

An advantage of my outsider position was that I raised questions that occasionally offered new insights into the activities of CWS professors. On more than one occasion as I shared observations, professors responded, "I had never thought of it that way before." Hearing this statement indicated that I had interpreted something in a (possibly useful) new way and reminded me once again that my assumptions were grounded in a different worldview.

In Thailand my work identity was three-fold: 1) foundation program officer, 2) doctoral student/researcher, and 3) non-teaching faculty member at another university. Work as a program director enhanced my access to data and my understanding of Center-donor relationships but did not seem to influence my interactions with people at the research site. The foundation I represented did not fund projects at public universities and no one at Regional ever inquired or approached me about funding projects. I had no indication that RU professors ever viewed me as a link to possible foundation resources for their programs.

The foundation work enhanced my research in several ways. I had observed and experienced the ways in which donors can influence program development and was aware of the complicated nature of the donor-recipient relationship. The relationships I developed through the foundation also significantly enhanced my data collection and understanding of the development of women's studies in Thailand. Because of my professional association with a foundation trustee who was the Special Minister to the Prime Minister's cabinet when I arrived in Thailand, I was invited to national meetings on women's studies and, in turn, I invited Thai government representatives to attend two Asian regional meetings on women's studies which I helped organize. In addition, the CWS director included me as a luncheon guest with the

other CWS professors prior to a seminar in which the Special Minister participated. As an advocate for women, for the expansion of Regional's CWS and for women's studies centers throughout the country, the Minister was held in high regard. I was deeply grateful for the opportunity to develop a broad-based understanding of women's studies and of the national government's role in promoting women's studies as background for my case study. This relationship may have influenced interactions with those whom I interviewed and observed in ways that I do not fully understand and cannot account for in my data collection methods.

My affiliation as a non-teaching social sciences faculty member at a neighboring private university provided an important contrast for me in understanding overall public university structure and the development of women's studies within a larger bureaucratic organizational structure. This affiliation with another institution may have discouraged those I interviewed at RU from offering comparisons between the two universities women's studies programs. Although their insights in this area would have been interesting, it was not essential to my question or data collection.

While analyzing and writing up the data, I struggled with writing "their story," that is, weaving together Thai colleagues' accounts of enacting women's studies, and interpreting their stories as my story from my location as a US feminist. I wanted to describe and analyze women's studies within the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) from the actors' perspectives in order to convey the "right" story, their story. They have become my colleagues and friends, I have great respect for their work and I resist analyzing their work from a Eurocentric point of view. I am, however, a North American woman and I must position this work within the English language literature of education and women's studies. In the end, I hope that I will have faithfully represented the work of Regional University professors, administrators and students

while acknowledging, at the same time, that this is my interpretation from within analytical frameworks I have selected, and from a cultural background and viewpoint that I cannot completely set aside.

My Choice of Methods

My questions are largely exploratory; therefore I utilized interpretive methodology and the case study approach to examine them (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982). I chose to look narrowly at a single case in order to understand 1) the development of one organization from several different angles over time, 2) the intersections of these angles of vision (perspectives) at particular historical moments, and 3) the interactions of one particular center with its environment.

This close-range study afforded me the opportunity to interact with and observe the individuals engaged in a particular set of women's studies activities over an extended period of time; to become acquainted with those who also were connected although not directly involved in this work--administrators, students, donors and representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs); and to observe the context in which these individuals were developing women's studies, paying particular attention to the process of how they organized this new enterprise of women's studies and to the content of what they were organizing.

The choice of a case study and my methods of data collection reflects the ways in which I conceptualize organizations: not as isolated, self-contained units but as collectivities of people engaged in interdependent relationships with other collectivities and material resources--the "environment." Weick (1979) argues for analyses of active "organizing" rather than "organizations," so that theories of organizations focus on the activities and constructions of people rather

a compelling alternative, I have chosen to use both terms: organizing to refer to the actions of people; and organizations in reference to the entities with which people identify and in which they work and enact their ideas and interests.

I selected Regional University as the site of the case study for several reasons. A regional university located in a province far from the nation's center in its capital city brings into sharp focus the challenges of establishing women's studies in a developing country. As a regional university charged with participation in national development activities, RU was an important site for observing where the university and the Center for Women's Studies come into conflict over priorities and approaches to development. The fact that Regional is part of the government system of public universities and that its employees are part of the Thai bureaucracy meant that I could research the development of women's studies in relation to a central ministry of education, an arrangement common to higher education throughout Asia and distinctive from autonomous US institutions. Finally, through colleagues' kind introductions, both the CWS director and the FSS dean invited me to conduct my research at the university in the Center and through the faculty, giving me official access to the research site.

Data Collection Methods

The period of data collection spanned three semesters of the Thai academic year which begins in May and ends in February. From March 1993 through July 1994 I collected data through individual interviews, observations and focus group interviews and by compiling documents from

the CWS and from five other centers at Regional University.[11]

Interviews

Through individual interviews, I set out to learn about the organization of the CWS, the people who organized and its location within the Faculty of Social Sciences and in the university. I also asked questions in order to compare the organization of the CWS with other centers. In each interview I inquired about the individual's autobiography, especially with regard to schooling. In so doing, I also learned about the individual's family, interests and relationships with and connections to other people in the university and beyond. In these first interviews I inquired about each person's relationship to and understanding of the CWS and then probed into different matters, depending on the information the subject had provided and her or his elected or appointed position in the university (see Appendix C for a list of sample questions for individual interviews). These probes led me in unexpected and sometimes surprising directions, all of which in some way enhanced my understanding of the setting. I tailored second, third and fourth interviews to explore specific issues that had come up in other conversations or through other methods of data collection.

Over the course of 16 months, I conducted interviews with 50 individuals and held numerous informal conversations with professors, administrators, CWS staff and others who had some relationship to the CWS. This included interviews with 32 professors from the faculties of social sciences, education, economics, humanities and nursing (see Appendix D for the distribution of professors interviewed according to faculty and CWS affiliation and Appendix E for a list of administrative

[11] Although I lived in Thailand from 1991 to 1994, due to my work schedule I traveled outside the country for a total of approximately five months per year in several-week chunks of time. Since I was away from Thailand even more during 1991 and 1992, I chose 1993-94 as the time of intensive data collection.

positions in the Faculty of Social Sciences and the ratio of professors to administrators). All but three of the academics I interviewed had pursued advanced degree study in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK or the US and spoke English fluently.[12] Our shared experiences with US higher education established a connection early in the interviews. A minority of professors I interviewed had doctoral degrees in their fields. That I was pursuing an advanced degree could have influenced interviews and conversations in this society that accords higher status to those with Ph.Ds. On the few occasions that I sensed that I was not being treated as an equal, however, it did not seem that I was being accorded higher status but lower. This made sense in my position as a (lower-status and younger) student meeting with (higher-status and older) professors. Reflecting on this experience also sent me to re-examine interactions and conversations within the hierarchical context of Thai relationships and to consider how hierarchy is part of the CWS's story, too.

I interviewed each of the seven current members of the CWS, four former members, the CWS secretary and all five CWS staff members. The CWS director granted me three lengthy interviews. In addition, my presence as a participant observer allowed me numerous informal conversations, especially with CWS faculty and the CWS secretary.

To understand the uniqueness of the CWS and the similarities of the Center to other institutes and centers in the university, I interviewed the directors of the other four centers in the Faculty of Social Sciences, the director of the women's center in the Faculty of Education, and the director and a staff member of a research institute affiliated with the FSS. I also wanted to understand how the CWS

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[12] Occasionally the direct quotes that I use in the text to support my assertions include non-standard grammatical constructions of second language speakers of English.

interacts with its environment, that is, with organizations outside the university such as donors and NGOs. Hence, I interviewed three foundation program officers and two colleagues in non-governmental organizations who had collaborated with the CWS director and professors on specific projects.

To understand the broader context of women's studies as it is developing in Thai universities, I interviewed the Assistant Permanent Secretary from the Ministry of University Affairs (who was also the rector of Regional University at the time the CWS was initiated), the Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office for the National Commission on Women's Affairs, and the Vice President of Academic Affairs for Regional University. I am most grateful to friends for making those interviews possible.

Primarily I conducted interviews on the campus of Regional University at the offices of the professors and administrators with whom I was speaking.[13] Most interviews lasted one-and-one-half to two hours. I interviewed staff members at their work sites or over lunch. In Bangkok I interviewed two distinguished feminist professors from Thammasat University who were pioneers of Thai women's studies. I offered bilingual interviewees the opportunity to be interviewed in Thai or in English since I worked closely with a very capable Thai research assistant. All professors and administrators but one selected English as the language of the interview. My research assistant and I interviewed all staff members in Thai.

[13] Many of the professors I interviewed also served as the elected or appointed administrator of a center, a program, a department, a faculty, or of the university.

Observations

Individual interviews provide an opportunity for in-depth, face-to-face conversation, but the ways in which groups of individuals interact with one another are better studied through observation. Observation was a particularly important method given that my question focuses on layers of the organization and the ways in which people organize women's studies. Rituals, routines--and breaks in routines--along with themes and issues are brought to the foreground through observations. While in interviews individuals described CWS activities from their personal perspectives, through observation I was able to gain insight into how they enacted women's studies. My observations included spending time "hanging around" the Center for Women's Studies, attending meetings and CWS-sponsored seminars at the university as well as seminars of the National Commission on Women's Affairs Bangkok, and observing in classrooms.

The director kindly afforded me the opportunity to read the CWS files containing correspondence, project proposals, reports and evaluations. This provided the perfect opportunity to hang around the Information Center (IC) while poring over the center's files. It also enabled me to observe routines among the office staff in the CWS office. In the center I observed the activities of the CWS staff and all who visited the library.

To capture the sense of who was using the Information Center and for what purposes, I left questionnaires in Thai and in English at the IC entrance for one week during the second half of the second semester. Having observed the rhythms of the first semester, I left the questionnaires at the time of the semester when the number of users was fairly typical and when the "regulars" were frequenting the IC. During

the week I chose, the Center was not inundated with students studying for exams, nor was it vacant because they were taking exams.

Over a three-day period, 29 women and seven men responded to the questionnaire. 15 were from the Faculty of Social Science; the others were from Humanities, Agriculture, Business, Economics and Fine Arts. The majority were third- and fourth- year students but professors and two guests from the community also used the Center.

Since project proposals and reports revealed that conducting seminars was a major thrust of the CWS, I attended all seminars that were offered during the period of my data collection in order to observe the rituals, attend to the content and become acquainted with the range of the CWS's activities. This enabled me to observe the organization of women's studies at close range. I was able to study the ways in which CWS staff worked together to organize the details of CWS activities to which representatives and program directors from foundations and non-governmental organizations supporting the CWS attended and participated in CWS activities.

Over the 16-month period I observed panel presentations and discussions in a one-day seminar celebrating International Women's Day; a two-day refresher seminar for women from villages and NGOs who had received paralegal training at previous sessions sponsored by the CWS; a two-day seminar to organize the regional component of a national network being established to monitor the responsiveness of politicians and political parties' to gender issues; and an afternoon seminar on economic development for women in the North. All seminars and special activities were held in the newly constructed Center for Women's Studies and were audiotaped.

To develop an understanding of the broader perspective of women's studies in Thailand, I attended four seminars in Bangkok sponsored by the National Commission on Women's Affairs. At three of these meetings,

professors from seven universities described the development of women's studies in their own institutions, presented papers on their action research plans to integrate women's studies into the curriculum and discussed their concerns and problems. The fourth seminar was a national meeting attended by government and NGO representatives from each province in celebration of 1992 as the "Year of the Thai Woman" in honor of HM Queen Sirikit's 60th birthday. Panelists presented papers on the position and conditions of women in Thai society.

Although I repeatedly requested to attend meetings of the CWS Committee, this never was possible. On one occasion the director invited me to a committee meeting but, just before the meeting began, her colleagues indicated that they deemed the agenda and anticipated discussion too sensitive for an outsider to hear. Attending a meeting of the CWS would have strengthened my analysis. This would have provided additional information on participation and interaction patterns among CWS members, the ways in which agenda items are discussed and collaboration occurs among professors, the CWS secretary,[14] and others. Rather, I had to rely on interview data which acquainted me with the content and frequency of meetings; CWS members willingly offered general observations about recent CWS meetings they had attended.

I wanted to become acquainted with the Regional Center for Women (RCW) in the Faculty of Education to understand how its organization parallels, meshes with and differs from the CWS; therefore I attended a sampling of its activities. I observed one organizational meeting of the RCW committee and two RCW-sponsored seminars. One of these was an RCW luncheon seminar arranged for Thai NGO leaders working with women heads of newly-formed NGOs in another Asian country. The RCW's largest

[14] The CWS secretary was a university graduate who served as administrative assistant to the CWS director.

project was encouraging and preparing women to run for office on the village council (*sapha tambol*), so observing a village training session would have afforded me an in-depth understanding of the RCW's work. I was interested primarily in the on-campus organization of the RCW, however, so the meetings I did attend provided the information directly related to my research.

Women's studies, by definition, involves learning (whether through research, lecture, discussion) and teaching. I observed teaching and learning take place in CWS-sponsored seminars for professors and for village leaders, but mention of curriculum development and "integration" for university students also repeatedly surfaced. Therefore, in order to understand classroom routines, to get a sense of classroom dynamics between the instructor and the students, and, secondarily, to observe the ways in which professors brought women's concerns into their teaching, I observed eight different professors from social sciences, economics and education teach a total of fourteen class sessions. I selected these professors on the basis of their diversity (they represented five departments and three different faculties, taught classes of different levels and size) and their shared interest in women's studies.

Attendance in the undergraduate classes varied in size from 8 to 120; 15 attended the master's level class in education (about half were absent that day due to the airing of the World Cup Soccer Finals the previous evening). With the exception of the education class, all the classes were held in the lecture halls and classrooms of the buildings of the social sciences' faculty.

Documentation

Documents offer a third source of data to verify information from interviews and observations. I also used them to spark interview

questions. As mentioned above, I took extensive notes from the CWS files. I was interested in correspondence between CWS professors, donors, and others; I also paid close attention to project proposals and reports to donors. In addition, I obtained copies of the Thai and English newsletters published by the CWS. The secretary of the RCW provided me with copies of all the proposals and reports from that center's files. I also collected materials provided for each seminar in the CWS, the RCW, and at the national level. Finally, I sought out materials from the university that would provide a framework for understanding the university structure and official rhetoric. These materials included the Seventh Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996) for Thailand, the university bulletins for undergraduates and graduates, and the course selection book for registration.

Focus Group Interviews

I chose to interview undergraduate university students in order to learn about the university and the gendered nature of activities on the campus. I also interviewed them in order to test out Thai university students' reported lack of interest in women's studies (Eckachai, 1990) and to get a sense of how students understood women's studies at Regional University. Later, as I learned from professors that students did not discuss or write much about women or gender issues in their classes, I expanded the focus group questions in order to hear students talk more broadly about their understandings of gender-related matters within the family and society-at-large.

I conducted eight student focus group interviews together with a Thai colleague; approximately four students attended each session. Informed by the work of Knodel, Sittitrai and Brown (1990) on conducting focus groups in Thailand, we interviewed 32 students from the Faculties

of Social Sciences, Humanities and Nursing. The interviews were conducted and transcribed in Thai, then translated into English.

I developed questions for the focus group interviews with colleagues from another tertiary level institution in the region and pilot tested the interview questions with a group of women students from their campus. My colleagues assisted me in formulating questions that would encourage students to discuss gender-related matters on the campus, within their families and in the broader society. (See Appendix F for sample questions from focus group interviews.)

We conducted the pilot interviews at another institution two weeks ahead of the focus group interviews scheduled at Regional University. The quality of the pilot group students' responses taught us how to alter the questions and the questioning strategy for the interviews at RU. The content of the students' responses--particularly their concern about prostitution among students--gave me time to reflect on the pilot interviews and on conversations with my colleagues and to inquire into this phenomenon. This experience and reflection prepared me so that I was better informed and not surprised when similar responses were given in focus group interviews at Regional University.

Knodel et al. (1990) recommend that a moderator--someone other than the researcher--be trained to conduct focus group interviews so that the researcher can attend to other aspects of the interview. For the RU focus groups, colleagues from another institution and my research assistant conducted focus group interviews as I listened, observed and monitored the audiotaping equipment. My research assistant also helped conduct interviews in Thai among CWS staff members. The interviewers often probed for information in ways that I probably would not have been able to, and, in most instances, the probes elicited detailed explanations.

Throughout the process of data collection I proceeded with preliminary analyses of the data. Having completed observations, individual and focus group interviews and having collected documentation related to the work of the CWS, I commenced a comprehensive analysis of the data. I describe that process in the next section.

Data Analysis

In this section I discuss the importance of triangulation to this study by providing examples of the availability of documentation (or lack of same) and particular discourse practices. Next I describe the dilemmas of selecting theoretical perspectives on organizations for the analysis and of incorporating western feminist critiques of organization theory. Finally, I describe conundrums of writing the analysis and the ways in which I resolved these puzzles.

Interpreting Data

Thorne (1993, p. 7) reminds us that "information gleaned from the fields of memory should be treated with skepticism since memories are partial, malleable, and shaped by later experiences as well as by conventions for remembering." Piecing together the history of the CWS and episodes of conflict when I was not present required gleaning information from the fields of memory of many different people. To substantiate information I tried to cross-check the data among several different sources. These attempts at triangulation in order to arrive at agreement on the "truth" were challenging, especially in interviews, given certain "conventions for remembering" and discourse patterns I discuss below.

One pattern is to attribute what may have been one's own idea and action to someone else's initiative. For example, interviewees

consistently reported that they did something because "someone asked me" rather than "I wanted to do it" or "I want people to know about that." This pattern of attributing one's own actions to someone else was particularly problematic in tracking down origins of the Center and ascertaining who and what were the catalysts for change. While CWS professors all pointed to the director, the director emphasized invitations from outside donors through the associate dean. The former associate dean, in turn, corroborated the director's story but the foundation had no archival records of such an invitation. Further communication with foundation program officers and the CWS director helped to put the puzzle pieces into place.

A second discourse practice I needed to keep in mind is the way in which one segues from a previous speaker. The phrase, "I agree with everything the previous speaker had to say, and..." can be followed by a statement that, in fact, contradicts what the previous speaker said. It was necessary, therefore, to listen for disagreement when the speakers said they agreed as well as to listen for points of agreement when speakers insisted that their positions were diametrically opposed.

In summary, I utilized the method of triangulation to verify data from one source with another. Where this was not possible due to non-existent documentation or differing reports, I note this in the text.

Organizational Perspectives

As I commenced analyzing the data, I grappled with what to call different ways of thinking about organizations: metaphors, frames, perspectives, paradigms, images, schemata or maps? Or should I try to find an entirely new term for the modes of thought that guided the analysis? This quandary was not simply word play but a deliberation on

the premises of using multiple theories of organizations for guiding an analysis.[15]

Authors who encourage the utilization of multiple ways of analyzing an organization do so from a position which argues that organizations are complex and ambiguous and that multiple ways of thinking about them expand our opportunities to see them as complex (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 1991; Martin, 1990; Morgan, 1987). In the end, I chose to discuss these not as competing paradigms or as graphic metaphors but as perspectives, a term that implies different angles of vision or ways of seeing. Each perspective serves as a lens that focuses on particular patterns and concepts but it does not simultaneously obscure others. Certain concepts and images recede into the background from one perspective while others are brought to the foreground.

After I had collected all the data, as I proceeded to analyze them together with the theoretical literature on organizations, I learned over and over that working with data within multiple theoretical perspectives (and within a single perspective) is an interactive and an iterative process. Considering the data from a particular theoretical perspective impelled me to re-think the data; the data, in turn, forced me to re-think the perspective. While a range of analytical perspectives is available, based on my interactions with the data and with the literature on organizations, I chose the structural, political and cultural perspectives as those that would have the greatest explanatory power for this study.

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[15] For a discussion of multiple theoretical viewpoints and comparisons see Birnbaum (1988) and Bolman and Deal (1991) on frames; Burrell and Morgan (1980) and Foster (1986) on paradigms; Martin (1991) on perspectives of cultures in organizations; and Morgan (1987) on metaphors.

Repeatedly I was compelled to decide how I would define a particular perspective for this study which was grounded in the organizational literature yet not bound by one particular author or framework. Historical and conceptual connections served as points of departure among certain authors and bodies of literature. One example of this is the view of the organization in relation to its environment from the structural perspective. Early writings about bureaucracies focused on the internal workings of the organization and disregarded the environment in which the bureaucracy existed (Morgan, 1987). Later work which discussed organizations as open systems emphasized the importance of the relationship between an organization and its environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Bolman and Deal (1991) merge the two distinct theoretical traditions into one "structural frame." The divide between internal workings of an organization and its external environment is historically important but one which I decided to bridge in one chapter on a structural perspective. I found the distinction to be useful in positioning the Center for Women's Studies both within the bureaucracy and in relation to its environment beyond the boundaries of the university.

I also struggled with the artificial lines drawn between perspectives and how to draw my lines as concepts from one perspective figured into the other perspectives. For example, a cultural perspective focuses on patterns and values of the broader culture and of the organizational culture. Cultural understandings are also important in understanding how episodes of conflict are played out and resolved from a political perspective. Cultural influence from the environment is an important consideration from a structural perspective. A second example is power and authority--key concepts in the political perspective but also important in understanding lines of decision-making within the structural perspective and the manipulation of symbols within

a cultural perspective. In the end I resolved this dilemma of artificial boundaries by maintaining the emphasis of a particular perspective but including reference to elements from other perspectives as seemed appropriate. These struggles are illustrative of the challenges of utilizing this relatively recent "multiple perspectives" approach to organizational analysis. While I regard this as a satisfactory resolution, I also regard it tentatively, one which I will continue to utilize and to challenge in future studies.

Feminist Critiques of Organizational Theory

Interwoven with data collection and while grappling with perspectives of organizations I also considered feminist critiques of organizations and organizational theory (Ferguson, 1984; Smircich, 1985; Acker, 1991/1993; Calás & Smircich, 1992/1993; Oseen, 1994; Sernak, 1993). From a feminist vantage point I conducted this study at a fascinating and confusing juncture in the brief history of organizational theory. Men have written most organizational theory to date and, feminists would argue (Calás & Smircich, 1989, 1992/1993; Smircich, 1985), this body of work is based on the assumptions of western men. Acker (1990/1993) further argues that bureaucracies are not the ungendered constructions we take them to be, but rather are predicated on the assumptions of men's work and men's jobs. Both the mainstream literature and the feminist critiques of male-dominated organizational theory literature, however, are written from a western point of view, with feminist critiques citing western feminist theories to critique the male-dominated western theories of organizations.

For example, Smircich (1985) turns to Chodorow's (1978) work on men's and women's systems of reality and Gilligan's (1982) work on moral decision-making among women and girls to push for a woman-centered

organization theory. In The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy, Ferguson (1984) also draws on Gilligan's work to analyze modern organizational life, In her concluding chapter, Ferguson (1984, p. 211) declares that "feminist organizations, even those that routinely encounter and work with bureaucracies, cannot be themselves bureaucratic or they cease to be truly feminist." This statement implies that a feminist organization cannot be hierarchical or bureaucratic, an assumption I discuss below and in Chapter Three.

In more recent work, Sernak (1993) constructs a feminist theory of organizations that brings together notions of power and caring, drawing largely from the work of Noddings (1984, 1992), a US feminist philosopher. Calás and Smircich (1992/1993) deconstruct the discourse of male-centric western organization theory and Oseen (1994) also reconceptualizes organizational theory from a feminist/postmodernist point of view. Oseen examines commonly held assumptions about the self, power, language, knowledge and reality--commonly held *western* assumptions. Yet such post-modern critiques are not readily embraced by Southeast Asian scholars. Indonesian feminist scholar Karim (1993, p. 107) argues that the western bias of such postmodern critiques makes Southeast Asian feminist scholars reluctant to move into post-structural language and definitions and to "accept yet another Eurocentric model of defining women with a new universalism based in a biased male psyche."

While I found merit in these western feminists' critiques of western organizational theories, I continually puzzled over their appropriateness at this historical moment for understanding the ways in which women and men were organizing women's studies in the Kingdom of Thailand. For example, based on the writings of Ferguson (1984), I expected to find some intentionally developed, less hierarchical, more egalitarian and more inclusive ways of organizing the staff of the CWS

at Regional University. Although I found evidence of a flatter structure with regard to the ways in which the CWS worked inclusively with village women, a top-down authority structure was in place within the CWS itself. The professors affiliated with the CWS were organizing the CWS according to the hierarchical patterns of Thai society and of the Thai bureaucracy, with some variations. A North American professor and long-time student of Thailand hypothesized that a major goal of the women academic-activists would be to gain equal status with men within the Thai hierarchy rather than challenging or dismantling that hierarchy. My data do not confirm or disconfirm the professor's hypothesis but no one I interviewed openly advocated alternative, lateral organizing as part of the women's studies professors' agenda.

On the other hand, although the feminist critiques of organizational theory represent western critiques, some of their stances--such as advocating non-hierarchical modes of organizing--are not uniquely western or feminist. Feminists in Seoul and Manila are working with colleagues to construct collaborative, non-hierarchical organizations as they create women's studies in their own national contexts. At a Korean university, while professors acknowledged that the success of women's studies within the university was due to initiative and support from the top (the president), simultaneously they were working with colleagues from other institutions to develop alternative, non-hierarchical organizations. Thus, the organizational theory critiques of western feminist authors and conversations with these Asian feminists prodded me to think more deeply about hierarchies and feminisms and whether or not they are antithetical, as Ferguson (1984) claims. This is a puzzle over which I deliberate each time I return to the data and to my analysis.

I continued to wrestle with these cross-currents of organizing, organizational theories and women's/feminist issues for the duration of

data collection and throughout data analysis. In the end, I have drawn from the mainstream or, as Aaron and Walby (1991) label it, the male-stream base of organizational theories and from feminist contributions to organizational theories, bearing in mind the western biases of both.

Writing Dilemmas

Among the challenges I faced in writing up the data were which terms to select in writing about the actors and how to discuss the intersection of gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Below I discuss how I dealt with these questions.

One dilemma I faced was how to describe the actors in the study. Professors engaged in women's studies activities at Regional University did not call themselves women's studies professors and they did not teach women's studies courses. In most instances I refer to them as "CWS professors" or professors affiliated with the CWS (or the Regional Center for Women) so as to not evoke images of full-time or even adjunct professors of women's studies courses. This also underscores the fact that CWS professors at RU see themselves as professors of a particular discipline who are committed to including women's issues in their university work.

I faced a second challenge in writing about administrators. Department chairs, associate deans and even the Vice President for Academic Affairs also teach and are called "professor." Some administrators are elected (selected through a nomination and voting process); others, such as assistant and associate deans, are appointed. Program and center heads take on the role of program administrators when they start programs and are officially recognized by the faculty dean. In view of these multiple identities, I have chosen to refer to department chairs, deans and other appointed and elected officials up to

rector as administrators. In Chapter Four I refer to the elected dean, associate dean, and assistant deans as "the dean" in an attempt to protect identities and respect confidentiality around sensitive data.

A third naming puzzle was writing about what I meant by students. When I asked a CWS committee member in the earliest stage of my research about which women's studies courses the CWS offered, she answered, "we have a lot of training courses but we don't give certificates or diplomas." I was asking about university courses offered to undergraduate and graduate students. Her response startled me and compelled me to redefine the "student" in the Regional University context of women's studies. I was probing to understand why CWS professors were not deliberating on how to introduce women's contributions and concerns into the university undergraduate and graduate curricula. The CWS professor appeared puzzled that I seemed to be unaware that the CWS professors, in fact, were teaching women's studies at the university. The students, however, did not stay in dormitories for a semester. The "grass roots women," as RU professors respectfully called them, stayed at the YMCA for the duration of their one- or two-week courses. Those attending seminars on women and research stayed at a hotel or at home. I usually refer to the students who attended the shorter seminars as seminar participants or grass roots women; in one or two instances I call them students to be faithful to the fuzzy distinction. I call university students just that, undergraduate and graduate students. As Thorne (1993, p. 8) notes about such conundrums, "Although I have found no tidy solutions, I have tried to be thoughtful about such choices."

A second dilemma I faced was how to include other categories of diversity in this study while giving primary attention to gender. Scholars are developing dynamic ways of thinking about relationships among gender, age, class, race, ethnicity, and sexuality (Collins, 1991;

Price, 1995). In a cross-national discussion such as this, nationality, religious affiliation and positioning with the global political economy are also important. Social location within these categories implies different access to power for social actors. I discuss the intersections of these socially constructed categories in a limited way but not in a manner that reflects my awareness of their inseparability or of the myriad ways in which they influence the organization of women's studies at Regional University. While I focus on gender in this study, in future research I plan to attend to the intersections of these socially constructed categories and their implications for organizations and organizing.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter Two describes the establishment and development of the Center for Women's Studies, the structure of the Center within the university structure and the CWS's goals and activities from 1986 to 1994.

Chapter Three examines the CWS from a structural perspective on organizations. I analyze the Center in its environment, that is, the Thai bureaucracy and other organizations on which it is dependent for resources. I also discuss the Center's position at the margins of the university structure and its tighter coupling with the center as it changed status from a program to an official department within the Faculty of Social Sciences. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of a second women's center within the university which questions the notion of the CWS as "the center" and points to a more complex organization of women's studies at Regional University.

Chapter Four examines the CWS from a political perspective. I examine two cases in which the CWS and the FSS administration are pitted

against each other over competing ideas about the governance of the CWS and conceptualizing women's issues.

In Chapter Five I examine the content and organization of the work of the CWS from a cultural perspective. First I consider the organizational culture of the CWS and the ways in which professors affiliated with the CWS define and organize women's studies. Next I turn to the university undergraduate students' conversations about gender relations and consider what professors' choices about organizing women's studies imply for the development of women's studies in the university. Finally I expand the discussion to the broader cultural margins and to the enterprise of women's studies at RU that extends beyond the CWS.

In Chapter Six I briefly discuss the strengths and challenges of examining the data from three perspectives on organizations. I examine the dilemmas and contradictions of engaging in women's studies which emerge from utilizing this multiple-perspective approach and I close by suggesting some implications of the study for women's studies internationally.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SETTING AND THE CENTER: A DESCRIPTION OF REGIONAL UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR WOMEN'S STUDIES

Professor Rita Gallin, Director of the Women and International Development Center at Michigan State University raised one of the early questions that led me to do this study. "How does a women's studies center in Southeast Asia get started?" she asked. "We don't know much about that. Is it from two women talking under the bathroom stall--or *what*?"

Since, as Professor Gallin observed, we *don't* know much about organizing a women's studies center in Southeast Asia, in this chapter I provide a rich description of the organization of Regional University's Center for Women's Studies. I have chosen which events and details to recount, therefore this chapter marks the beginning of my interpretation of the data. By design, however, the chapter is long on description and short on analysis, in order to set the stage for in-depth analysis from three different perspectives in Chapters Three, Four and Five.

I begin by locating Regional University within the context of Thai higher education and the Center within the organizational structure of the university. A narrative follows of how the Program for Women's Studies (PWS) came into being at Regional University in Thailand 1986, moved into its own new building in 1992 and became an official center with the status of a university department in 1993. In the second half of the chapter I describe the goals and activities of professors and staff affiliated with the Center for Women's Studies.

Thai Higher Education

A military academy, a hospital *cum* medical school, and the Royal Page School were the first institutions of Thai higher education; all were located in Bangkok (Bhamarapravati, 1990; Wyatt, 1969;). In 1927 the Royal Page School became Chulalongkorn University and among its first students were seven women studying both the arts and sciences (Kabilsingh, 1991). This established an important precedent for women in Thai higher education.[16] Bhamarapravati (1990) asserts that these institutions were not a "seat of learning, research, and scholarly pursuit as in the universities of the west" (p. 245); rather, their mission was to prepare leaders for the country and for the labor force, specifically, the civil service.

Between 1958-1970 the public university system expanded tremendously, and in 1967 the first regional university in a province outside of Bangkok was established. Subsequent to 1970 the university system has expanded further, gradually introducing Ph.D. and master's degree programs; establishing two open universities with enrollments exceeding 200,000 students to meet student demands for greater access to higher education; and, in 1969, adopting legislation which paved the way for the establishment of private universities. In 1994 Thailand had nine public regional universities in outlying provinces and twelve in Bangkok, in addition to twenty-five private institutions.

Undergraduate students are admitted to public "selective" universities, such as Bangkok's Chulalongkorn and this study's "Regional University," on the basis of qualifying grades on the National Entrance Examination. This allows students around the country to apply to attend any faculty in any selective university anywhere in the country. In addition to the national exam, regional universities offer the Regional

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[16]It is important to note that, although Thailand has secondary schools for young women only, there are no all-women's colleges or universities.

Quota Entrance Examination which has different admissions standards. This enables students from outlying provinces to be admitted to the university more easily. (Fifty per cent of the admissions quota is reserved for students from high schools in the region.)

While there is no quota for women and men students, there appears to be relative parity in numbers of men and women students. Statistics from 1984 indicate that more women take the entrance examination than men; almost equal numbers of men and women are admitted and more women receive BA degrees but more men receive MA degrees and Ph.D's (Thailand Development Research Institute, 1988). The numbers of men and women professors also suggest parity among men and women instructors but men administrators predominate at various levels of the system.

The Seventh Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996) identifies four areas to be developed in Thai higher education: equity, excellence, efficiency and internationalization. These priorities acknowledge increased responsibilities for regional universities and promote greater autonomy in decision-making for public universities through the decentralization. To "meet the changing demands of society" and to "guide these changes in the right direction," the document cites these four areas as most important to higher education: teaching, research, academic services and the preservation of Thai art and culture (Ministry of University Affairs, 1992b, pp. 18-21).

Regional universities have a particular mission in Thailand. The Assistant Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of University Affairs (MoUA) elaborated on these objectives in this way:

> One thing that stands out very clearly is the role for regional development...if you take all the provincial universities, all the aspects of mission will be tied up with regional development. For example, with selection of students, 50% of the seats will be provided for the high school students in the region....The research activity will be focused on the problems of the region....The extension services

> of each of the universities will be targeted to the groups in the region.
>
> With the Seventh National Plan, one thing that we stated quite clearly is the internationalization of the higher education of this country--and we have seen a lot of activities going on between regional universities and overseas universities ....This is the second wave of what I would call the internationalization and the regionalization of the regional universities.

The MoUA defines equity as equalizing educational opportunities between the Bangkok center and the outlying regions of the country. Gender equity and categories of race, language and religion are not included in the definition of equity. Regional University is one institution in an outlying province responsible for bringing about this equity.

Regional University

A uniformed guard seated in a small open-air guardhouse watches those who pass the imposing brass bas-relief university emblem to enter the grounds of Regional University. Following the straight, paved road onto Regional's campus, one passes a long stretch of green grass and blooming flowers, then comes face-to-face with a miniature white house on a post--a spirit house--trimmed with dozens of flower necklace-length garlands placed there to invoke blessings or to give thanks for such things as passing a course examination. The regal Thai-style building behind the spirit house is the *sala* where the King waits once a year prior to personally handing diplomas to each Regional University graduate. Following intersecting roads onto the central campus, one winds past a grassy soccer field, tall palm trees and bougainvillea bushes, hundreds of motorcycles, the single story campus post office, and buildings of various shapes and sizes. These include six-story women's and men's dormitories, faculty buildings, the computer center,

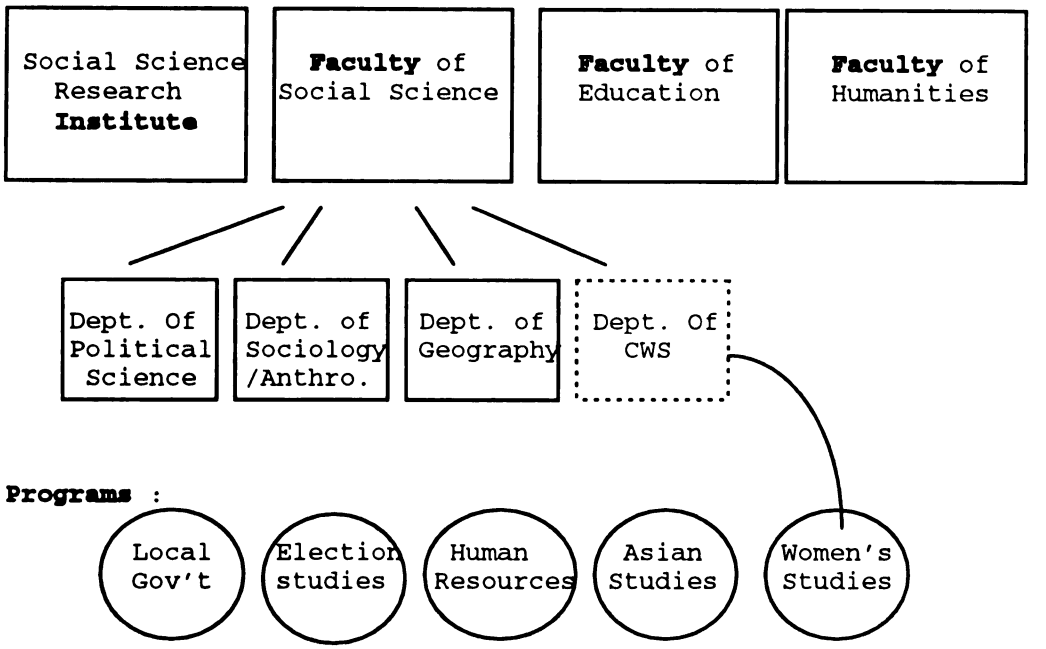
the five-story library and, across from the library, the Center for Women's Studies.

Regional University was among the first of the regional selective universities established under national decree with the express purpose and distinctive mission of contributing to "development" of regions of the country outside of the capital. Currently one of nine regional universities, its budget is among the largest of the nine. Proportionately, however, RU and all other regional universities are allocated a small share of resources from the national higher education budget.[17]

Faculties of Social Sciences are found in all the selective universities in Thailand, but the departments may vary. The social sciences at Regional University consist of: Political Science, which includes Law, International Relations and Government; Geography; and Sociology/Anthropology, which includes Social Work (see Figure A). Historically, studying political science in Thailand was preparation for civil service. Still today, its chief mission is not to prepare budding political analysts but rather aspiring bureaucrats who hope to find a career in the Ministry of Interior. Social Sciences at Regional do not include Economics or Business Administration; in 1992-93 the Ministry of University Affairs approved the request of both departments to be upgraded to faculties.

[17]The Seventh Plan for Higher Education indicates that the four selective universities in metropolitan Bangkok receive 43.63% of the total higher education budget. The remaining 17 universities--selective, open and technical universities--receive 53.71%. The remaining 2.66% is allocated for administrative costs of the MoUA.

Figure 1: Structural Organization of Regional University



As described above, a faculty consists of several departments; it is the equivalent of a college within the US university. In addition to its three departments, Regional's Faculty of Social Sciences has five autonomous programs, also called centers, which individuals or small groups of professors have established to address specific concerns. These include programs or centers for "Election Studies," "Asian Studies" and "Women's Studies." Each of these receives nearly all funding from sources outside the university, most commonly from North American, European or Japanese foundations or from ministries of the Thai government other than the MoUA. If funding ends or the issue for which the center has opened is considered solved, the program closes. If the program continues to receive funding, the appointed program director stays on indefinitely as head of the program and takes primary

responsibility for writing proposals, attracting funding and charting the direction of the center.

Centers have no full-time appointed professors but rely on the volunteer efforts of interested professors to carry out programs and serve on center policy-making committees. The CWS, then, has no professors of women's studies with full-time or joint appointments. Rather it has professors of specific disciplines who accept the invitation to affiliate with the Center for Women's Studies on a volunteer basis. Although center directors also lack full-time appointments, a committee and advisory board meet periodically with center directors to offer advice on programmatic activity. In most of these autonomous programs, the dean of the faculty or one of his or her associates sits on the advisory board and/or working committee. This practice builds in a formal connection between the faculty administration and any given program.

Professors are expected to teach two courses per semester although elected department heads and faculty administrators may have reduced workloads. In reality, a professor's load varies from one to five courses per semester, depending on student demand and other factors. Research, writing and academic service are all considered volunteer work and, together with committee work, may constitute the balance of an academic's work load. While non-teaching activities count toward merit pay raises and promotions, they are neither required nor are they weighted with specific percentages as part of one's workload.

The Center for Women's Studies

The 1970s in Thailand was a period of increased popular political activity in Thailand, a decade in which the Thai Communist party rose and fell and students and farmers worked and demonstrated together

against repressive military rule and foreign (US) influence. During this period a number of foreign donor agencies left or were asked to leave the country. A coup d'etat in 1976 returned a repressive military government to power and the 1980s ushered in a period of decreased popular political activity. The decade of the 1980s was also a period when a "critical mass" of Thai academics returned to Thailand having completed master's degrees and Ph.Ds in Australian, European and North American universities. These new or early career professors returned to Thailand having developed competencies in conducting research, writing proposals, and communicating fluently in English and other European languages. Concurrently, international donor agencies such as the Ford Foundation, Asia Foundation, and IDRC of Canada funded Thai development projects. CWS professors described these conditions as ripe for beginning a women's studies center in Thailand.

Emerging Interests in Women's Studies

Chamberlain and Howe (1995) link the development of women's studies in Asia to the development of Women's Studies in the US and Europe. Given that most CWS professors obtained advanced degrees from North American and European universities, it would be naive to ignore influences of western scholarship on higher education in Thailand. Indeed, two professors affiliated with the Center for Women's Studies indicated that attention to women's issues in their graduate studies, one in the US and one in Europe, was important in developing their understanding of gender issues. Still another cited an interplay between early activist work on behalf of Thai women along with US graduate-level comparative studies in women's rights as forces that influenced her commitment to equity for women. This notion of interplay, or of a dynamic construction between Thai understandings and

western ideas of women's rights, is a useful way of characterizing what went on in those early years for the professors and what is still going on in 1995; I expand on this in Chapters Five and Six.

Despite this interplay, most Thai professors engaged in women's studies in Thailand cited their experiences within the Thai political, cultural and historical contexts as critical to the development of their commitment to women's studies. In particular, the anti-military and anti-foreign pro-democracy movement of the early 1970s sparked the interest of many in matters of gender equity and the contributions of women to Thai society. I discuss the impact of this period on CWS professors again in Chapter Five.

Early work related to women's issues in Regional University's Faculty of Social Sciences was carried out by individual professors who explored the concerns related to women on their own or with one other person and shared this information informally with colleagues. For example, a researcher in agricultural economics stumbled onto the pivotal position of a rural woman's labor in the family work unit when doing her research among farming families. It became apparent to her, she noted, that the "male head of the household," the one whom the researcher had been trained to interview, "didn't know all about agriculture." A. Kanchanaa said,

> We wanted to know what kind of fertilizer they used for those particular crops. [The husband] was not sure [how] to answer. He had to shout for his wife and ask her, "What kind of fertilizer do we use? When do we apply the fertilizer? How much...?" That caught my attention first. I was doing something wrong seeking information; I was overlooking woman's role. From then on I was aware of the woman's role.

Professor of anthropology, A. Prasit told how, in doing research on rural Thai people's belief systems, he sought to document animist beliefs to challenge the dominant voices in mainstream academic writing

of the 1970s which say that Thailand is a "pure Buddhist society." Through this research, A. Prasit "came across the idea of matrilineal social structure in Northern Thai society" and "the reality that women in the rural area work as hard as men and they speak their opinion." In later research on decision-making in the rural area at the household level, he noted that the prevailing paradigm at that time pointed to men as the household decision-makers. A. Prasit and law professor A. Radida found in their collaborative research that, whether considering household finances, the health of family members, or decisions about children's education, men and women shared decision-making responsibilities.

Law professor A. Kamol spoke of reading a book on women and society written by A. Radida, and he noted that he had learned much from her about women's issues through their informal discussions as members of the same small faculty. These early learnings, conversations, collegial relationships and friendships catalyzed the foundation of the core working group of the Center for Women's Studies.

The Advent of the Program for Women's Studies

Those involved with establishing the Program for Women's Studies spoke of its origins in different ways. Within the Thai cultural context many professors with whom I spoke who were involved in a university program spoke of "being asked by someone to do something," rather than initiating or seeking out opportunities on their own. Since conversations about the earliest beginnings of the CWS also proceeded in this way, I discuss the different versions of the Center's origins.

Most professors credited A. Radida, the Center's director, with starting the program. Colleagues who worked closely with A. Radida in the earliest days of the Center acknowledged her central role:

> We got together--five or six of us at the beginning-- and we pushed this. Radida--she's a very strong person, you know, she has a very strong personality. She went to talk to the dean and gave him the idea that we should have this project.
>
> There were a few faculty members who were interested in women's studies, but the real initiative was from A. Radida, actually. I don't think anyone else can claim that they had a part in establishing the Program for Women's Studies.

A. Radida herself and the associate dean for academics at that time gave the credit for the idea to the foundations that funded the earliest projects and to the associate dean. A. Radida recalled that since she had been involved in women's issues for some time, FSS administrators "saw the prospect of bringing in funding for research," so they approached her and offered her the opportunity to set up a program. The professor who served as associate dean in 1986 noted:

> I just gave her the idea, that's all, and then she ran with it. She's a very tough woman as you know. She wanted to be by herself and run things by herself. My part was to give her an idea--and she got it.

Her colleagues in the Department of Political Science were well aware of A. Radida's activism on behalf of the legal rights of low-income people and her views on equality between men and women. The associate dean, with whom she had worked closely when she was Political Science Department Chair and on a research project, also knew A. Radida's commitment well. She had worked actively to promote the status of women in Thailand since the 1960s, when, as an undergraduate law student, she had found disparities in the ways in which Thai law treats men and women. In 1974, A. Radida completed a master's thesis. In her thesis she compared Thai and US inheritance and property laws and their implications for women at an Ivy League university in the US. Prior to the completion of this degree Radida returned to Regional University to teach undergraduate law classes in the Department of Political Science.

In the mid-1980s, A. Radida's interest in equity issues meshed with the newly-articulated mission of donor agencies. Following the 1985 Nairobi UN World Conference on Women, the Ford Foundation expressed its commitment to funding initiatives focused on women in a monograph entitled Created Equal; a document that Foundation staff shared with Thai colleagues (M. Zurbuchen, personal communication, September 25, 1995). The foundation also announced a grant to the Social Science Association of Thailand to encourage the development of institutional capacities in women's studies (G. Suwannarat, personal communication, August 2, 1995).

A. Radida and her colleagues submitted a proposal to the Ford Foundation for funding to begin the Program for Women's Studies. (They sent a second proposal to the Asia Foundation, which, together with Ford, was the earliest funder of the PWS.) A. Radida had become acquainted with the Representative of the Ford Foundation's regional office in Jakarta who expressed an interest on behalf of the foundation in supporting on-going program development as well as special projects of the proposed PWS. With the promise of funding from these foundations and with the PWS proposal's authors' consent to RU officials request not to pursue women's studies curriculum development, the university and the Faculty of Social Sciences approved the establishment of the PWS and provided office space and basic office furniture. In 1986 the Program for Women's Studies of Regional University was launched.

Not every professor who had an important idea and wanted to establish a program could simply start a center. Another CWS professor noted that he had proposed an idea for a different kind of center but was not able to find financial support for the idea. Whether the idea to develop the PWS came from the associate dean, from an announcement of Ford Foundation funding, from A. Radida herself or from all of these factors combined, each was an important ingredient that led to the

development of the Program for Women's Studies. The interest and objectives of the donors, combined with willing personnel who will write proposals requesting financial support from outside and in-kind support from within, are critical factors in starting a program or a center in the university. A. Radida was able to secure that kind of support from the dean, her colleagues, the university, and outside donors so that within the first two years the center had sponsored two training programs; collected hundreds of articles, books and magazines for the Information Center; and published several newsletters in English and in Thai. The Program for Women's Studies of Regional University was off and running.

Organizational Structure and Governance of the CWS

As a requisite of setting up the program, Professor Radida insisted that she be allowed to choose the committee members with whom she would work.

> So I had my condition, you know, of setting up the program... that I have my own committee members of my choice. [The associate dean] said that was fine, he didn't want to bother with that. As long as I would be able to deal with all other regulations and financial problems, I would be free, independent...it means [I am] on [my] own actually. There are good, the positive and the negative sides of that. If you are able to bring in enough funding you are very independent and no one will interfere. But once you are in trouble, there is no one to offer to be at your assistance.

Prominent members of the community and university administrators serve on the advisory boards and committees of other autonomous programs but A. Radida wanted to select only those with an understanding of and a commitment to women's issues. She did not select the dean, an associate dean or a department chair to serve as her co-workers and advisors at the Center for Women's Studies. Rather, in consultation with

similarly-minded professors, she identified other professors in the Faculty who were willing to serve on the working committee and advisory board of the proposed Program for Women's Studies. Four professors who were invited to become part of this group have continued working with the center throughout its eight-year history. Four others worked with the committee for different periods of time and then resigned. (While the terms "program" and "center" are used interchangeably for all autonomous programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences, hereafter I refer to the PWS as the Center for Women's Studies, unless I am specifically referring to the work of the center in 1986-87 when it was introduced as a program.)

When the Center first opened with minimal staff support, colleagues served in these roles, providing services such as secretarial work for the center and A. Radida, translating proposals and assisting with administrative work for conferences. The eventual funding of proposals allowed for the hiring of a secretary (administrative assistant) for the Center and, later, for an accountant, a librarian, and a research assistant. The Faculty of Social Sciences provided a custodian to perform janitorial work in the Center.

Construction of the CWS Building

In 1990 women's organizations in Norway had come together to raise funds for women in the Third World. Members of the Norwegian Association of Women Jurists came to Thailand to collect information, evaluate projects that their government had supported, and select programs that they could support and that would be coordinated in the Third World. The association representatives also served as board members for a huge television fund-raising campaign, "TV Campaign '89: Women in the Third World," which consolidated more than forty Norwegian

women's organizations. In 1989, this same group, together with children all over Norway, campaigned for funds to help women in the Third World. They brought Radida and her husband to Norway and urged her to submit a proposal that would include a request for office space because the office space they occupied in the Faculty of Social Sciences was not large. With her colleagues, Radida prepared a proposal for the building, the information center, research--and, as she notes, they "got it all."

Government architects who were friends of A. Radida (and had designed her home) designed the CWS building according to the needs of the program and A. Radida's tastes. The spacious, two-story building, patterned after Thai-style architecture, is painted white and trimmed in teak. Door-sized windows allow a maximum amount of light and tropical breezes to flood the building. The building is located directly across from the main library of the university, not far from the Faculty of Social Sciences classroom and office buildings on the campus. The distinctive style of the building--the teak trim, balcony and tall window openings--sets the Center for Women's Studies apart from the concrete block, box-style classroom and office buildings on the campus.

By February 1992, the building was completed, and it was dedicated in a ceremony on February 29, 1992, that was presided over by the ambassador of Norway to Thailand and attended by an array of officials and guests. One professor of the Women's Studies Committee observed that with the erection of the building, faculty administrators seemed to begin to take notice of the kind of work the program was doing, work in which international agencies were heavily investing. She identified the construction of the Center for Women's Studies building as a turning point in raising awareness among faculty and department administrators about women's issues.

> We're educating them, we're pushing them from the bottom up, not the top down, sort of pushing

> our way up. If you ask them [about women's studies], it will make them more interested in our work. They don't understand the kind of work we are doing now. They see we get a lot of money from international agencies and put up this building--I think they began to take notice then...not before that.

The Women's Studies Newsletter described the new building in symbolic terms as standing for the equality of women. It is indeed unique; no other academic Center for Women's Studies in Thailand has its own building. A. Radida recognizes its uniqueness and, given her account that she never solicited funds for the building but that the donors came to her, she maintains that "luck" played an important part in its construction on Regional University's campus.

The building enhances the capability of the WS program to host seminars for and about women and also provides space for lectures on other topics. It is a visible symbol of women's studies on the Regional campus, however women's studies is defined. The Information Center is a comfortable, quiet place to work where resources on women's issues are available for students, faculty and international scholars' use and loan. CWS committee member A. Prasit meets with his two general anthropology classes either in the upstairs seminar room or the small downstairs meeting room. On occasion A. Radida holds her law class here. Training courses, seminars and workshops are convened in the large upstairs seminar room. During all-day seminars, lunch is served either out-of-doors under a canvas pavilion tent or inside, upstairs in the large hall/entrance way outside the seminar room.

Community activists also meet here in the seminar room, and, occasionally, local artisans and farmers are invited to sell their wares, such as painted fans and umbrellas, textiles, fruit and honey, on woven mats they spread out in front of CWS building.

Plans to Upgrade the Program to a Department

In the early 1990s, A. Radida began to prepare for the process that would lead to the upgrading of the Program for Women's Studies from an autonomous and completely externally-funded program to an entity with the status of a department, eligible for government funding alongside other departments in the faculty. It appears that this commitment to upgrade the program set a precedent in the university and in the country. No other autonomous programs at the university had ever requested this nor had any other women's studies programs at other universities attempted such a move. Consequently, no written guidelines existed to indicate how to proceed with the process. A. Radida contacted different officials to discover what documentation was needed and how to proceed. After she had prepared the 37-page proposal in December 1992 A. Radida submitted the request to the MoUA for final action. The Advisory Commission of the MoUA which approves new curricula and new organizational units within the university structure asked A. Radida to appear before them to answer questions about the proposal. Although she flew to Bangkok for the meeting, the committee approved the proposal without requiring A. Radida even to enter the meeting room. A high-ranking government official on the MoUA commission strongly advocated the upgrade and explained the necessary information to the other committee members. They agreed to it with little discussion. The Assistant Permanent Secretary recalls,

> When we talked about gender studies, [MoUA commission members] looked at it as some academic activities that we should support....everyone agreed that we should set up a center at RU. There was discussion in terms of what [the CWS] has done in the past. Radida and her colleagues prepared documents of what they have done. They have done many, many activities in the past and I think *that* convinced the committee that they are strong enough to carry on the project of the Center. I

> don't remember anyone opposed to it; that was very good.

In July 1993 HM King Bhumibol Adulyadej signed the action into the Royal Gazette, officially recognizing the Center for Women's Studies as a unit with departmental status in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Regional University.

Just prior to notification of the officially upgraded status of the Center within the university bureaucracy, the dean and an associate dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences initiated a proposal to alter the working arrangements and decision-making structure of the Center. The final written arrangement was issued by the office of the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs during the final weeks of my data collection in July 1994. According to this document, although the working organizational arrangement of the Center had not been changed for the short-term, the process for selecting the director would be changed, thereby sowing seeds of change for the future administration and direction of the Center for Women's Studies. I discuss this in greater detail in Chapter Four.

Of the other centers in the Faculty of Social Sciences at Regional, at least one had applied unsuccessfully to elevate its status to that of a department; the other centers had chosen not to apply for this. The CWS was unique in its ability to capitalize on its work and relationships to continue to develop the work of the Center.

Content: The Goals and Activities of the Center for Women's Studies

> In the case of developing countries particularly, intervention for women's equality and development....always has to contain a central core of educational information gathering, communication and training activities....Educational institutions possess some of the necessary skills, infrastructural support and above all the human resources to play this role. (Mazumdar, 1991, p. 45).

The goals set by CWS professors in 1986 illustrate what Mazumdar calls the "central core" of intervention for women's equality and development: information gathering, communication and training activities. In the first project proposal A. Radida and her colleagues prepared to initiate a Program for Women's Studies, they wrote that "women have a significant role in the development process" and they underscored the need to promote "an understanding of women's hidden contribution to society in all countries and in a historical perspective." CWS professors established women's needs and participation in economic and social development as priorities of the center. They also cited the need for a theoretical framework that would both "analyze the root causes" of the exploitation of women and critique development strategies from the point of view of their effects on women. The proposal's authors believed that disseminating information on women's issues was the university's responsibility. With their proposal to establish the PWS within the university, information gathering and communication or, in their words, information dissemination, figured prominently in their vision for the program. They chose to emphasize the "documentation and analysis of women's organizations and struggles against their subordination, particularly in developing countries."

To operationalize these plans, the PWS organizers listed the following objectives in their program brochure:

- To encourage studies, research and collection of information relating to women's issues.
- To set up a source of data and information about women.
- To disseminate and create an academic exchange on women's problems.
- To create a liaison with other governmental and non-governmental organizations in working towards the development of women.

Implicit in the objectives, according to the authors, was the need for a "critical approach towards existing social science theories with a view

to identifying and overcoming their inherent androcentric and Eurocentric biases." They also were interested in searching for "a methodology with which practice and theory, teaching and research could be integrated." CWS professors developed the following five strategies to meet these objectives:

- A curriculum for women's studies will be arranged.
- Studies and research into women's problems will be pursued.
- A center of information and documentary work relating to women, especially those in (this region), will be set up.
- Information and research findings will be disseminated by various means, such as provision of training, dissemination of documents and articles, publicity through the mass media, exhibitions and other media.
- A forum for academic exchanges of view between academicians and other organizations will be created in the forms of a symposium, discussion and lecture.

In accord with the center's objectives and strategies stated above, the work of the Center for Women's Studies encompasses two broad activities: 1) information gathering and dissemination and 2) collaboration and networking.[18] Although the first strategy was to "arrange a curriculum for women's studies," A. Radida indicated that this strategy was relegated to last place when university officials considering the proposal objected to the expense of providing instructors to teach courses for a new curriculum. CWS professors had not yet developed a women's curriculum by the end of my data collection in July 1994; rather, professors integrated topics about women into class lectures on an ad hoc basis.

[18]Over the course of the data collection period, the center reported the following products of its work: symposia (2) workshops (5); training courses (7); research projects (5); lectures/seminars (12); panel/group discussions (6); video presentations/ discussions (5); exhibitions (3); publications (13); newsletters; action projects (1).

In addition to enacting formally stated goals, the Center devotes time and energy to other activities that are not formally stated in the goals. These include securing funding for the work and projects of the center (primarily the work of the director) and encouraging attention to and providing a venue for meetings that promote other progressive causes.

Information Gathering and Dissemination

The centerpiece of the CWS's activities is gathering and disseminating information. This consists of research, seminars, lectures, training sessions, panel discussions, publishing monographs and newsletters and collecting materials for loan through the Information Center.

Research

CWS professors have studied the impact of deforestation and reforestation programs on household survival strategies and the work of ethnic minority women; statutory laws, customary laws and village practices; gender and access to justice; and the impact of social, cultural, economic and political changes upon children and youth in rural schools of the region.

A. Malee describes the latter project:

> [I am conducting the research] with the help of a research assistant and...[one] teacher. The first activities were real research; the second was launching a campaign on inculcating the value of gender equality among primary school pupils and the prevention of child prostitution by giving them education. My research assistant was assessing the impact of the extension of compulsory education to nine years [to see] whether it could help prevent or stop child prostitution.

To reach the village where they conducted the study, A. Malee and the research assistants traveled by bus to a province three hours away, walked around in the hot sun for hours and then returned by bus to the university. A. Malee admitted that this was a physically demanding study but that she was pleased with the outcome. A Scandinavian NGO funded the research but it was unclear whether or not the results would be published and to what extent they would be shared. The principal investigator of some research projects prepare reports that are marketed through the CWS, but A. Malee worried that preparing such a publication would announce that she was trying to promote herself or her own career.

Information Center

The Information Center was part of the original PWS proposal and, in its first years (1986-1991), was housed in the one-room office allotted by the Faculty of Social Science to the Program for Women's Studies. The library moved to the first (ground) floor of the Center for Women's Studies when the CWS building opened in 1992. As one enters the building, staff offices are on the left and the Information Center is on the right. Outside the large L-shaped room of the IC, a bulletin board to the right of the entrance displays a variety of information: posters denouncing the trafficking and trickery of Thai women into prostitution, announcements of upcoming exhibitions or concerts of Thai art and music, flyers advertising the latest publications of the Center for Women's Studies, even a notice that the Center director is selling her car.

Inside the entrance on the right, Information Center staff are available behind the counter to sign out materials and answer questions. To the left is an office with three desks that CWS committee members use as office space. (These professors also maintain the office space

assigned by their respective departments but choose to use this as their main office space. Aside from A. Radida and her husband, who each have ample office space on the second floor of the building, three of the other four professors affiliated with the Center work in their departmental offices and come to the CWS occasionally.)

Cabinets, bookshelves, book racks and filing cabinets flank the perimeter of the large room. In the center of the room, free-standing book shelves display books in Thai and in English. Five ceiling-to-floor glassless windows around the room trimmed with Thai teak allow sunlight or the sounds of pounding tropical rains to flood the room as well as the roar of motorcycles at the end of a class period and occasional yelps of local dogs. Four tables with six chairs each provide spaces for library users to sit and work. The Information Center is officially open from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.; on more than one occasion, however, I observed that one or more of the center staff arrived and opened the center early (8:00 a.m.) and stayed after closing hours.

The Information Center staff collects and catalogues printed information. Books, journals, magazines, newsletters, newspaper articles in Thai and in English, videocasettes, slides and conference papers are available for public use. Through these materials and publications, the CWS hopes to reach NGO leaders, village and rural women leaders, academicians and students of Regional University and "the public"--including international visitors and visiting scholars. Materials are loaned out for one week to undergraduate students and for longer periods to graduate students and professors. CWS documents indicate that, as of 1994, more than 6,000 entries line the shelves and filing cabinets of the Information Center. Books are categorized by language (primarily Thai and English); clippings and articles are filed according to twenty-nine subject areas.

A. Radida considers the Information Center to be critical to the future development of a Women's Studies curriculum on the university campus:

> The collection of the textbooks and the materials in the area of Women's Studies has been successful. And that is, I think, the most significant stage of preparing for the long-term curriculum....People can make use of the Information Center. Already they integrate their feminist approach or the concepts of feminist thought or women's experiences into their individual courses.

To capture the sense of who was using the Information Center and for what purposes, I asked IC users to fill out a questionnaire about their use of the center. Over a three-day period, 36 women and men from six faculties filled out the questionnaire. As I discussed in Chapter One, the majority of those who visited the IC were third and fourth year students but professors and guests from the community also joined them. Most came to find books and materials on specific topics: abortion, rape, child prostitution, women's rights and women and AIDS. One student said she came to the IC to do her homework and, from my extended period of observation in the Center, I discovered that indeed it was a place where students came to work on homework assignments or study for exams. An occasional student also placed his or her head on a table to take a noontime or early afternoon nap. Students who participated in focus group interviews admitted that prior to their association with the Center for Women's Studies they had misunderstood its work and *raison d'être*. One student assumed the CWS was a center for research only, another student thought the Center served women with problems, a third thought that the entire building was a library.

One avenue of information dissemination for the CWS is making materials available to professors, students and the general public

through the Information Center. Training courses constitute a second avenue, one in which a major share of Center resources are invested.

Training Courses

Prior to the construction of the Center building, sessions were held in the seminar room of the Faculty of Social Science. The current venue for training sessions is the CWS's second-floor seminar room. The second floor seminar room is large, with long tables arranged in a square three rows deep; microphones are available at each set of tables. In the training sessions university personnel and, on occasion, outside resource personnel identified by the Women's Studies Committee give lectures and conduct discussions. When the budget has allocated a stipend for professors, a sum of money is offered to those who conduct the lectures. The project budget also includes a daily stipend for the women who attend the training courses. If the training lasts more than one day, participants stay at the nearby YMCA, or, for the research seminars, at a moderately-priced hotel.

Women wearing silk skirts or cotton sarongs arrive at the center for the seminar on a comfortable tour-style bus from the YMCA. The training sessions they attend usually are held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. and last from one to two weeks (although one lasted only two days). A typical morning session begins between 9:00 and 9:30, and, shortly thereafter, the CWS secretary, Napaporn, or another CWS staff member serves cold water to the seated participants. The morning session consists of two lectures followed by a question-and-answer period. In between the two lectures, CWS staff members serve Thai sweets (*khanom*) and tea or coffee during the 15- to 30-minute snack break. The afternoon session follows a similar pattern and the bus returns at the end of the day to take participants back to the YMCA.

A CWS professor who has lectured in these training courses described her lecture in this way:

> [The lecture] is a kind of "make them alert" [session]; give them facts first. For example, give them figures of the proportion of the females in the labor force. Normally there are a lot, depending on jobs....Then I tell them what kind of pay they would get. "That's less than the men, right?" And I tell them about working conditions, the rights that they should get and don't get, this kind of thing. So we make them more aware--and make them feel more aware that they are more important as well. "Why [do] they get less pay for equal work?" we ask--things like that. And we make them aware of all the social benefits that they should get sometimes they don't get--because most of them, most women, work in the informal sector of the labor force that the fair labor law doesn't cover. For example, when they want to have maternity leave, they don't get paid.

Since the CWS committee consists of only eight professors including A. Radida, the professors work together closely on major tasks. Not only do they plan the training programs, they also give the training session lectures. CWS professor A. Kanchanaa described the necessity of working together:

> Everybody has to get involved in every activity --at least in the meetings, to give ideas. In practice, in training in law (we have three committee members)....And if it happens to be training in something else, the one who has direct knowledge and experience will take direct responsibility; the rest help. So we have to get together for every activity.

The Ford Foundation and the Asia Foundation funded the first two training courses of the PWS in 1986. The first course was a "Leadership Training Project for Rural Women"; the second a training course for conducting research in women's studies. The CWS sponsored four additional workshops from 1991-93. Three of these focused on legal (or "paralegal" as it was called) training for rural women; the other was an 'improved' version of the Leadership Training for Rural Women. Prior to the elections of March 22, 1992 CWS professors traveled to villages in

outlying provinces to hold seminars on "Women's Issues in Thailand and Politics" and "Platforms of Political Parties and Women's Issues in Thailand." Funded by the Asia Foundation, the seminar's purpose was to encourage women to run for political office and to prepare women and men to question political candidates about political parties' positions on women's issues. Rao (1991, p. 4) asserts that "empowering women is a key aim of women's studies center around the world." Sharing this view, CWS members have offered training courses in doing research on women, training paralegals, and other training programs. I elaborate on the details of one such project below.

In 1990 the Ford Foundation funded the second "Leadership Training Project for Rural Women." Several non-governmental organizations that work extensively in villages in the region, such as the YMCA, assisted with the selection of candidates for the training. CWS professors invited some of the candidates together with NGO representatives to the Center for assistance with planning the training classes. The professors asked the future trainees about their needs and interests and what they thought should be included in the training course. The CWS professors and the donor agreed that this was a novel and important part of the project; such preliminary work is not customary practice of projects sponsored by the Thai government.

As they talked about developing training courses, such as the training of paralegals and of rural women leaders, CWS professors were quick to note that the rural women who attend a course also participate in its design. CWS professor, A. Prasit, noted:

> We [kept] suggesting to the Center committee: if we have paralegal training, it has to be specially designed. We spread the word around to NGOs, asked them to come in and provide us with real-life situations. "Are there any women leaders in your [vicinity] who we can work with? Can you identify someone who is active and has potential to develop their leadership, to strengthen it?" we asked. "If so, contact us, give us their names. Ask if they're interested.

> Identify key leaders." [NGO leaders and women] came in and we designed the project together. "What are the serious problems in your village?" we asked....Obviously, most said, "[We need] more jobs, funds to support women in raising pigs, small scale business, for example, cooperatives in the village."

Committee members take pride in the fact that the CWS includes the women who will participate in a training course in its design, observing that this is a radical departure from the top-down approach of government agencies. For the training for paralegals, the entire group of seventeen participants attended the meeting to discuss potential topics. An elected group of representatives working together with the professors and NGO leaders finalized the seminar topics and schedules of both of the proposed week-long seminars.

Regional University professors taught most of the seminar sessions. Although most lectures were given by CWS professors, on topics such as women's health, professors from different faculties of the university were invited to present guest lectures. Lecturers from outside the university, for example, from the local association for women lawyers, also gave occasional lectures to the seminar participants. Although lectures followed by question-and-answer sessions were the primary mode of knowledge dissemination, seminar organizers also included field trips, practice sessions in proposal-writing, and skits through which participants applied and demonstrated what they had learned.

On occasion class sessions move from the meeting room to the field. Leadership Training Project (LTP) participants visited the animal experimental unit in RU's Department of Animal Husbandry; paralegal trainees visited the provincial court, an attorney's office and the juvenile rehabilitation center.

Seminar leaders and participants selected seminar topics together. CWS professors, leaders from several regional NGOs that work with women,

and seminar participants collaborated on the choices. LTP organizers and participants arrived at the following topics: group organization and management; information on income-yielding activities; women and health; the role and status of women (including wage inequalities between men and women); daily life and the law; environmental issues; herbs and medicine; culture and education; and field trips to learn about paper flower making, weaving, animal raising, the use of herbs and mushroom culture.

An evaluation component of the Leadership Training Project sent professors to the villages to meet with their trainees to see what impact the training had on the leadership capabilities of the women and, ultimately, on their villages. Evaluations of the program were mixed; some participants had implemented the plans participants had designed in the seminar while others had not.

One seminar participant, who, on returning home, immediately utilized what she had learned, was Nah Eh, an ethnic minority woman from Baan Pa Kaew Village. The villagers' farm land had been badly damaged by waste water from nearby mines. This necessitated that the men and women of Baan Pa Kaew walk a long distance to cultivate crops. To earn supplementary income, especially when farm lands lay fallow, villagers worked in the mines that had damaged their land. Men received 50 baht per day; women 30 baht.[19]

At the time of the CWS secretary's visit to Baan Pa Kaew, the village housewives' group, formed with assistance from a Scandinavian - sponsored development project, had been in existence for about a year. After returning from the training at the CWS, Nah Eh proposed to the group of thirty women that they try weaving for commercial purposes as another source of employment and income, and they agreed. Nah Eh

[19] In 1993, the exchange rate was approximately 25 Thai baht: US$1.

expected that they would begin this project within two months. In addition to the weaving project, Nah Eh initiated a second activity, encouraging members of the housewives' group to grow and market garden vegetables.

In attending the two-week seminar of the Leadership Training Project for Rural Women at the Center for Women's Studies, Nah Eh, along with about 20 other women had learned about the opportunity to market woven goods and garden vegetables. She also learned how to prepare a project proposal that the NGO staff could submit for funding. The village of Baan Pa Kaew faced grave problems: their farm land was damaged, the village had no school (school-age children walked two kilometers to attend school in another village) and the dirt roads to Baan Pa Kaew were rutted and in poor condition. By attending the training project and working with the local NGO, Nah Eh had learned how to gain access to resources that enabled her and members of the housewives' group to increase their meager incomes, an initiative that had the potential to provide them with a means of dealing with other issues in the village.

Lectures, Seminars and Workshops

In addition to training sessions, the CWS sponsors lectures and seminars on specific topics. From 1986-88, the first two years of its existence, the Center offered six lecture-seminars. In the early days, professors from the Regional Teacher's College, a private university, different Regional University faculties, and area NGOs gathered to discuss women's issues. They examined the status and roles of Thai women, laws about which women should know, and mother and child health care from a developmental psychology perspective. They also explored issues for women in Papua New Guinea and talked about women's studies

and matters of women and development. One participant in these discussions said repeatedly that she considered herself "lucky" to be part of those early discussions. When she wrote her thesis on Thai literature she had come face-to-face with glaring inequalities between women and men, and she had been puzzling over these patterns on her own. Meeting with the group gave her a forum to share her findings with others and to discover patterns of inequality in other disciplines and in society.

Publications

The goal of CWS publications is to disseminate information on the status and condition of women, especially women in this region of Thailand, to readers throughout the country and the world. A 20- to 40-page newsletter, "Women's Studies News," is published biannually in English and quarterly in Thai. One woman and one man professor, members of the CWS Committee, each edit one language version of the newsletter. CWS professors and individuals affiliated with the center write some of the articles; others are reprints from non-CWS publications. Topics of articles range from the humiliation of women Ministers of Parliament (MPs) by men MPs to the prostitution of Thai and Burmese women, from environmental issues to democratization in Thailand, from the education of girls in the region to the position of minority religion women in the country. The newsletters also include listings of CWS publications and of Center events. The last few pages of each Thai issue chronicle the travels of and meetings attended by the CWS director, CWS professors and the secretary as well as the visits of other groups and individuals to the CWS and meetings held at the Center.

Under the same goal of information dissemination, the Center publishes reports of Center work. These include reports of research

findings and reports or follow-up manuals from training courses, such as the two guides, entitled "The Law for Women," published after the paralegal training course. FSS law professors, including two not officially affiliated with the CWS, prepared the guides to make the law accessible to women with limited formal education. One author noted that they intentionally wrote the guides in very simple language. Topics included women's status, family, inheritance and administrative law, constitutional law, social problems, contracts, law and environment, law and forestry, land law, prostitution and law, rape, child and juvenile security, labor law, and the roles of community leaders in the arbitration of local disputes.

Collaboration and Networking

A. Radida and CWS professors are committed to building a network among women and men who are working to addresses women's issues. CWS goals define this as creating an "academic exchange on women's problems" and a "liaison with other governmental and non-governmental organizations in working toward the development of women." They engage in this networking at the university, local, national, regional and international levels with academic, government and non-government agencies and individuals working on matters pertaining to women's rights and women and development.

The University Network

CWS professor A. Kanchanaa explained the CWS's approach to creating a network among professors at Regional University:

> Whenever we have a seminar and whatever we would invite the public to, that's what we do not just with the Institute [for Research on Social Concerns)] but with the Teachers College as well and [private universities], too. So what we do is we try to create a network and work with this

> work with this group. So even though we have a committee--like when we have a group training on Women and Democracy, most of us are the ones that talk and we give a lecture, [but the teachers' college professor] also helps us, so it's not just that we do it by ourselves....

A. Radida adds:

> We have all kinds of support from our colleagues from other faculties. We invited them in to be on certain projects, to be our resource persons and to participate in our discussion activities or seminar or trainings.

While the CWS reaches out to invite and include other professors and leaders in its activities, neither the CWS or any other unit assumes responsibility for coordinating women's studies activities in the Faculty or the university. The CWS is on the electronic mail network but the majority of Regional University professors are not; therefore, it is not a means of communicating with RU professors interested in women's studies. Rather, professors and staff from different units communicate by telephone, written memoranda and face-to-face. RU professors report that although they know what each other and what other centers involved with women's concerns are doing, they find it impossible to stay abreast of all the projects and activities.

No formal connection exists among the five centers in the Faculty of Social Sciences. While center directors may be friends and work together on certain issues, organizational ties among the centers are not strong. According to A. Kanchanaa, while the FSS's Human Resource Management Development Center and the CWS may, in fact, be working toward similar goals, the two centers do not collaborate on plans or activities.

The director of another FSS center candidly states that he does not collaborate with the CWS on women's studies projects nor does his center promote a women's agenda. He argues that women's studies has "come up from the fantasy of feminists in the west who would like to see

women playing a more active role in developing countries" and he believes this is wrong. He argues that since political consciousness in Thailand is new, the women's project, which demands more concessions from men and "makes them uneasy," instigates a "rivalry among sexes" and does not water the seeds of democracy. For various reasons, then, FSS centers rarely, if ever, work collaboratively.

Other RU professors in the Faculties of Humanities, Education, Communication, Nursing, Agriculture and others, consider themselves part of the women's-issues network in the university based at the CWS. These professors attend CWS seminars, give lectures for CWS training courses and integrate women's issues into their teaching.

The CWS is not the only organized entity engaged in the study of women in the university. A second autonomous women's studies program, the Regional Center for Women, exists in the Faculty of Education. Since I refer to the RCW at different points throughout the study, I provide a brief description of it here and the discuss some of the implications of two centers within one university in Chapter Five.

A group of men professors from the Faculty of Education established the RCW in 1990. They invited A. Pornthip, a newly-hired woman professor of education from a progressive Bangkok university to become the director of the center and she agreed. A. Pornthip shapes the RCW's activities according to her political interests, a direction her colleagues support.

The primary project of the center focuses on encouraging and equipping women to run for election and serve on village councils in select areas of nine northern provinces. Other work of the Regional Center for Women includes research, workshops and community-based

training projects, and international exchange.[20] Two RCW research projects focus on issues for Thai women laborers. In the category of exchange, a US-based foundation brought four women leaders of Mongolian fledgling NGOs to meet with Thai women NGO leaders and the RCW facilitated the visit. The dean of education supported this work of the RCW with funds and in-kind support from the faculty.

The working space of the Regional Center for Women is located in a non-air-conditioned office in one of three Faculty of Education buildings; formerly the space was the office of one of the professors who was a founder of the center. RCW committee members discussed a proposed move to a second floor office in another building at the committee meeting I attended. The new office space was a renovated rest room and had no windows; committee members expressed concern that it would not be comfortable and discussed how to deal with the expense of air conditioning if the office space were to be made more comfortable.

A faculty administrator noted that early funding for RCW projects came from the Faculty of Education and from the Research Institute for Social Concerns with which the RCW's founding professors were affiliated. Funding for the projects in 1992-94 come from several foundations in Europe and the US. Two of the donors of RCW projects also fund projects at the Center for Women's Studies. Although the RCW projects are similar to the programs of the CWS, the directors do not consider their programs in competition, rather, they see themselves as part of the same university and national network.

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[20] Concern was raised in the Regional Center for Women's planning meeting about connotations of the word "training" and the expert-trainee (higher-lower) meanings implied. A brief discussion ensued and there was indication that the word might be changed to diminish the implied status differential.

The network within the university is not the only one important to the CWS. Given its definition of mission, the CWS sees links to the community as vital.

The Community Network

Work with community non-governmental organizations is the main focus of networking within the community. A. Kanchanaa clarified the role of the center with regard to non-governmental organizations:

> We have said clearly that "we don't work in the field; we don't work directly [in] the village." We give sort of advisory work to the NGOs, such as the way we work with the YMCA....So our role is serving them, serving the NGOs as an advisory agent. Since we have knowledge, maybe we don't have experience, we share, they have experience and we have knowledge, so we work a lot with the NGOs. We learn from their experience and they want the knowledge from us...for advice on how to do the research work, how to do a campaign or how to set up a development program....We don't have enough personnel, enough money, since we are all full-time lecturers, we cannot go straight to the village, to the people, like the NGOs.

The CWS has worked with NGOs in the region on planning training programs and has relied on the NGOs to identify women leaders to participate in training programs. For example, the Village Leaders Association, women leaders of the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), and the Regional Lawyers Association met to plan the paralegal training course. The YMCA routinely houses CWS training program participants in the building in which its offices are located. NGO leaders have also been invited to participate in seminars about doing research on women. Professors from a private university in the area initiated the development of an umbrella NGO organization in 1986. The CWS participated in this volunteer activity which brought together approximately 20 regional NGOs working on women's issues. The network had not disbanded but neither was it active in 1993 and 1994. These

community networks extend beyond provincial borders and are intertwined with national networks as well.

National Networks

The CWS is involved in both NGO and university networks. The CWS second floor seminar room housed the two-day organizing meeting of a regional chapter of a newly-formed national NGO, the Gender Watch Group. The national network aims to monitor politicians' promises and hold political parties accountable to women's needs and concerns. Several CWS professors participated in this organizing meeting or "action project," as CWS documents labeled it. CWS members have attended or spoken at national conferences of, for example, the Rural Development Organizations Committee, the Population Institute, and Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok. Participation in these meetings nurtures informal networks among those interested in women's issues.

Gumport (1991) argues that the development of cross-institutional national networks were crucial to the development of feminist scholarship and women's studies in the US. Although the development of such scholarship was not a focus of my study, my data suggest that the NCWA's initiative to integrate women's issues into the curriculum is the principal avenue within the Thai academy for promoting academic scholarship on women's studies. NCWA leaders invited academics and government officials chiefly responsible for giving shape to women's studies in the university to NCWA conferences. Over time the NCWA meetings expanded to include university academic administrators under its ever-widening umbrella in an attempt to expose administrators to the importance of including women's issues within the curriculum. While NCWA-funded meetings promote dialogue, the absence of national scholarly associations and societies which have special interest groups that

attend to issues of women and gender constrains dialogue among Thai women's studies professors and fosters cultural fragmentation rather than cross-university collaboration. Nevertheless, Thai professors interested in women's issues and CWS professors in particular work diligently to build international networks to support Thai national initiatives to improve the condition and position of Thai women.

International Networks

A. Radida is convinced that international networking is key to the Center's mission. While she asserts that working toward equality for women and men is the primary mission of the CWS, A. Radida adds:

> ...but, added to this, now my perspective has broadened. Working with regional or international organizations is quite critical, too. One cannot work alone in one's own local level or at the domestic level. There are so many times that campaigning and pressure from the outside world. Letters of support or whatever from a network appear to be quite efficient because the government now is aware of globalization. The world situation now has changed and Thailand can't ignore the world.

Internationally-supported, high profile campaigns which address the trafficking of women and child prostitution in Thailand (and throughout Southeast Asia) are among the projects that have had an impact on Thailand. A. Radida believes that connecting with international and regional networks that bring pressure to bear on the Thai government to deal with issues such as prostitution increases the likelihood that the government will address women's issues.

To develop this network, over a two-and-a-half year period A. Radida attended over thirty meetings, including fourteen trips to Bangkok and nine trips out of the country for NGO-related meetings. A. Radida is a member of the steering committee of a Southeast Asian non-governmental organization for women lawyers. There have been exchanges among members in the region: the CWS secretary traveled to India and a

Malaysian member visited projects in Thailand. She has attended meetings for NGOs throughout Asia and participated in the NGO Forum prior to the Fourth UN International Conference on Women held in Beijing in August 1995. The list of Center visits and meetings included in the Thai language newsletters gives insight into the variety of NGOs with whom members interact: the Laotian Women's Federation, NGO Committees Against AIDS, Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, among others. Given that only eight professors are part of the working committee and that A. Radida takes primary responsibility for networking, building this international network requires the few CWS professors involved with the CWS to expend a great deal of energy.

Other Social Concerns

A. Radida and the majority of the committee members of the CWS believe their work on women's rights and in women's studies is integrally related to other societal and university-related concerns in which they are involved. When I asked one member how she came to be involved in women's studies activities, she answered:

> I'm regarded as an activist here. I don't like to see changes happening in the wrong way in [this area]. For example, I was one of a few people who participated in protesting against high rises....We are interested in similar things like that: injustice...you could say "improper things." Things that should be this way but it's not that way. So I'm interested in justice and improper things.

Another professor from the faculty who was involved with the CWS committee for several years notes:

> In our country we have so many, many problems.. ..We do not have a separate group to deal just only with the women's issue. This means that if you are considered a feminist group or women's group you need to deal with other problems, too --like poverty, the environment, and other issues also.

One of the newer members of the CWS committee explained that the CWS professors asked him to serve on the committee because he repeatedly met one or more of the members at meetings about prostitution, child labor, the environment, and similar conflictual issues. His participation in these meetings signaled that he shared their interests and concerns and therefore that he was a logical and appropriate choice to work with the Center for Women's Studies. CWS committee member A. Prasit is involved in a social forestry project with RU's Research Institute for Social Concerns and works on that project from his office space in the CWS building. His research assistant is based at the Center and assists CWS staff members, as her work load permits, with their work.

Individual and collective commitments toward justice and "proper things" thus extend into the work of the Center and involve activities that take place in the CWS building. Human rights, environmental concerns, activities to promote a more democratic Thai society--all have been the subject of meetings held in the Center for Women's Studies. In early January 1994 the board hanging in the CWS office listed activities scheduled for the weeks ahead:

--a seminar on community forestry;

--biodiversity;

--"The Red Indians?" A lecture by a Native American on March 4th;

--lecture by a retired community professional and local activist.

The work of the Center also reflects a commitment to challenging the social costs of economic development and modernization within the region and the country, as is evident from the topics of research projects, workshops, training courses and seminars. Two of the Center's four research projects underway in 1993-94 focused on development issues (the impact of de- and re-forestation and the impact of development-related changes on rural children and youth).

Participants in seminars examined approaches to community development, the impacts of socio-economic change on men and women and relationships between women, consumerism and the environment. Training course lectures covered similar topics.

Beyond the CWS's Purview

Given the wide range of activities of centers for women internationally, it is also important to describe what the Center does not do. It does not as yet offer women's studies courses, despite its earliest plans to do so, nor does it offer seminars for professors of their own or other faculties to integrate women's issues into the curriculum. Despite this lacunae, CWS professors and those in other faculties do integrate women's issues into their teaching, a subject I discuss in Chapter Five. As with many women's studies centers described in the literature (for example, see Rao, 1991), activities related to student services also are beyond the CWS's purview, for example, advocacy on behalf of women students and counseling services. The Center also does not engage in advocacy on behalf of women professors or staff.[21]

Conclusions

The CWS at Regional University did not begin with two women talking under the bathroom stall but from a convergence of factors. These included a) the efforts of one professor committed to establishing a center to promote equality among Thai women and men, b) similarly-minded colleagues who invested time and energy to develop proposals and execute activities, c) the interest and willingness of outside donors to

[21] Student services personnel indicated that they provide no special counseling services for women student's to deal with issues such as rape, pregnancy, or sexual harassment.

fund this initiative, and d) faculty administrators who supported the people and the ideas.

While this is one description of the Center's origin, organizing the CWS was and is much more complex than the above description conveys. In the next chapter I begin to explore this complexity from a structural theoretical perspective of organizations.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STRUCTURAL PERSPECTIVE: A TOP-DOWN CENTER AT THE MARGINS

> [Women's studies] doesn't happen from the top down. It happens from the underneath going up as opposed to many, many other studies where it's a top-down thing....[For example,] if you want science or technology, you tell the [MoUA] and they respond. But with women's studies being a subject that is very controversial, it is interesting that it has to be brought from the bottom up.
>
> --Advisor, National Commission on Women's Affairs

Bureaucracies operate from the top-down according to hierarchical principles which establish a "firmly ordered system of super- and subordination" (Weber, 1922/1958, p. 197). From her position at the top of the bureaucracy, the NCWA Advisor observes that an office at the top--the Ministry of University Affairs--supports certain initiatives from its position at the top and not others--in particular, not women's studies. Regional University's Center for Women's Studies is one unit which is working from the bottom up to develop Thai women's studies. To carry out this work it must work within the national and university bureaucracy and it has developed its own top-down hierarchy to carry out its mission.

To explore these arrangements in greater depth, in this chapter I analyze the Center for Women's Studies from a structural theoretical perspective, drawing from the literature on organizations as bureaucracies and as open systems. First I describe the Thai bureaucracy, showing ways in which it influences the work of the Center. Next I examine hierarchical assumptions of line authority in relation to the CWS and within the literature on the Thai bureaucracy. Following

this I explore conceptual notions of loose and tight coupling in the context of Regional University. Descriptions of loose coupling illuminate innovative and autonomous aspects of the CWS; the transition from loose to tighter coupling points to areas of conflict between CWS organizers and administrators. Finally I discuss the relationship of the Center to its environment, exploring ways in which the CWS organizes, selects its priorities and expands within the organizational structure of the university.

Interviews with administrators, professors and staff members at each level of the university as well as CWS, faculty and university documents were laden with references to functions, structures, goals, national development plans, control, coordination and conflict as an interruption of task accomplishment. These words point to assumptions of working within rational, bureaucratic structures. Conversations about such things is not surprising since public universities such as Regional do not exist apart from the national Thai bureaucracy. All professors and staff are civil servants in the national government's civil service bureaucracy and advance according to the national step-system pay scale. The university's funding comes from the MoUA's national budget for higher education. University administrators are accountable to the Ministry of University Affairs for program, curriculum and staff increases. In addition, the CWS and all units of the university must consider all future planning in the context of national development plans, such as the Seventh Higher Education Development Plan, which are predicated on rationalist assumptions that setting appropriate goals and achieving those goals leads to progress and overall national development.

A discussion of the CWS within the structure of the bureaucracy was a useful and compelling point of beginning. In view of the autonomous nature of the Center, however, both the notion of the CWS's

"loose coupling" within the professional bureaucracy of the university and the significance of the relationship between the CWS and its environment became fertile ground for analysis.

Finally, a cross-national comparative perspective highlights the reality that the location of women's studies within the university bureaucracy is related to the ways in which women's studies develops in academe. Gumport (1987, p. 118), addressing the situation of US higher education, notes that "the most obvious location for the emergence of women's studies within the organizational structure is in the academic program." This is also true in some countries of East Asia, for example, Japan and the southern provinces of Korea and in Indian colleges and universities (Committee for Women's Studies in Asia, forthcoming; Chamberlain & Howe, 1995). In Thailand and at Regional University in particular, however, women's studies is grounded not in the academic program but in the Center for Women's Studies which focuses on issues of women and development and on research. Thai academics are experimenting in various ways to include women's concerns in the academic program, but the Center continues to be the focal point of work. This structural positioning of women's studies and its focus on development is not unique to Thailand. This arrangement does stand in marked contrast, however, to those countries and institutions where women's studies is located within an academic program and is synonymous with coursework and classes. To better understand the Thai arrangement, I proceed to examine the CWS from a structural perspective.

The structural perspective on organizations gave birth to the entire field of organizational theory. Weber's (1922/1958) nineteenth century theory of the development of bureaucracies paved the way for this field of study. Taylor's (1911) construction of a management science provoked debate and won disciples for his theory about the ways in which organizational parts are arranged for the efficient and

efficacious workings of twentieth century organizations. Discussions since the 1950s challenged debates about structures to consider organizations as systems, appealing to the metaphor of the organization as a biological system rather than a machine (Morgan, 1987; Scott, 1981). The open systems perspective highlights the salience of an organizational system's relationship to its environment (Scott, 1981). In this chapter I combine the view of organizations as machine-like bureaucracies which focus on the internal workings, structures and functions of an organization with the open system perspective that continues to guide much of the contemporary popular debate about organizations today. While I do not utilize the biological metaphor which examines exchanges between an organism or an organization and its environment, I do attend to the relationship of an organization to its environment along with the intraorganizational machine-like structure of the bureaucracy.

The Thai Bureaucracy

Bureaucratic structures in Thailand have a long history. In the fifteenth century the monarch of the Kingdom of Ayudhya (located in what is now central Thailand) introduced an elaborate system of bureaucratic administration, codified law, and a state-organized economy. The system was effective in expanding Ayudhya's control, despite resistance, since it contrasted sharply with the more personal system of patron-client relations that had preceded it (Wyatt, 1982/1984). The bureaucratic pattern of Ayudhya endured until the late nineteenth century when King Chulalongkorn set out to restructure the bureaucracy in a strategic move to push Thailand out of isolation and to strengthen ties with colonial

powers but keep them at a distance.[22] This system continues--and continues to expand--to the present.

Thailand's government bureaucracy is massive. In addition to university professors and staff throughout the country, the national bureaucracy includes primary and secondary school teachers, the police force, postal service, armed forces, and hospital and health care workers. Thirty-seven per cent of the national budget is allocated for the maintenance of the bureaucracy and this amount is increasing. Benefits of being employed by the government bureaucracy include the guarantee of a life-time position, opportunities for advancement and a pension upon retirement.

The center of decision-making and power of this government bureaucracy is located in the capital city of Bangkok. With a population of over six million people (about 1/10 of the country's population), Bangkok is the center of government, finance, business and trade for Thailand. As Thailand's GNP grew dramatically in the 1980s, the majority of resources were expended in the center of Bangkok and in other urban areas around the country (Muecke, 1992).

As with other government ministries, the Ministry of University Affairs (MoUA) is centered in Bangkok. It has a coordinating function that involves responsibility for approving university development plans and the establishment of new universities. Standardization and quality-monitoring also fall within its purview and the ministry approves individual course syllabi and new degree programs and courses of study. Professors at private universities must also regularly defend their proposed examinations and have them approved by the Ministry. Together with the Budget Bureau, the MoUA decides the numbers of new professor

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[22] Thailand was never officially colonized. An agreement between the British to the west of Siam, as it was known, and the French to the east designated Siam as a buffer state between the two colonial powers (Keyes, 1989).

and staff appointments to be allotted to each faculty of any public university. In 1993 the FSS applied for a number of new professors to expand disciplinary offerings but they were allocated only one new professor.

Bureaucratic procedures shape the organization of the university and of units within the university in countless ways. The "Laws of Regional University," which exist under royal decree, dictate the organizational structure of the university and any change must comply with these laws. Permission to hire new professors, to construct new buildings and to introduce new programs must all be approved by the appropriate units of the bureaucracy, usually the MoUA and the Budget Bureau.

When the CWS conducts a seminar which is funded by the national government, the Center must follow government guidelines. For example, national government guidelines specify the exact stipend to be given to seminar consultants conducting training workshops. The guidelines are based not on who the consultants are, but on who the trainees are. During one CWS seminar, the director registered her dissatisfaction about the level of stipend paid to CWS professors and community professionals conducting the seminar. Since their students were rural women each consultant was to receive 300 baht. Had the students been business people, the stipend would have been substantially higher. In this case, A. Radida argued strongly against the government's guidelines and assumptions and the consultants were paid the higher fee.

To receive permission from the MoUA's Advisory Commission to be upgraded from an autonomous program to an FSS department, the CWS had to demonstrate through documentation required by the MoUA that it had, and, in the future, would continue to fulfill the objectives of Thai higher education as set forth by the MoUA. The director and CWS staff prepared a document which demonstrated that the activities of the CWS were indeed

in line with the Ministry's objectives. In keeping with the mission of regional universities, CWS work was devoted to work in the region. Their "academic service" work matched one of four MoUA focal areas. The networks the CWS professors are developing in Southeast Asia and internationally carry out the MoUA's goals for the internationalization of Thai universities.

CWS employees were paid by project monies and funds continually had to be sought from donors to pay them. With that arrangement there was less job security for employees and lurking uncertainty for the Center. That is, if project funding did not continue the Center would have to reduce staff and scale down its work. As mentioned above, benefits of being an employee of the bureaucracy include the guarantee of having a position for life, a pension, and opportunities for advancement, among others. Receiving permission from the MoUA to upgrade to a department and Budget Bureau approval to gradually allow staff members to become civil service employees implied greater security for the individual employees and the work of the Center than existed when the Center was an autonomous program.

Organizational studies of Thailand characterize the Thai bureaucracy an inflexible hierarchical structure in which rewards, sanctions and decisions on important matters are centralized at the top of the hierarchy (see, for example, Riggs, 1966; and Siffin, 1966). These features are attributed to the hierarchical nature of Thai culture and society and to the intentionally designed Weberian bureaucratic system.[23]

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[23] Eberhardt (1988) describes this hierarchy within Buddhist cosmology: "Buddhist cosmology orders all creatures--human and nonhuman--along a continuum...with the Buddha representing one end of this continuum. Not only are classes of beings hierarchically ordered, but individuals are classes of beings hierarchically ordered, but individuals within each class are also believed to be fundamentally unequal....This belief in the essential inequality of all beings has consequences for people's behavior. At any given point in time, cultural norms prescribe the

A Weberian bureaucracy posits that roles, rules, classifications and assignments obviate attention to favoritism and personal relationships. Weber (1922/1958) described these characteristics of a bureaucracy: 1) it is divided into fixed areas of jurisdiction which are ordered by rules and regulations, 2) bureaucratic activities are designated as official duties, 3) the authority to give commands to carry out these duties is rule-bound and stable, 4) official duties are fulfilled methodically only by qualified employees, and 5) hierarchical principles hierarchy ensure that higher offices supervise lower ones.

In Thailand, however, the line authority of the bureaucracy is both reinforced by hierarchical relations in Thai society and complicated through the importance of affiliative relationships. Organizational structures coincide with and are reinforced by cultural norms which give weight to hierarchy and its distinctions. The co-existence between personal, patron-client relations and the Thai bureaucracy, rooted in practices of the fifteenth century, continue on in 1995.

Haas (1979) suggests that criteria such as graduating from the same faculty of a university allows Thai officials to enter easily into the patron-client system and to maximize their rewards and satisfactions. He further argues that this particular criterion is more frequently observed in highly bureaucratic environments than in professional institutions such as a government hospital. In contrast, Prabudhanitisarn (1988) asserts that using such particularistic criteria to build trust in personal relations in fact may be used even in a less bureaucratic environment of a university when resources are scarce or

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proper manner of interpersonal interaction in such as way as to highlight this inequality....[through] posture, speech, and overall demeanor" (pp. 78-79).

interests are in conflict and cannot be reconciled by formal rules and procedures.

The most widely-discussed example of this personal bonding which provides lifelong professional (and personal) gain discussed by FSS professors was that of the "Black Lions" (*singh dam*). The Black Lions are graduates of Chulalongkorn University's Faculty of Political Science who expect to enter into the service of the Ministry of Interior upon graduation. Black Lions aspire to become district officials and provincial governors--bureaucratic positions to which one is nominated and appointed by officials of the Ministry of Interior. Not all become government officials, however; some move into other professions, such as university professors. In the FSS at Regional University, the dean, an associate dean and the department chair of political sciences were all Black Lions; in addition, three out of five of the autonomous programs in the Faculty of Social Sciences were headed by Black Lions.

Drawing on relationships with Black Lions or members of other groups are primary ways in which trust is built and tasks are accomplished within an organization. Relationships with other Black Lions or Red Lions (graduates of Political Science from Thammasat University) or with members of the same class from a military academy reinforce patron-client relations and clique-based favoritism within an organization. In the process, bureaucratic assumptions of replacing the personal with the impersonal recede to the background.

The CWS professors who are Black Lions reject this group membership; this rejection clusters them and like-minded professors into an opposing category. This group refuses to participate in Black Lion activities and speaks out against activities and practices that bond Lions more closely. However, one becomes a Black Lion by virtue of graduating from a particular university faculty and therefore shares an

unbreakable bond for life with other Black Lions. This means that these alumni--including those who oppose the activities of the Black Lions--will address each other using nicknames (a practice not exclusive to this affiliation but an expected part of it) or in familial terms such as "big sister."

While CWS professors may resist some of these affiliative ties, personal relationships also have been important to the development of the CWS. A. Radida and her colleagues acknowledged that her relationship with one or more influential members of the subcommittee of the Ministry of University Affairs was crucial to obtaining approval to be upgraded to a department. At least one other center also had applied to be upgraded to a department but it did not have a similar long list of accomplishments nor did the directors have connections with members of the MoUA advisory commission. In a public meeting the director announced to her colleagues that, in fact, the Center would not have been upgraded if the Special Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office had not championed their cause.

A member of the national Budget Bureau also sits on the Ministry of University Affairs committee that approved the upgrade of the CWS. If the Budget Bureau does not set aside funds for a new program being considered by the Ministry of University Affairs, the progression to program is unlikely to succeed. The Budget Bureau did concur with the upgrade of the CWS to a department, meaning that the Center could have access to funds as does any department of the university. The official Budget Bureau memo that endorsed the upgrade of the Center also indicated that the bureau would financially support only one center of women's studies at the university. Since there are two women's centers at Regional University, this decision limits the ways in which women's studies will develop at the university in the future.

The University within the Thai Bureaucracy

As mentioned above, studies of professional agencies within the Thai bureaucracy suggest that not all segments of the bureaucracy are resolutely hierarchical. Case studies on management information and budgeting systems in a Thai university and of physicians in a Thai government hospital indicate that these institutions are less bureaucratic, less hierarchical, and more collegial than are those within the regular Thai bureaucracy (Prabudhanitisarn, 1988; Haas, 1979). In universities, the authority to make many decisions is delegated to academic departments and faculties. Faculties and departments have autonomy in managing academic affairs as long as they conform to the official rules of the university. Committees make recommendations on curriculum development, the allocation of research grants and budgeting before decisions are made at department, faculty, or university administrative levels (Prabudhanitisarn, 1988, p. 53).

Professors elect colleagues to administrative positions such as department chairs, deans and the rector for limited terms (a maximum of eight years). Administrators who wish to continue in office have to be reelected at the end of four years.[24] At the end of their term, administrators return to their work as professors, a strategy that "has an effect of making them careful not to make enemies unnecessarily and careful to respect the dignity and the needs of the professors under their charge" (Prabudhanitisarn, 1988, p. 53).

Directors of autonomous programs, such as the Asian Studies Center and the Center for Women's Studies, are not elected and are not subject to the same election guidelines as department chairs and deans. When a new dean was elected to the Faculty of Social Sciences, the director of

[24] There is even autonomy and variation here, however. Within the Faculty of Social Science at Regional University one department selects a chair every two years for a maximum of four; another may rotate the chair every two years; the third follows the 4-year/8-year pattern.

the Center for Women's Studies offered to resign, as is customary, so that the dean would be free to appoint a new director in her place. The dean reappointed A. Radida and the members of her committee; he also reappointed the directors of other centers in the faculty. When another center's director was elected department chair, he asked a colleague to be his successor and the dean issued the formal appointment. The university is less formally hierarchical than other organizations within the bureaucracy and units such as the CWS are more flexibly structured than other units within the university.

There are other differences between the "regular" Thai bureaucracy and a university. The Civil Service Commission is the responsible agency for recruitment to all bureaucratic positions. Advancement within the bureaucracy is determined solely by a ranking administrator. In the university, however, recruitment of new professors is considered by academic departments autonomously and career advancement from instructor to full professor depends in part on the deliberations of departmental evaluation committees. Although professors are government officials and receive approximately the same salary as other civil service officials, they have separate rules of recruitment and reward (Prabudhanitisarn, 1987).

Bureaucracy, Authority and the CWS

Even if a university is not as bureaucratic as other organizations, the structural arrangement of the CWS reflects the bureaucratic arrangement of hierarchy and authority. The director of the Center is at the top of the hierarchy. In a national seminar she described that she and the CWS professors worked together as a team but that she was "a little higher" than the others. In terms of pay,

authority and status, under the director is the secretary, then the librarian, then the accountant, and the custodian is at the bottom.

I found some evidence of a flatter, less vertical structure in the CWS and in the ways in which it is organized. For example, the staff assisted each other with tasks outside their domain and, except for the secretary, they regularly ate lunch together. On one occasion I also observed a professor from the working committee eating with the staff. Rather than carefully separating tasks between advisory board and working committee members, members of the advisory board worked alongside the members of the working committee. In the area of program, village and rural women leaders were brought in to give their ideas of what should take place in training sessions and their ideas were incorporated into the design of the program. These may be said to be dramatic challenges to the hierarchical structuring of Thai relations.

The two-tiered distinction between professors and staff and the top-down line authority among center staff also reinforced the hierarchy, however. Except for the secretary, staff members were not included in planning meetings with the working committee and advisory board. There was a clear delegation of tasks and authority that descended from the director to the secretary to other staff members. Appointments with the director were made only through the secretary. The two large second floor offices were occupied by the director and an advisory board member (the director's husband) while a third smaller office remained empty; one large first floor office was shared by three other professors. At the bottom of the hierarchy was the custodian, the only one sent to buy lunch for the Center staff at noontime, the lowest paid and the one whose duties included staying at the center day and night. As a subsystem of the university, the CWS appears not to offer an intentionally designed, non-hierarchical structural alternative to the university system or to other agencies with which it works.

My interviews suggest that for some of the CWS Committee members past and present, the hierarchical structure of the Center, even with its inclusion of NGO and village women leaders and fluid work responsibilities of staff members, is unsatisfactory. Although they agreed that the director had invested an inordinate amount of time in the Center, some would prefer that the director invest less time, personally fulfill fewer invitations and lower her own visibility, giving more leadership responsibilities and opportunities for participation to other professors. Professors serving on the CWS Committee in 1993 and 1994 expressed appreciation that A. Radida took charge of Center, however, and they gave credit for the development of the Center, from its earliest beginnings to the 1993 upgrade, to A. Radida.

Ferguson's (1984) critique of bureaucracies champions egalitarian, horizontal structures as viable feminist alternatives to vertical, hierarchical structures. Chinese feminist scholar, Zhang, (personal communication, June 15, 1995) argues, however, that "definitely not all feminists share the American feminist idea that a feminist organization should be bottom-up, consensus based, and non-hierarchical." She asserts that this may not be part of professors' consciousness at this stage or it may not be part of their concern.

Even if the CWS were to challenge the pattern of line authority, it would be naive to expect a structural alternative from an organization in the margins to have an impact on the broader university. Ferguson (1984, p. 210) observes that "women's studies programs cannot restructure the university, any more than unions can restructure corporations." While the CWS structure does not offer an alternative organizing pattern within the university, its practice of collaborating with rural village women way may serve as important testimony to alternative ways of organizing in the broader society.

Tight and Loose Coupling

A metaphor for smooth functioning of a bureaucracy is the machine (Morgan, 1987). A machine must run smoothly for maximum efficiency; the gears must fit tightly and be well greased. A change in linkage or a tightening of the gears may result in the grinding of metal against metal and they must be adjusted to obtain a proper fit.

The mechanistic logic of the structural perspective presumes that organizations are "rational, consistent and orderly" (Scott, 1981, p. 256). For example, the rational system expects tight linkage or coupling: 1) of directive to outcome (what the manager says the worker does); 2) of information to action, that is, that adequate information effects appropriate action; and 3) of basic work of the organization to its output (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Weick (1976) proposed, however, that loose coupling describes organizational activities more accurately so that, for example, a worker's actions may precede receiving information and organizational intentions are ascribed to actions after the actions have occurred

Although all social organizations are made up of combinations of loose and tight coupling, forms of tight coupling exist more obviously in organizations with sufficient resources and low complexity. Bolman and Deal (1991) give the example of McDonald's, a fast food industry restaurant with low complexity as a tightly coupled organization. In a professional bureaucracy such as the university, however, goals are diffuse, resources are limited and the mission and work are complex; the organization thus operates as a loosely coupled system. There are examples of tight coupling within the university but, as I describe below with regard to the CWS, one primarily finds loose coupling.

Loosely Coupled Units: Innovation without Disturbance--or Impact

One advantage of loosely coupled units within the university is that the university can respond quickly and innovatively to a concern (Weick, 1976). The origins of the Program for Women's Studies illustrates this well. In 1986 funding was being made available through US foundations to support programs related to women's issues in Thailand. The associate dean recalled that to obtain outside funds A. Radida needed to set up a program, that is, to write up a proposal with goals, objectives and strategies that could be approved by necessary university committees. The structure of the autonomous program within the university allowed A. Radida to prepare a proposal and to design a "Program for Women's Studies" within the Faculty of Social Science to which the funds from the foundation could be directly channeled. The program was quickly approved without having to go through the longer, slower decision-making paths of the national bureaucracy.

A "program" within a faculty is a moveable piece in the structural organization of a university faculty that can be added or deleted with a modicum of official approval and paperwork. A proposal is written by members of a faculty, outside funding is secured, office space is allocated within a building of the faculty, members of a committee and an advisory board are selected and the program becomes official. This internal structural dimension tells part of the story but another important part is to be found in the context.

The CWS was thus introduced to Regional University's Faculty of Social Science with little disturbance to the building blocks of the organization of the university--a faculty, research institute, the central administration or any other part of the university. In this case, it meant not having to seek permission from the Ministry of University Affairs or going through the even more time-consuming legal

process of getting approval from the Ministry and the signature of the King, the procedure the Center later had to follow when upgrading to a department. There was little disturbance to the university and the university was able to begin officially addressing concerns about the position and condition of women in Thai society through the Center for Women's Studies without forging an institutional response or making a serious and permanent commitment to these matters through a university-wide policy or initiative.

With the introduction of a women's center to pay attention to women's concerns, the university was not compelled to attend to women's concerns in a comprehensive way. I have no evidence of a university-wide or administrative level commitment from the rector, vice presidents and deans to dealing with women's/gender issues within or across faculties or beyond the university nor is there evidence that they attempted to coordinate such an initiative. The Ministry of University Affairs had not mandated that universities consider gender issues nor did any ministry require that the goals of the 20-Year National Development Plan for Women be incorporated into the university's Five-Year Development Plan. Hence, attending to women's issues was optional for Regional and all other universities in the country. The university was not compelled to formulate a university-wide policy to address women's issues or women's studies. Under these circumstances, a Center for Women's Studies has no major impact on the university with regard to policy or program.

A disadvantage of a loosely coupled unit such as the CWS is that its presence does not compel or even urge RU to comprehensively deal with women's concerns; in fact, it may appear to relieve others in the university of addressing such issues. Birnbaum (1988) suggests that when a university creates a loosely-coupled unit to deal with specific concerns, administrators and others may regard that unit as taking care

of the issue so that a university-wide response is not required. My data indicate that the presence of the Center for Women's Studies also allows professors and administrators to pass off women's concerns to the CWS as the place where the university deals with women's issues. For example, in an interview with an FSS center director, I asked:

> S: Do any of your [center] projects focus on women's issues--say, getting women mobilized in government?
>
> D: No--why? You know why? Women's Studies is taking care of that. That's one thing. Another thing is that there's another project at the Faculty of Education led by Prof. Pornthip... So why should we do that?

Loose coupling between centers and other units of the university bureaucracy allows autonomous programs within the same faculty as well as administrators who oversee the university's academic core not to pay attention to women's issues in curriculum and in other academic service and research activities.

Autonomously Setting the Center's Agenda

A potential advantage of loose coupling is that it fosters innovation and attention to issues by smaller sub-systems (Weick, 1976). In this case, the subsystem of the Center for Women's Studies is allowed to develop its own agenda, requiring approval from university committees for only its most general goals and strategies. The director, CWS committee and advisory board, through their activities, discussions and written documents have defined this broad work agenda: information gathering and dissemination on women's issues in relation to other social concerns, networking within the university and with community and international organizations, and developing courses in women's studies.

All FSS centers focus primarily on issues, training seminars and meetings beyond the university and expect to have an impact on audiences

other than university undergraduate and graduate students. While the CWS's audience includes university colleagues and GO and NGO leaders, its primary interest is in "grass roots level" women, that is, rural village women who are respected leaders and can bring about changes in their village communities. A. Radida identifies outreach to grass roots women as the CWS's highest priority. She says:

> The most urgent and needed strategy to work on women's concerns...is to...reach out to the rural women' s group....Because in the past [university people and government organizations] have been focusing on [things other] than the outreach programs with the grass roots women. So we would rather develop projects where we can work with grass roots women above anything else.

In choosing to build networks and work with grass roots women, defined as extension work or academic service, the Center for Women's Studies becomes more tightly coupled with NGOs in the environment outside the university and less tightly coupled to the Faculty of Social Sciences. Through this they also avoid dealing with the MoUA over the adoption of new courses of study development and syllabus development, a goal that has not as yet received support in the faculty or the university.

Loose coupling of the CWS with the faculty, university and with financial resources has allowed the CWS, under the strong leadership of its director, to innovatively and independently address women's concerns as they choose to define them as long as they are able to match with donors' guidelines.

Independence and Coordination

Within the professional bureaucracy of Regional University, attention to women's studies and women's issues is appearing in many

different places and forms around the campus. I noted this in a conversation with A. Radida:

> S: It seems to me that women's studies is growing up like little plants in many different places in the university.
>
> R: It's the same as happens in government work or even NGOs--because it's connected more with the interests of each particular group and the potential of the group to develop activities or programs to suit their interests....
> We have never had a master plan or main plan for anything. If someone is interested in the indigenous people's rights, then they develop their own project and carry out the work from their side. Another part of the university might also have the same interest but we don't have the dialogue for people to avoid the unnecessary waste of resources or human resources or financial resources....But I don't mind having many, many groups working toward the same issues.

Although there are many activities around and resources available through the Center for Women's Studies, it is not a center that coordinates and primarily initiates all work about women on campus. Many things are going on; individuals report that they casually inform each other and that they know what other centers and individuals are doing but in a university of 12,000 students with over 1,500 full-time instructors, coordination of this information is very difficult. One of the results of an absence of coordination, however, is that there can be overlap in programs. Indeed, I saw some of the same village women leaders at activities sponsored by the CWS in the Faculty of Social Sciences and at those sponsored by the Faculty of Education's Regional Center for Women. One professor reported that some of these women had expressed concern that being invited and feeling obligated to attend activities by different units placed heavy demands on their time.

Other examples point to the potential difficulty of coordinating this work at Regional University's campus. The Research Institute for Social Concerns received a contract to write a report on ethnic minority

Women's Studies. That institute also sponsored a conference on "Leadership, Socioeconomic Change and Gender" with a US university and forgot to inform the CWS that the conference would take place. One CWS professor received a notice about the conference, and she informed me. Institute staff members apologized profusely for this oversight. Nevertheless it was emblematic of the lack of coordination and communication among centers with related interests. In fact, a several million baht project of the Faculty of Social Sciences, "Improving Conditions for Thai Women," was developed by the dean and his associates and the Center for Women's Studies was not consulted about it. Faculty administration defended the absence of collaboration by arguing that the proposal was not about women but about HIV and AIDS. Birnbaum (1988) argues that examples of this lack of coordination within a loosely coupled system are not unusual; in fact, they are quite typical. In Chapter Five I explore this further in a discussion of the fragmented women's studies subculture emerging at Regional University.

Notions of loose and tight coupling within the loosely coupled university have offered insight into the following: the possibility of introducing an innovation such as the CWS into Regional University without impact on or disturbance to the university structure, the opportunity for a new unit to set its agenda independently, and the possibility of operating autonomously without coordinating women's studies across the university (and the likelihood of overlap). It also points to the possibility of conflict wherever loose coupling is tightened.

Loose to Tight Coupling: Points of Conflict

Following the approved upgrade for the CWS from a center to a department, the dean proposed a new set of guidelines for governing the

CWS and selecting its director. In this proposed plan, the FSS deans would have a say in choosing committee members and in recommending the new director, which would result in a tighter coupling between the faculty administration and the CWS.

Comparing the earliest form of governance of the CWS with that of other centers in the faculty and the university provides insight into the broader context. One of the earliest conditions set by the director in establishing the Program for Women's Studies in 1986 was that she would be able to select the people with whom she worked. The dean agreed and the director chose a group of six professors for the working committee and three for the advisory committee, with no faculty administrators included, i.e., no dean, associate or assistant deans. This composition stands in contrast to other centers, for example, the women's center in the Faculty of Education that has seventeen committee members and includes the faculty's dean and an associate dean. This latter approach often includes administrators, members of the community, and prominent Thai citizens in addition to the organizing professors. A. Radida reasoned, however, that more names on a committee list did not equate with more workers for a center's mission, and she was interested in working with committee members who were truly committed to doing the work.

Some professors, including past CWS committee members, judged that this approach is too exclusive and that committee membership should be expanded. Others criticized the CWS committee's practice of inviting only one or two new professors to join the CWS committee every couple of years. One professor notes:

> I think that [the CWS] should have been able to attract more people because as far as we know there are more people who are interested in [Women's Studies]. That leads to another question: How come after so many years of working we just have so few people who are interested in women's studies?....There may be something wrong there in trying to recruit more

> people into coming in...and I don't know whether enough efforts [are] being made.

From its beginning, the CWS had been autonomous and loosely coupled to funding and decision-making mechanisms of the university. A. Radida had been told that the CWS more closely resembled an NGO than a university program--an observation that makes sense given the CWS's autonomy and flexibility within the bureaucracy. The dean's proposed new set of guidelines would couple the CWS more tightly to the faculty and to the university.

The CWS had proposed a tighter coupling with the university bureaucracy in order to gain job security for its employees and a permanent position in the university for itself. This tighter coupling with the bureaucracy also meant that in order to have access to this stability the CWS would now be responsible for following rules and regulations of the bureaucracy.

In the mechanistic terms described above, this upgrade adjusted the loose-fitting gears or coupling of the Center for Women's Studies to the Faculty of Social Sciences. This adjustment in the linkage resulted in a loss of autonomy for the CWS, required that it follow new rules and, in view of the dean's proposal, implied that in the future the CWS would work more closely with faculty university administrators. The CWS's resistance to this loss of autonomy could be described as a grinding of the gears to which the CWS as a new part of the machine bureaucracy would have to adjust.

Resources in the Environment

The above understandings come from looking inside the university. What goes on beyond the borders of the campus in the broader environment

of the university is also important in understanding the functioning of the CWS. The earliest structural perspectives on organizations viewed the organization as its own entity, as an autonomous independent unit. It is impossible not to take into account the environment of the organization, however, since an organization depends on exchanges with other systems for its survival (Scott, 1981). The salient dimensions of the environment for this analysis include the structure and culture and of the Thai bureaucracy in which the university is positioned, the Thai academic structure and culture, and resources essential for the survival of the Center for Women's Studies. These resources are accessed through relationships to donors, to the national Ministry of University Affairs and the Budget Bureau, and to different levels of university administration. Since an essential component of the core technology of the CWS is training of village and rural women, the Center depends on NGOs that operate in the community and in provinces within the region to supply the "input" for their system (Katz and Kahn, 1978). The topics and content of the training are derived from perceived needs of the sociopolitical, economic and cultural context.

To acquire resources and to operate within bureaucratic policies and regulations, Thai universities have to deal with several organizations in the bureaucratic system. Resources essential for the survival of the Center for Women's Studies include relationships to organizations within the Thai bureaucracy--the national Ministry of University Affairs and the Budget Bureau--to donors, and to different levels of university administration. They also include material resources.

In the earliest days of the Program for Women's Studies the Faculty of Social Science provided office space and basic furniture for the Center. Now that the Center has its own building, electricity and a telephone line have been allocated to the Center from the faculty budget

along with annual purchases of items such as filing cabinets or a desk. Funds for curriculum and research projects and for special celebrations such as the 30th anniversary celebration of the university ostensibly are available to the Center now that it has the status of a department but it must compete with three other departments within the faculty for these monies.

Funding also is available for the work of the CWS through specific government channels. Special project monies have been made available to the CWS from the National Commission on Women's Affairs, which is part of the Office of the Prime Minister. A two-day seminar in legal training for rural women at the CWS was funded by the NCWA. The NCWA has also funded conferences or meetings in Bangkok on Women's Studies and the CWS director has been invited and funded to attend those meetings.

The majority of project funding for the Center, however, comes from donors in North America and Europe, such as the Ford Foundation and the Asia Foundation, the International Development Research Centre and the Canadian International Development Agency, the Norwegian Association of Women Jurists and the Freidrich Ebert Stiftung Foundation of Germany. At least one Asian NGO also has contributed to the work of the Center. Each donor organization has its own mission, guidelines and modus operandi that the CWS must understand and match in its proposals in order to receive funding. Work with foundations is facilitated by the fact that the director or her husband have had long-standing relationships with program officers at several of the major foundations. Nevertheless, changes within donor organizations--staff turnover, organizational re-structuring or down-sizing and budget reductions--usually have an impact on the work of the CWS.

For their part, donors are partners with Center for Women's Studies professors in their attempts to challenge the dominant

patriarchal structure of relations through their funding of CWS programs--although these funds can also be construed as evidence of colonial patrimony. One program officer, who called funds for women "fashionable," noted that many resources are available to women's programs these days but that donors have their own ideas about how recipients should relate to a foundation about the use of the financial resources:

> We have so many difficulties in getting money to Thailand now. We [donors] each have our own projects....What I don't like is to compete with other donors. I like to get together with others so we're not funding the same thing. We want the recipients to understand our philosophy. I don't want them to just use our money. They want to be independent--they don't even want to acknowledge we have given the money. I want to give an opening address, tell them our goals.
>
> I always go to the seminars to get an idea of who's coming, at least for half a day; otherwise it's just money business. I want to know what has been done with it, to see what's developing.
>
> Many foundations have women's programs. They need it. It's fashionable--if not a woman [program officer] for women's concerns, some money for it....
>
> I have been supporting some of the same seminars as [another foundation]. If I'm not sure of the budget....Sometimes they (those requesting funds) say they've asked [another] foundation for [a certain amount of money] but they haven't. I like to be sure we don't fund the same thing--at least to get to know each other.

The Center for Women's Studies has been the recipient of successive grants from several different foundations, an indication that they are trusted, that their work is respected by the donors, and that the Center for Women's Studies is able to successfully negotiate for resources, matching the interests of foundations that are looking to fund the kind of projects that the Center is able to propose and facilitate. Since the foundations' resources come from North America and Europe, the funds can be interpreted both as a resource for the

Center to develop women's studies in the Thai context and a "press from the west" to increase attention to women and gender concerns in Thailand.

Strategies for Survival at the Margins

From the structural perspective, the organization is viewed as a technological system. The focus of this system is the technical core or core technology, the mechanism for transforming inputs into outputs (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Applying this language to the arena of higher education, students enter the university as inputs and are transformed in the system through teaching so that transformed, learned students become the system outputs. Teaching is the core technology, just as laboratory work and data collection constitute the core technology of research organizations. Teaching, labeled "information dissemination," is also a core technology of the Center for Women's Studies. The taught are primarily village and rural women leaders and NGO leaders along with university professors interested in women's issues. The teaching takes place through training projects, seminars and workshops. Conducting research is a second dimension of the core technology in which the majority of the CWS affiliated professors participate. Publishing research findings and collecting printed materials are auxiliary aspects of the core technology.

The core technology of an organization is subject to environmental perturbations, that is, changes and uncertainties within the environment can affect the technological core in substantive ways. For example, budget reductions within donor agencies can eliminate or significantly delay entire programs of the Center for Women's Studies. Organizations such as the CWS initiate strategies, such as expansion and growth, to buffer the technological core from these disturbances (Pfeffer &

Salancik, 1978). Another strategy to secure the survival and enhance the bargaining position of an organization in relation to its environment is the utilization of bridging techniques (Scott, 1981). These techniques include the co-optation of personnel from the environment, developing associations and mergers with similar organizations and forging institutional linkages and governmental connections. The absence of such bridging techniques within the CWS contributes to its autonomy and also to uncertainty for it as a subsystem within the university system, as I discuss below.

Reliance on donors for all major program funding results in great uncertainty for the Center for Women's Studies. The director commented on the program's vulnerability from the outset when she stated:

> If you are able to bring in enough funding you are very independent and no one will interfere. But once you are in trouble, there is nothing to offer to be at your assistance.

A European funding agency that had expressed great interest in funding a training program to assist women in establishing small businesses changed personnel and the training program was canceled. Upon receiving a government budget cut, a North American governmental organization withdrew its funding from the Center (at least temporarily) and a grant and training program for researchers in women's studies that the CWS professors envisioned to be ongoing was terminated. The board of the Norwegian TV Campaign that had funded research and the construction of the two-story CWS building changed membership. Reportedly the new members set different priorities and their funding was no longer available to the CWS. In structural terms, these are perturbations in the environment that affect the Center's technical core of training and research. Buffering techniques shield the technical core from these disturbances.

The strategy initiated by the director and working committee to buffer the technical core of the CWS was upgrading from an autonomous program to the status of a department, an option available within the laws of the university and the national bureaucracy. A department has access to funds from the national budget for higher education, especially for personnel. Whereas a program must pay all staff members through project funds, a department can employ personnel who are part of the government bureaucracy, thereby giving greater job security to the employee and providing greater stability for a center.

A second strategy under discussion in 1994 was the expansion of the Center for Women's Studies from a department to an institute that has the status and available resources of a faculty. Scott (1981) notes that organizations that are large have more leverage over their environments and a cushion against organizational failure. With the encouragement of at least one major donor, CWS professors began to explore the merger of the CWS and the RCW and the expansion of the CWS to serve countries in the region. There is resistance to this plan; one high-ranking administrator sees the Center as attending to a "single issue" (women) and not sufficiently diverse to warrant upgrading yet again to become an institute. Other concerns expressed focus on the allocation of scarce resources and the acquisition of power; I discuss these issues in greater detail in Chapter Four.

To secure its survival and enhance its bargaining position, an organization uses bridging techniques such as the co-optation of representatives of external groups into an organization's advisory structure, the development of associations and forging governmental connections (Scott, 1981). Maintaining connections with government is one solid bridge that the CWS has built to its environment. Although the process of preparing documents for upgrading the Center to the status of a department was a long and complicated one, when it came time

for the Ministry of University Affairs commission to meet and make their decision, A. Radida did not even have to appear before them to defend the proposal. She traveled to Bangkok for the meeting as requested but she did not have to defend the proposal; a high-ranking government official did that for her. While ties with some government leaders is one strategy the CWS utilizes, it appears not to have actively developed any other bridging strategies. In fact, it has avoided bridging to some other parts of its environment, as the example of co-optation below illustrates.

Other autonomous programs in the university, including the Faculty of Social Science, utilize the strategy of co-optation. Distinguished members of the community are invited or co-opted to serve on program or center advisory boards and committees. Their presence and participation give distinction and potentially greater visibility to a program. The participation of faculty and university administrators on advisory committees both garners the administrative support necessary when requesting outside funding and potentially fosters communication of plans and activities between faculty and program administrators. The CWS director has chosen not to utilize this strategy. Instead she chose to select only those professors who possessed an understanding of and a commitment to women's issues to serve as her co-workers and advisors at the Center for Women's Studies. She did not choose the dean or any of the associate deans or department chairs in 1986 and this pattern has been followed to the present. This action provided a buffer from potential interference from administrators and allowed her to work with like-minded colleagues and develop the program in the ways in which she, her colleagues and funders agreed upon. Not utilizing this strategy of co-optation also may be cited as one reason for poor communication between the program and the faculty. It also may result in a potential

loss of bargaining power with regard to scarce resources in the environment, as I discuss in Chapter Four.

Conclusions

The structural perspective provides a useful way of understanding the development and functioning of the Center for Women's Studies at Regional University. Existing studies of the Thai bureaucracy offer insight into how the national and university bureaucracy within the Thai cultural setting influences the structural arrangement of the Center for Women's Studies. Since the university does not function in a strictly top-down hierarchical mode, however, the concept of loose coupling helps us to understand the ways in which the CWS has developed. Moving beyond the university to examine the environment extends the structural perspective of this analysis, highlighting how the CWS is able to maintain itself as an organization. These strategies focus on the ways in which the CWS protects or buffers its work as well as builds bridges to its environment and resources in order to survive.

As the CWS makes the transition from an autonomous program to a department, an examination of tightened coupling of the Center to the national bureaucracy, to the university, and to the Faculty of Social Sciences in particular points to a grinding of the gears at the margins of the university. This grinding signals a possible point of conflict--a nuisance from a structural perspective but the focus of a political perspective, the approach to which I now turn.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE POLITICAL PERSPECTIVE: MANEUVERING AT THE MARGINS

> I would look at the gender issue differently from the western way....I would use the word "harmony" between genders in this society; harmony more than conflict. It has never caused any social conflict at all....In higher education I don't see any particular issues that would concern gender. [We] have women rectors--women presidents--in the past and in the present.
>
> --Male Official, Ministry of University Affairs

Utilizing the political perspective as a second approach for data analysis in this study challenges the official's position that harmony prevails over conflict among women and men in Thai society and within higher education. This exposes interests, conflict and power in the arena of higher education, dynamics that are hidden in the structural approach to organizations. This perspective also analyzes the discourse that ignores or hides conflict, thereby reproducing the status quo of male domination, and alternative discourses which challenge the status quo. The structural perspective offers one view of the CWS's organization, that is, its form of governance, lines of authority, structures and functions. The structural perspective highlights the complicated nature of coordinating activities and engineering change within a loosely coupled system.

What the structural perspective misses, however, are the posturing and battles in the arena of the university as actors compete for control of resources and fight to maintain or struggle to resist dominant patriarchal ideologies. From a structural perspective actors would be expected to view conflict as an aggravation since the rationalist assumptions of that perspective posit that an organization exists to

accomplish its goals and conflict obstructs its mission. Those whom I interviewed spoke disparagingly about politicking within the FSS and Regional University. The political perspective, however, exposes the dynamics of intense conflict as inevitable and as life-as-usual within the organization.[25] And as much as rationalist assumptions may underlie the criticism of politicking that I heard, my observations and interviews suggest that the organizing of women's studies at RU is very much a political activity.

In this chapter I discuss the CWS within the FSS as an arena of competing ideas and interests where conflict is common and sometimes intense. I present and analyze two case studies which illustrate the political dynamics of organizing women's studies at Regional University.

Understandings of Power

One tradition within the political perspective posits that organizations consist of collectivities of people which depend on limited resources in the environment for the maintenance and survival of the organization (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Membership in these groups shifts as individuals coalesce around different interests and compete for scarce material and human resources and for the resource of power. I draw on this perspective in the analysis of the first case where competition for resources surfaced repeatedly in discussions. While the theme of access to resources was muted in the second case, I also consider the implications of this perspective in the analysis.

From a critical theoretical perspective, people live within and construct societies and, thus, organizations, which are characterized by dominant and alternative ideologies and resistances (Apple 1992). Dominant ideologies, such as the assumption of personal advancement

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[25] I use "faculty administration" and "the dean" as interchangeable terms within this chapter. When referring specifically to the dean himself I call him Dean Suwit.

within a society based on merit, reinforce and reproduce prevailing power relations. The dominant discourse, that is the dominant ideology, although it oppresses, can also be resisted. This way of thinking is grounded in Foucault's (1980) view of power as the politics of everyday life, and views power processes as complex (Fraser, 1989; Gallin, 1995; Villareal, 1992). In this way of thinking, power is "instantiated in mundane social practices and relations" (Fraser, 1989, p. 26) which implies that efforts to dismantle or transform current power relations must attend to the complex processes and address practices and relations of dominance in everyday life. Resistances allow actors both to individually "maneuver within the spaces/margins" of dominant power relations and to challenge dominant ideologies collectively and individually. In this way of thinking power is not only used to oppress but it is productive as well. As I examine the attempts to dismantle existing power bases of both alternative and dominant ideologies in these two cases, particularly the second, I consider the discourse among the actors and the productive use of power to resist the dominant ideology.

Although CWS professors' work is not in the mainstream and their ideas challenge mainstream practices which pay scant attention to women and to gendered relations, CWS professors do not see their work as marginal or themselves as powerless. The following excerpt from the CWS's project evaluation report of the Second Training Seminar for Paralegal Workers project report graphically illustrates how CWS professors used their access to power to defend a village headwoman. In this instance CWS professors utilized their power, that is, their access to information and to a successful attorney, to support one woman with whom they see themselves in partnership at the grass roots level.

The CWS invited women whom regional NGO personnel had identified as community leaders to two weeks of seminars for training as

paralegals.[26] Following the seminar an instructor was assigned to stay in touch with each paralegal in her home village in case she needed additional information or advice. As part of the project grant, the advisors traveled to visit the paralegals in their home villages. There the advisors gave lectures and answered legal questions of particular interest to the local citizens--or non-citizens, in the case of ethnic minority people who are not granted citizenship under Thai law. While visiting a paralegal in another province, one advisor confronted the following controversy:

> One of the paralegals was prosecuted for the charge of defamation by an owner of a construction company. This was due to the performance of her duties as village head by voicing complaints of villagers affected by the construction company's activities. As a result, the CWS arranged for Mr. Chatchai Chunitawan [a famous human rights lawyer working on the project] to represent her in this case. The litigation was successful and she was found not guilty by the court of first instance in Anantana province.

In this vignette, a representative of the CWS working together with a rural woman, a paralegal trained by the CWS, challenged the construction company, a player in the game of national economic development. The CWS used its access to power (an influential attorney and material resources) to support the headwoman of a rural village in her challenge to the construction company's defamation charge. It is this kind of partnership with villagers over domination by others to which the CWS members are committed and which they plan to continue through their Center work. Thus, at the heart of CWS work is a challenge to power. Perhaps because of that, politics are an important dynamic both within the Center itself and in its relationship with the rest of the university.

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[26] The CWS defines paralegals as community leaders who are knowledgeable in the law and can apply this knowledge to resolve conflicts at the local level.

The two cases below illustrate the political dynamics in the CWS and within the university. The first case examines the attempts of two interest groups struggling for control of resources through an attempt to change the CWS's mode of governance following its upgrade to a department. The second case examines the discourses of domination and resistance, of maneuvering at the margins in the case of the CWS's eleventh-hour decision not to participate in the FSS's academic service project "Improving Conditions for Thai Women." Each case is followed by a discussion of the conflict and each suggests enduring themes found in the case from the political perspective.

Throughout the analysis I assert that academic and fiscal resource agendas are impossible to disentangle, as are personal and organizational interests and motives. Since interests and agendas are impossible to completely untangle, through the cases and analysis that follow I will attempt to show how they are intertwined.[27]

Case No. 1: The Upgrade to a Department: The Way is not like the Rose

On February 13, 1990 the Center for Women's Studies received approval to apply for department status within the Faculty of Social Sciences. In December 1992, the Center applied to the Ministry of University Affairs to receive official status as a fourth department within the Faculty of Social Science. The change in status was approved in July 1993.

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[27]Personal vendettas and how they are played out in Thai social action are also very much a part of academic politics. Allusions to personal animosities surfaced in interviews and I acknowledge that they are a part of private motivation for action within an organization. I do not elaborate on these animosities or vendettas in my analysis but I do acknowledge that they exist and are inseparable from actors' articulated motivation for action. I posit that women also play out these vendettas but with less practice and at greater odds in a male-dominated Thai society, a theme that I address in the discussion of Center leadership.

During the course of 1993, faculty administrators began to discuss how the director of the upgraded center should be chosen. Just before the King authorized the CWS's change in status in the Royal Gazette, the FSS dean sent a memorandum to the three department heads about a new selection for choosing the CWS director. Members of the Center for Women's Studies were not aware that this memo was going to be circulated. At the next meeting of the FSS Standing Committee,[28] both the memorandum and a proposal for a new governance structure for the upgraded CWS were on the agenda. The dean proposed that the CWS be governed according to the model of faculty-level research institutes on the university campus. The rationale for this new structure was that the function of the Center--its research and extension work--was more similar to the work of an institute than to a department where courses are taught. This new model would expand the membership of the policy-making committee of the Center and change the process of selecting the Center director.

After the Center for Women's Studies officially was upgraded in July, the FSS Committee met again. The Center for Women's Studies was represented at this meeting, but not by A. Radida. Convinced that the committee would not respond favorably to her, A. Radida asked a CWS colleague, Professor Linchee, to represent her. In addition to being a department colleague of four Standing Committee members, A. Linchee was arguably the most academically illustrious and by rank the most senior professor in attendance at the committee meeting.

At the meeting Professor Linchee proposed a second model of governance on behalf of the Center for Women's Studies. Since the Center had been granted the status of a department, the Center's

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[28] The FSS Standing Committee consisted of the dean, [four] associate deans, three department chairs and several elected professors, including the former dean who had lost a second-term election to the current dean.

rationale was that the governance structure should parallel that of a department, even though the Center was not yet offering any courses. This meant that the professors affiliated with the Center would remain the members of the working committee and that they would choose the director.

Neither side left with its original proposal intact. Although no one mentioned compromise, they had indeed compromised. A. Linchee agreed that the CWS working committee and advisory board merge into one standing committee, to parallel the governance model of a faculty institute as the dean had proposed. A. Linchee also volunteered that the standing committee would welcome additional professors to join the new CWS standing committee, thereby meeting the dean's interest in expanding committee membership. For its part, the FSS Committee agreed that the dean should re-appoint professors currently serving on the CWS working committee and advisory board. They also agreed to consider the CWS's counter-proposal to govern according to department structure. The FSS sent both the deans' and the CWS's governance proposals to the university-wide deans' committee for that body to make the final decision. While everyone awaited this decision, the dean of the Faculty of Social Science notified A. Radida that until a decision had been made she would be considered not Director but "Acting Director" of the Center for Women's Studies. Several weeks later the Vice President for Academic Affairs sent out a memorandum stating that the selection of the CWS's "department head" or director would parallel the departmental selection process this time. In four years, department heads and deans would be involved in selecting the next CWS director.

In describing this process of pressing for the Center's upgrade to department status at a national seminar, A. Radida lamented, "The way is not like the rose, the way has many thorns." The process of the development and upgrading of the Center resembled not the delicate

fragrant rose petals at the top of the stem, but rather the thorns that emanate from the stem, thorns that must be avoided lest they pierce the flesh and wound the one who touches them.

Discussion

The king's signature elevated the CWS to a department and procedures for governing a department already existed within the university. Why, then, did faculty administration raise the issue of the governance of the CWS and propose a significant change in the organizational structure of the CWS? I argue that the discourse of the dean's proposal was about structures and rules but at stake were issues of control and power.

From a structural perspective, rules, regulations and procedures in organizations are often viewed as rational instruments to be manipulated in order to enhance task performance and outcomes. A political view suggests that these are better understood as "products and reflections of a struggle for political control" (Morgan, 1987, p. 162). What appears to be disagreement over structural change--the adoption of new university rules and regulations for governing the Center for Women's Studies--actually was a fierce power struggle.

The dean saw the CWS as competing for and taking scarce material resources from the Faculty. Other FSS administrators viewed CWS professors' work for the Center as a drain on department resources: more work for the CWS meant less time available for teaching in the department. The dean also viewed the CWS director and her colleagues as controlling the Center and its entire agenda. CWS professors, on the other hand, viewed the multi-faceted work of the Center as a valuable, expanding resource within the FSS which enhanced the work of the Faculty, carried out the university's commitment to academic service and

contributed to the work of national development--albeit from an ideology which challenged the dominant discourse. Discourse about structures, functions and position descriptions actually constituted a struggle for power, for control over the Center and its resources. The dean used the power of his position to set the terms of the debate and to stage the challenge; the CWS used its power to oppose the dean and maintain control over the resources and direction of the Center.

Structures, Functions, Rules and Resources

The dean proposed a new structure with different election procedures for the CWS based on the *functions* of the Center rather than on its new status as a department within the university structure, explaining that the functions of a center should determine how a center is governed. Research institutes at Regional University are engaged primarily in research and academic service activities; the chief function of a department, however, is teaching. According to the dean, the CWS's chief function is not teaching but rather is research and academic service; therefore the CWS should be governed as a research institute. Ironically, one reason that CWS professors did not engage in teaching women's studies courses was that in 1986 administrators rejected the Program for Women's Studies' first objective which was to establish a women's studies curriculum. In 1993 faculty and university administrators pointed to the fact that offering courses and teaching were not part of the CWS's function as one reason why the Center should change its modus operandi.

To parallel the structure of a research institute, the dean proposed that the CWS's structural arrangement of two separate but related entities--the CWS committee and a CWS advisory board--should be replaced with one standing committee. Standing committee members would

come from each FSS department, different faculties in the university, and, he suggested, even from other universities. To choose a director according to this model, each FSS department would nominate a candidate for CWS director and FSS administrators would select the person who, in their opinion, was the "best nominee" to head the Center for four years. Additional reasons the dean cited for his proposed structural change were to bring new faces to the CWS Committee and to change the procedure for how the Center director would be selected, casting the net more widely for potential candidates.

The director and committee of the CWS countered that the governance system of the newly upgraded center should be based on *structure*. Since the CWS had acquired the status of a department, they argued, the Center should be governed in the same way as a department. The CWS secretary explained the rationale this way:

> If you want to appoint a chair of a [French] department you ask for nominations from the professors in the department--you don't go across the department to ask the teachers in an English Department, right? The dean has to go and ask the professors in the [French] department, "Who do you want to nominate as a chair?" And that's what we want...[for] the professors in the CWS who are associated with the Center for Women's Studies to be able to nominate their own chair.

Given the existing governance structure of the CWS, this strategy of "department members," i.e. CWS professors, nominating the director implied that current CWS professors would nominate the director. In light of current CWS members' support for A. Radida, they would certainly elect her to a four-year term as director. Since she had been responsible for attracting donor support and developing the scope of CWS activities into an exemplary Thai women's studies program, her colleagues supported A. Radida staying on as director. One CWS staff member stated:

> There's no other qualified candidate [to be the] director....There are limited funds, and [the director] is not working just as an administrator, but also has to be a "funding hunter" and needs a lot of connections and credibility with funding agencies. I don't see anybody else that can replace her at the moment.

CWS members were not simply concerned about structure, they believed it was imperative that A. Radida continue on as the Center director.

By virtue of the dean's position as the elected authority of the Faculty of Social Sciences, he not only initiated the debate about functions, structures, and position descriptions but he also controlled the timing of the circulation of the memo and agenda of the Standing Committee meeting where his proposal was to be discussed.

Dean Suwit, by virtue of his position, set the agenda for FSS Standing Committee meetings. In proposing an alternative form of governance for the Center for Women's Studies without consulting the CWS professors, the dean exercised control over the FSS Standing Committee's agenda in an to attempt to institute a new form of governance in the CWS. If successful, the dean would have sought out nominations from many sectors and thus would have appointed as director the person he and the selection committee considered "most qualified." This move could have wrested power from A. Radida and those with whom she had worked for eight years, thereby giving the dean greater control over the Center's direction and agenda than he originally had.

CWS professors did not have access to the FSS Standing Committee agenda nor control over the distribution of the agenda. The CWS professors did interpret the proposed structural change as more than simple tinkering with director/committee selection procedures, however. They viewed the proposed structural changes as vital to their power. A. Radida chose not to attend the FSS Standing Committee meeting herself but asked a non-controversial, highly respected professor to attend in her place. A. Linchee did not see herself as a CWS negotiator, but, in

fact, she was a figure with whom to be reckoned. She offered a sensible counter-proposal on behalf of the CWS: if the CWS had the status of a department then it should be governed as a department. When one FSS administrator tried to reject the CWS's counter-proposal, A. Linchee asserted that since they were all "part of the faculty" they should be able "to reason together;" which they did. Several FSS Standing Committee members agreed that A. Linchee's counter-proposal should be considered, and the meeting ended with the current CWS structure intact.

FSS administrators and CWS professors did not only debate rules and structures but they also were competing for resources, particularly for control of the Center for Women's Studies. The CWS sees the presence and work of the center as a resource to the Faculty and to the university; the dean sees it in competition for FSS resources. CWS activities constitute a resource for the university, through its Information Center, occasional seminars, academic service which reaches beyond the borders of the campus, and through the expertise of professors with knowledge of and experience in women's issues. The CWS brings outside resources for the Center to the university; specifically, money for research, materials, training, office staff and a building.

The dean, however, spoke of the CWS as competing for the limited resources of the Faculty. While the autonomous programs required minimal funds from the Faculty since their funding is all external, departments are entitled to FSS resources. The dean stated clearly that the CWS's upgrade to a department required additional resources from the faculty budget. From his perspective the expertise of CWS was not an asset to the faculty but rather a drain on the budget. Given the elevation in status of two FSS departments--Economics and Business Administration--which took resources from the FSS and increased the need for additional funding for these two departments, the dean was

particularly unhappy that the former CWS program had worked to become a department and would now also require dwindling FSS resources.

A CWS professor indicated that on two occasions the dean apportioned funds to the three FSS departments for research and special activities but he gave various reasons why the CWS, the newest department, should not receive a share of Faculty funds. Through these actions the dean reinforced and reproduced the status quo and its ideological underpinnings. When one unit is deserving of more funds than another, the entity which is judged "more deserving" occupies a more elevated position in the hierarchy than the unit that is less deserving. The dean's actions not only prevented the CWS from having access to Faculty funds, but also relegated the CWS to a less deserving, marginalized position.

The dean is on the advisory board of another FSS center which gives a small share of its outside funding to the Faculty in payment for its electricity. While this is not common for other centers, the dean suggested to A. Radida that the CWS should consider this practice in partial payment for custodial personnel and electricity. The dean saw the Center as rich in material resources and in a position to help fund the FSS rather than vice versa. A. Radida countered that the CWS carried out the work of the Faculty and was entitled to financial support from it.

From the point of view of some other administrators in the Faculty, professors are the essential resource for the main work of the university, that is, teaching undergraduate and graduate courses. While professors also engage in research and academic service, these may be considered volunteer activities and in competition with professors' time for teaching. As CWS secretary Napaporn reported:

> Sometimes the department has an uneasiness to let their professors have responsibilities here [at the CWS] because they're afraid that they won't be able to work for the department most of

> the time. When you take a job it means that you have to spend your time on it...and there's a problem with personnel in the departments--that they don't have enough faculty.

I asked one professor if department colleagues would see work with the CWS as enhancing the work of the department. She responded:

> Oh no, no, no. Not an advantage....My work at the CWS is of advantage to me. I gain knowledge in order to teach students-- it's a benefit for me and it's an advantage for the department also, because I'm not using the teaching time to work there. I said that I guarantee that I will help with the duties of the department as well as the Center for Women's Studies....I realize very well that, being a university lecturer, my first priority is to teach; but I never ignore the people--it is my lifetime commitment.

Although several CWS professors noted that one of the primary benefits to them of working in the CWS was that the research and related work enhanced their teaching, those who disagreed with the way the Center was being run viewed these activities not as complementary but in competition.

Commitment to center or program activities also may take professors away from teaching unstaffed courses. In 1993 the Department of Political Science introduced a new (undergraduate) Law program. Since a number of law professors engaged in special program and research activities, the program coordinator found it difficult to enlist staff to teach the courses necessary to make Law a viable new program.[29]

Discussions about human and material resources--and the instances in which the CWS was excluded from Faculty funds--underscore the reality

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[29] This is directly related to how courses are staffed. Low course enrollment for a particular course may result in a professor teaching only one course. He or she then could choose whether to devote more time to other activities or to teach an unstaffed course. While professors have a sense of duty to students and colleagues and while there are incentives (additional pay, counts toward merit promotion) to teach additional courses, a professor is not required to take on additional teaching responsibilities if too few students have enrolled in the course that she or he has offered.

that competition for limited resources can indeed be a source of conflict. It also suggests that control of the Center, which represents substantial resources, may be of primary interest to the dean. As the battle continues, the governance style of the CWS raises another concern.

The dean asserted that the CWS's small, self-perpetuating committee excluded the contributions of others. CWS professors described their committee as a working group--a hard-working group of people--who shared similar ideas--ideas considered marginal to mainstream thinking in the Faculty of Social Sciences--and worked together to execute those ideas. They maintained that the committee was an inclusive group which regularly invited others in to participate in particular CWS activities. The dean, however, believed that a larger working group was necessary to carry out the work of the Center in its "initial stage of development" as a department. He argued:

> We need a director who can be very open for the initial stage of the development of the Center. It's impossible to pick someone to do [the work] with a small group of people and try to produce good quality research regarding women's issues with a small group of people.

The CWS's on-going decision to maintain a pattern of work and governance that differed from other autonomous programs elicited the observation that the director and the committee were "closed" and that the director was "very selective in choosing her colleagues." Two professors from different faculties, the first a man, the second a woman, observed:

> Everybody--the [professors] in the Center for Women's Studies--they are not open; they are closed. We are very interested in that Center for Women's Studies, we want to study something about [women] too, but the professors at the Center were closed, they do not have open minds and don't want anybody to be involved with them...
>
> Many of the faculty members would see [the CWS] as a monopoly...no one [goes] there to interfere

> or to step into the Center for Women's Studies; it's a kind of kingdom....I haven't seen many professors except those who are part of the Center for Women's Studies there at the Center going after information or looking up resources or anything.

Since the CWS committee is a self-perpetuating committee and would remain so under their proposed department-style system of governance, the dean's proposal raised the question of how new members can be brought on to the CWS standing committee and how other professors can rotate into the directorship. Although in the FSS committee meeting A. Linchee volunteered that any interested professors would be welcome to join, no additional professors had stepped forward to request membership in the CWS committee group. Perhaps other professors were reluctant to join the perceived "monopoly" or "kingdom;" perhaps they preferred to work with another center. For whatever reasons, the only names submitted to the dean for the new CWS standing committee were those of professors who had been serving on the committee for at least two years

With an eye toward resources, one FSS administrator further argued that the current exclusive organizational arrangement would be "suicide" for the Center:

> To have only six people doing administration and research is suicide for the Center. It will be unable to attract necessary resources...I'm not in favor of having the director who [is voted in by] only six people who sit on the standing committee of the Center for Women's Studies. That's going to narrow down many opportunities for cooperation.

The administrator reasoned that attracting material resources and doing the necessary administrative work as an official department in the bureaucracy would be impossible with a small committee and that opportunities for cooperation with other professors would also be eliminated.

While the dean spoke of structures, rules, and resources, the

attempt to change the rules was a maneuver for control to dismantle A. Radida and the CWS Committee's existing power base and to gain control over that power base. It is important, then, to explore who the director is in somewhat more detail.

The Director

With the unwritten understanding that a center director is, as a professor from another center noted, a center's "owner," the director *is* the center in the minds of many. According to the structural arrangement of a center at RU, and the hierarchical Thai cultural pattern of organizing, most frequently center directors establish a center, chart its course, and go after funding to ensure its survival. This pattern prevailed among all five FSS centers.

Given the intense debate over rules for choosing the CWS director and committee, it is important to know more about A. Radida and perceptions of her role and her work. She emerges as a highly controversial figure, one who is always ready to challenge those who would thwart the course she has charted for the Center. It also is essential to remember that organizational conflicts do not hinge on the actions of one person alone nor is this particular conflict solely an artifact of RU personalities. Conflicts precede and outlast any individual. This case provides the opportunity to see at close range "how and why the organizational actor is a political actor" (Morgan, 1987, p. 196) and to see the salience of organizational actors enacting competing political interests within the organization.

Both friends and opponents describe A. Radida as "strong," "tough," "aggressive on women's studies," and one who gets angry "very easily when someone makes male chauvinistic remarks." The director acknowledges that she is known to be a "non-compromising figure when

[she] deals with the administrators." A. Radida, together with a cadre of like-minded professors, has opposed the university in its efforts to build the city's largest auditorium at the front gate of the university and to lease part of the campus to businesses as a profit-making venture for the university. In the case of the former, she entered unannounced into a meeting where the rector and the deans were discussing the project behind closed doors. She interrupted the meeting and presented them with a petition from a group of university professors, some of whom were with her, to challenge the site of the proposed new building.

A. Radida believes the Center has to work in opposition to administrators at every level of the Thai bureaucracy. In a national seminar she described this perceived lack of support for the Center for Women's Studies, speaking of officials as "they" and "them." When asked to clarify who "they" are, she replied:

> "They" means starting from the faculty up to the university and the Ministry of University Affairs and also the Budget Bureau. The Office of Royal Decrees is no problem. So I can't say which one--it's each one, every one.

In a society that values "social smoothing" tactics over argumentation, even in academia (Komin, 1990), and especially among women, how the Center director tries to straddle two worlds, trying to be a director of a Center for Women's Studies in the context of a male-dominated society is part of the complexity of A. Radida. She plays by their rules, confronting men and women alike, posturing according to male-defined rules while working to advance women's rights. Yet constructed social norms indicate that women are to be followers, not leaders. When women do lead, they are to be gently assertive, certainly not leaders at the forefront of conflict. As studies of other Asian feminists and women's studies scholars suggests, challenging the gendered status quo of patriarchal ideology and structures requires leaders who are assertive and undaunted (see Committee on Women's

Studies in Asia, 1994; Jaywardena, 1986). The Advisor from the Prime Minister's Office to the National Commission on Women's Affairs highlighted this:

> Within the university's administrative web, the personal leadership of [women's studies] has to be very dynamic. You actually rely on the leadership of those people who are involved to make things happen. [A program's success depends on] the seriousness of the person--usually the individual professor who is personally involved.

A leading academic feminist in Bangkok noted specifically of A. Radida:

> Radida is very strong in [the regional women's] movement, but more or less single-handedly. I don't know how many of her colleagues understand what she is doing or appreciate what she is doing.

With respect to social location and power, A. Radida is part of a wealthy, upper class, landholding family. One RU professor volunteered admiration for A. Radida in that she gives her heart and soul for this work when she wouldn't have to work at all:

> She could just only teach but she works very hard...it's not necessary for her to work as hard as this. So I think that she has sacrificed to a certain extent.

Others observed that because of these personal resources she was neither beholden to others nor did she have to make concessions throughout the organizing process in the ways that others of lesser means did. For her part, A. Radida refers to the CWS and to her work in the women's movement as her infant, her child. While she is disappointed that this child has not matured more quickly and requires her to invest increasing amounts of time and energy for its development, she maintains a hopeful vision for its future. Donors have encouraged A. Radida to develop a plan for the future of the CWS; her dream is that it will serve the region more broadly, bringing in women from throughout Southeast Asia.

A key premise of the political perspective is that conflict is a daily occurrence in organizing and organizations. Following this

analysis of the dynamics of power negotiation and conflict in the upgrade of the CWS, it would be conceivable to interpret this discrete event as a major turning point for the organization of the Center for Women's Studies rather than as one of many episodes of conflict that constitute life-as-usual in the organization. To illustrate the everyday nature of conflict within the institution, I present a second case. The political perspective highlights that conflict is part of the fabric of an organization. This episode of conflict underscores that reality and extends the discussion of the dynamics of power within and around an organization.

Case No. Two: The Development Agency International (DAI) Project

"[In] the Thai culture, you know that this happens all the time." So said a Regional University professor in discussing one occasion of conflict between the CWS and the dean about which I was questioning her. She was intimating that conflict is routine and not worth paying much attention to. Her indication that it *is* routine compelled me to pay close attention to her remarks.

The conflict under discussion focused on a project called the "Improving Conditions for Thai Women (ICTW)" that was a public-private partnership among Regional University's Faculty of Social Sciences and a number of major corporations facilitated by a North American government aid agency I call the Development Agency International (DAI).

One responsibility of the FSS Associate Dean for Academic and Foreign Affairs is to attract grant money to the FSS for research and academic service. The ICTW proposal grew out of an earlier grant the dean had prepared to underwrite a counseling initiative for students at Regional University. The proposal was not funded, however, a key government official, suggested that the dean submit an alternative

project proposal that the DAI might fund--a campaign to address child prostitution. Although this is not what the dean and his associates originally had wanted to work on, they decided to "give it [their] best shot." Unfamiliar with work in this area--"We just had ideas but we didn't know how to do it at that time"--they worked "gradually" and were pleased with the results.

This large project was related to an earlier smaller project that was intended to address attitudinal issues among parents, children and teachers about the dangers of young girls going into prostitution.[30] They weren't certain how to proceed but took every step "moving very carefully" and were pleased with the influence that the teacher-counselors and the videotapes they produced had on the villagers.

With the possibility of significant funding from the DAI, the proposal was expanded. The "attitude-changing" component was extended. Scholarships were added that would enable girls to finish middle school. Occupational training and job placement constituted the final partnership between private companies and the university/government partnership. The associate dean explained the rationale of the project:

> We have to find the jobs first--we have to find the market demand first and then work backward into the training. And now we are very successful. We have sent several girls to Bangkok to work and to be trained at Kanoke Academy to become assistant health workers.

The project began with a quickly-planned seminar for governors and other high ranking government officials, the first officially DAI-funded part of the project. "So everything was in a hurry and everything was

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[30] In this particular area, parents' reasons for sending their daughters to become prostitutes include not only economic desperation but also parents' desires for additional family income. With the deeply held cultural value of the importance of expressing gratitude (*bunkhun*) to one's parents, young girls enter the sex trade. In other areas parents are tricked and girls are abducted and forced into prostitution.

done rapidly--as you can imagine," concluded the administrator. CWS professors did not participate in the seminar.

CWS professors learned about the grant and followed its progress in the same manner as an average literate citizen--through the newspaper. From the newspaper they learned that members of the ICTW project committee included a former CWS member and a professor from another university.

The deans did not include the CWS in discussions of the ICTW proposal until just before the dean's office and the donors officially announced the project. The dean circulated a memorandum that listed the positions of ICTW advisory committee members and included on the list was the position "CWS Acting Director." A. Radida attended a meeting of the project committee; it was there that she first received a copy of the project proposal. Later she discussed the project with the professors of the CWS and together they reached the conclusion that the CWS would not participate in the project and A. Radida would not be part of the project committee.

FSS Dean Suwit indicated that he preferred that the committees work together on the project

> This is not a factor of women but about HIV as well as AIDS....One of the Academic Committee's major tasks is to give service to the community...and this problem is huge. I personally feel that we need to help; not just one single agency can solve it.
>
> Before signing the agreement I asked the director of the Center for Women's Studies to serve on a [project] committee that's part of the Faculty of Social Sciences but she wrote a letter to refuse--because that's the way it is. I can understand why because they feel anything dealing with women should be their area of interest. However, I consider that this is a very serious issue and A. Wimol's [academic] committee has a responsibility to give service to the community....
>
> It would be more effective if the Center for Women's Studies and A. Wimol's committee could

> work together and use the expertise of each other to tackle each problem.
>
> S: Do you think that will happen?
>
> D: No. [The director] said they have a different way of doing things. But they need more people to work on this because the committee of Center for Women's Studies is very limited....
>
> I'm glad to see [the Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office] is going to do the same thing. She talked on Channel 9 [TV] and mentioned my name--our faculty--that we're doing this and they're going to do the same thing. They have more money. I feel sorry that the Center for Women's Studies doesn't see the problem is so huge....

The CWS professors critiqued the project for being overly ambitious, for including the training of "beauty advisors"--a dubious occupation for keeping young women out of prostitution since it is a notorious channel for bringing them in. (This occupation was later deleted from the final proposal.) CWS professors also expressed the opinion that the proposals' rationale was not clearly delineated and it appeared to "blame the victim." But primarily the CWS professors were concerned that the project committee consisted of professors without expertise in this area and that project organizers had disregarded both printed and human resources available through the CWS. The FSS administration had not utilized Information Center materials which document and analyze different facets of the dynamics of prostitution in the region. Neither had Faculty administrators drawn on the collective insight of the CWS affiliated professors, at least two of whom have conducted research and action research projects related to women in prostitution. (In fact, the dean individually approached at least one professor of the CWS with knowledge and research experience in this area to request her participation in the project. She indicated that she was already engaged in another time-demanding research project which precluded her involvement in this one.) "It shows how they think about

us," said one professor. "I think it's very [indicative] of how they view the center in general," said another. A third elaborated:

> The people who are involved [with the project] don't have enough experience or enough knowledge to work in this area; prostitution is very sensitive and it's a hard issue to do well in. I think they should possess certain expertise and I think that they're inadequate, they don't have enough expertise to do this work. It's a hard issue; you have to do it very cautiously. It is a very complex, very complicated issue. You should do it little by little, not a huge project that you cannot manage in terms of people involved and in terms of money, in terms of administrative management. And it is too ambitious I think, the project itself.

The CWS professors unanimously agreed that it would be imprudent for A. Radida to participate in this project.

These disagreements may appear to the government official who facilitated ICTW project funding as a series of puzzling internecine squabbles. Since the goal of the CWS and the National Commission on Women's Affairs is to advance the position and improve conditions for Thai women, cannot these professionals simply work together and do their part to effect these changes?

Discussion

The DAI case involved typical university activities of conceptualizing research, writing proposals and engaging in academic service activities. The DAI grant was among the largest grants the FSS had ever received and received more media publicity than other grants, but the steps of design and execution were common, not unusual. As A. Linchee had noted, the conflict between the FSS and the CWS over the proposal is the sort of conflict that "happens all the time." An analysis of the conflict reveals similar patterns to those of the first conflict and underscores the fact that political posturing and battles are really quite ordinary.

In this second case, as in the first, the dean[31] once again utilizes the power of his elected position to advance his--and what he would label FSS, RU and national--interests. From his position of control the dean decides the timing of sending out information to the newspaper and an invitation to the CWS Acting Director to attend the ICTW project committee meeting. He also decides who participates in the conceptualization and early negotiations of the project proposal and who is appointed to the project committee.

In contrast to the first case, however, the discourse is less about rules, structures and resources and more about competing ideas and who is marginalized. The ideas more obviously in competition in case two include the ways in which different groups conceptualize gendered relations. Symbols of resistance within the dominant discourse reinforce the expressions of this conflict and cultural views of harmony and conflict give insight into how scenarios of conflict are played out.

Conceptualizing Gendered Relations

CWS professors conceptualize gender relations far differently from the MoUA official quoted in the introduction to this chapter. He speaks of harmony, not conflict, in gender relations in Thai society and higher education. CWS professors, on the other hand, discuss, lecture, plan training sessions, and publish reports on inequalities among Thai men and women, and on injustices suffered by women and girls in Thailand and throughout Southeast Asia. For the CWS professors, the fact that a few women rectors occasionally head Thai universities does not confirm that "all is well" for women in Thai higher education; rather, they question why more women do not occupy administrative positions at all levels of the university and why the government has limited the number of women

[31] Here again, "the dean" does not specifically refer to Dean Suwit himself.

entering certain fields such as veterinary science. CWS professor A. Kanchanaa assessed the situation in this way:

> The women's studies issue is not really very popular. Not many people give attention to it or realize the importance of this issue. They don't see women conceptually. They see women physically, but conceptually--there's no woman in their concept.

CWS professors try to help others see women conceptually; in so doing they resist and challenge dominant societal power structures that popularly position women as the "hind legs of the elephant." CWS activities focus on empowering women and on raising public awareness about women's issues. CWS professors and staff align themselves with grass roots women and include rural women in planning training seminars on law and leadership, raise women's issues with political party members, encourage women to run for political office, conduct and promote research on women, and gather thousands of documents on women together in one place.

As I discuss in Chapter Five, most CWS professors do not call themselves feminists. Their discourse and their activities, however, support anti-patriarchal (feminist) discourse which actively critiques and resists patriarchy. Their work is consonant with Farganis' (1994) definition of feminism which "assumes the injustice of treating men and women inequitably and views women as oppressed by men through long-standing historical structural arrangements" (p. 102).

Dominant patriarchal ideology is reproduced through inaction and action. In case one, the Center was elevated in status by the MoUA Advisory Commission and the director was demoted in status by the dean. Although she had served as CWS Director for eight years, following the announcement of the official upgrading of the Center for Women's Studies into the Royal Gazette, A. Radida was notified that her title had been changed to "acting director." She was to retain this title until other

decisions had been made with regard to the Center. A. Radida voiced her understanding of this decision to her colleagues at a national seminar, indicating that the decision was grounded in FSS administration's interest in both wresting control from her and, once again, in withholding material resources:

> I am now the 'Acting Director' because the university doesn't know how to manage/control me under this new official status....
>
> The university wants me to be the leader, not the director. Why do they mind? In my understanding my title does not mean "to control everybody" because we work together like in teamwork. [It doesn't mean that I'm on the top, the leader, I'm a bit higher but I can talk to everybody. . .]
>
> We got the salary for the janitor from the department but now there's no money for the title of director...they are afraid to spend money for my title.

"Director" was not just a title; new legislation had, for the first time, just allotted a small monthly stipend for department heads. A head of a center with the status of a department should receive this stipend along with other department heads. In this case, the monetary remuneration would be of little consequence to a person of independent means such as A. Radida. But changing her title and according her a title of lower status--"acting director" for whatever reasons (insufficient funds, waiting to make a decision, need for more information) was a very offensive demotion to A. Radida and to her CWS colleagues. The dean's actions attested to the position power he held and underscored his position of dominance in the faculty hierarchy. Just as A. Radida had metaphorically described the road from program status to department at a national seminar as "full of many thorns," this manipulation of her title was one more thorn.

By ignoring or downplaying the power alliances which reproduce patriarchal structures, administrators at various levels reproduce the

dominant patriarchal ideology. For example, the MoUA official's declaration that there is harmony and "no social conflict at all" among Thai women and men, appeals to the cultural value of harmony and low conflict but ignores the problems and paradoxes of Thai women. At the faculty level, male administrators speak of women as "a factor" in the spread of AIDS and, in so doing, ignore the unequal power dynamics of gendered relations and sexuality. CWS professors insist that experience and knowledge are needed to work in the area of prostitution. They argue that prostitution is a very complex and sensitive issue and that it is a difficult area in which to work successfully. In so arguing, they advocate a different ideological position and are resisting the reproduction of patriarchal ideology that is expressed in this project. They do not, however, act out of resistance as they did with the proposed upgrade structural change. They did not propose an alternative way of doing and jump in to do it. Rather than maneuver from their marginal position, CWS professors agree that A. Radida should leave the project and not work with the committee. To understand this response, it is necessary to consider Thai cultural views of conflict and how to deal with it.

Conflict and Harmony

To place conflict in a Thai context, it is useful to begin the discussion recognizing that Thailand is often called the "Land of Smiles" by Thai people and foreigners alike. Komin (1990) argues that Thais place a high value on "other directed" social interactions which project a picture of smooth, kind, pleasant, no-conflict interpersonal interactions, in short, the "surface harmony" observed by many non-Thais. Komin asserts that the non-assertive, polite personality and the preference for relaxed and pleasant interactions contributes to the

reputation of Thai people as smiling and friendly. Mulder (1979) concurs that a smile is a "means of smooth and polite presentation of self" (p. ix). He adds that a smile may be a sign of good humor or agreement but, for a person who has been offended, it may also express sadness, hurt or opposition.

Smiling when one has been offended is of particular interest here. Komin (1990) argues that ego-orientation is the foremost value among Thais, ranked even higher than smooth presentation of self. Despite a calm presentation of the self, if the ego/self or a person close to one's self has been insulted or violated, one can be provoked to a strong emotional reaction. To illustrate this, Komin cites the high-profile case of Deputy Prime Minister who promptly resigned from the cabinet when another cabinet minister publicly called the Deputy PM's wife a "walking jewelry case." The Deputy PM's response was a not-surprising reaction to the insult.

In less public conflicts, the foremost way of dealing with conflict between people is to consider saving "face" or the ego of the persons involved, to find "indirect ways to soften the message" (Komin, 1990, p. 134). In case one, two professors who attended the FSS standing committee meeting where the alternative governance proposal was presented reported that they remained silent in the face of conflict because they "didn't want to argue." One professor chose not to voice opposition to the CWS's counter-proposal; another chose not to contradict the dean on an obvious and significant error. Saving face for the other person was of primary importance for both professors.

Komin (1990) labels saving face as one of the "social smoothing" values. Attention to social smoothing does not only mean that one is silent in the face of conflict, but that one is careful to not hurt another's feelings, nor to reject another's good intention or contribution. Intellectual contributions and ideas cannot be separated

from one's self and therefore a rejection--or failure to include--another person's ideas constitutes a rejection of the person. As Komin (1990) asserts:

> It is difficult for the Thai to dissociate one's idea and opinion from the "ego" self. This is why strong criticism to the ideas is often automatically taken as criticism to the person holding those ideas. The Thai would avoid criticising not just superiors, but their equals, and to some extent, their inferiors as well. Such characteristics are deeply internalized (p. 136).

The inextricable connection between the person and the idea, and the anticipatory aspect of social smoothing which requires one person to work diligently in advance to not offend another person, give insight into the CWS's recommendation that A. Radida not participate in the ICTW project. By not involving the CWS in the conceptualization of the project, not inviting the Acting Director to join the project committee until just before the project was announced officially, the dean ignored the CWS's expertise and contributions. This not only signaled low regard for the CWS, but, more specifically for the professors and for the director. As two of the professors noted: "It shows how they think about us" and "It's very [indicative] of how they view the center in general." In light of the dean's insult to the individuals, an appropriate CWS response was to send a letter--as A. Radida did--indicating that she would not be able to participate in the project. In another context a professor might join the project committee, challenge project assumptions and propose an alternative. In this context, the dean's total--and what appeared to be intentional--disregard for the CWS and most of its professors for a project dealing with young women was an egregious offense, not to be ignored or taken lightly.

The dean had similarly ignored and offended CWS professors in the upgrade debate in case one. CWS professors understood that the upgrade

necessitated that they would work under some new set of rules but they also were frustrated that that proposal was developed without consulting them. One professor noted:

> This is the first time that the Center for Women's Studies is officially part of the university so [the administration] had to come up with how we were going to choose the director. But, instead of the normal thing you do with other departments where you have members of the department staff select the [department chair], they said, "No, we're going to have each department in the faculty nominate a person." So without [regard for] all the people that have worked at the center or the committee...they disregarded completely.

Since the CWS committee had been disregarded in the formulation of the dean's governance proposal, they countered with their own proposal. Contrary to CWS professors' decision in case one to maneuver from their marginal position by offering a counter-proposal to the FSS standing committee in order to keep control of the CWS, in this second case the CWS's survival is not at stake. Although the dean's actions and inaction over the ICTW may have been a serious affront to CWS professors, his deeds did not threaten the on-going work of the CWS as they had earlier. The lack of threat to the Center for Women's Studies' work meant that professors reacted to the affront in a more or less normal way, that is, by withdrawing from a difficult situation as a way of dealing with conflict. It takes something like a major threat to a group's core interests for it to risk violating cultural proscriptions against conflict by more actively resisting and countering threats of that sort.

Symbol of Resistance or Domination?

While I continue to describe the CWS as the alternative or resistant ideology, the CWS building raises important questions about the nature of this alternative discourse. Editors of the Center for

Women's Studies Newsletter identified the Center as a symbol of equality for men and women on RU's campus. One CWS professor observed that its construction and the access to material resources that the building represents was a sign to university administrators that women's studies was not simply another program at the margins but that it was strongly supported by similarly-minded donors in the west. Although its activities may not be well-known or understood, by its very presence the CWS building, located directly across from the main library, is a symbol of resistance to dominant patriarchal ideology in Thailand. Or is it?

One western foundation program officer suggested that the construction of the Center for Women's Studies building represents a "press from the west," an act of colonial patrimony or nobless oblige on behalf of another western donor to promote its own agenda for women in Southeast Asia. On the other hand, A. Radida considered herself and the CWS "lucky" that a Norwegian NGO offered funds to construct building which freed her from actively seeking donor support for such a project. This lovely, distinctive building advances the work and announces the CWS's mission; the edifice also stands out from other buildings on campus. It has access to materials from western donors which positions the Center in a rather prominent position at the margins--comfortable office space for professors and air conditioned classroom space for the one or two professors who choose to teach there. The CWS building appears to be both a concrete example of western hegemony and an expression of solidarity between western and Thai feminists. It is an example of the complexity of resistance that individuals and organizations--even those committed to alternative ideologies organizations--both resist and reproduce ideologies of domination.

Conclusions

The political perspective highlights enactments of resistance to and the reproduction of power in the daily life of organizations. In this chapter I explored the ways in which organizations, or, more specifically, organizers, compete for limited resources and I argued that differential awarding of resources reinforces the dominant ideology. I examined ideologies and gendered relations and the complexity of both reproducing and resisting dominant ideas. A discussion of cultural enactments of conflict in Thai culture foreshadowed attention to the cultural perspective of organizations, which I discuss in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: CULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS AT THE MARGINS

> I think this field [of women's studies] is very new and there's no consensus. At this point I think that it is in the process of searching for an identity.
>
> --A. Malee, CWS Professor

Professors at Regional University are creating Thai women's studies. A. Malee speaks of the enterprise as new and "searching for an identity." As CWS professors enact women's studies they are constructing its identity. While a political perspective highlights conflict, interests and power, the cultural perspective focuses on enactments and meanings of women's studies. Their enactments are diverse, shared, fragmented.

Cultural studies of organizations examine organizational actors' interpretations of events and things rather than assuming that a priori meanings exist in the events and things themselves (Louis, 1983/1992). The structural perspective focuses on structures, functions, rules and roles in organizations and the political perspective views these as contested sources of power. From a cultural perspective, however, "organizations are socially constructed realities that rest as much in the heads and minds of their members as they do in concrete sets of rules and relations" (Morgan, 1987, p. 131).

Although the phenomenon of culture has been studied in the academy for over a century, the introduction of culture into studies of organizations gained currency only in the 1970s (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). Organizational theorists most frequently have studied cultures by looking at shared interpretations and meanings among organizational actors (see Martin, 1992; Morgan, 1987). While early cultural studies

by looking at shared interpretations and meanings among organizational actors (see Martin, 1992; Morgan, 1987). While early cultural studies in anthropology also sought out shared, agreed-upon meanings among cultural group members, from the late 1940s scholars also have researched diverse and oppositional interpretations within and among cultures as well as subcultures. Contemporary studies of cultures in organizations explore not only homogeneous cultural views but oppositional subcultures within larger organizations and cultural fragmentation, that is, the constant flux, confusion and unresolvable complexity of organizations (Martin, 1992). In this chapter I consider the CWS's organizational culture as it is embedded in other cultural contexts and I explore the confusion and complexity of culture in the CWS in relation to cultural enactments.

Weick (1979) describes enactments as the processes through which we shape and structure our realities. While I continue to focus on the ways in which CWS professors shape and structure the enterprise of women's studies at Regional, I also include other cultural actors in this chapter, some of whom do not figure prominently in the analysis in the analysis in Chapters Three and Four.[32] Undergraduate students are cultural participants in the wider university culture and in the cultures of specific faculties, departments and classes. Students clearly construct culture and gendered understandings about their world, as my data show. But within the Thai context of teaching and learning I describe, I am compelled also to discuss students as cultural actors who are the focus of cultural transmission, recipients of disseminated knowledge (Spindler, 1974).

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[32]While this analysis focuses on administrators and professors in Chapters Three and Four and pays more attention to students and less to administrators in Chapter Five, this does not imply that perspectives are audience-specific or more appropriate to one group of actors or another.

Within this framework of cultural transmission and disseminated knowledge, I argue that teachers are disseminators and gatekeepers of knowledge. Examining how professors beyond the CWS organize and enact women's studies positions the CWS as part of a broader emergent subculture, that of women's studies at RU. The ways in which professors and students shape their realities is embedded in a larger context of values, discourse and actions.

The position and condition of Thai women and gendered relations which I discussed in Chapter One are part of the broader cultural context in which the CWS is embedded. Also included are important Thai values, some of which I discussed in Chapters Three and Four. In Chapter Three I examined affiliative relationships, such as the Black Lions, within the Thai bureaucratic structure and Chapter Four explored conflict and harmony in Thai culture as related to ego and face and to conceptions of gratitude in Thai relationships. In this chapter I allude to those discussions and I proceed to explore some of the dynamics of Thai academic culture and cultural practices of teaching and learning as they relate to how professors and students engage in the cultural practice of women's studies at Regional University.

Organizational Culture of the CWS

Morgan (1987) asserts that "the formation of a group...ultimately hinges on an ability to create a shared sense of reality" (p. 133). Through their words and actions CWS professors articulate a shared sense of doing women's studies within the broader contexts described above. They agree that doing women's studies means: 1) women and men must work together 2) for equality among Thai women and men 3) to solve the problems of Thai women, especially village and rural women in the region, through training and research. In so doing they are creating a

Thai way of doing women's studies. CWS professors' opinions also diverge, however, on conceptions of feminism and ways of organizing and defining women's studies, weaving a colorful tapestry of an emergent women's studies culture at Regional University.

Men in Women's Studies

CWS professors appeared to be in complete consensus about whether or not men professors should engage in women's studies activities. Women CWS professors did not say, "We invite the men to work with us," rather, they insisted that men and women have to work together to address gender inequities in Thai society. A. Linchee stated:

> Both men and women, we have to solve the problem together--that's my position.

Law professor A. Kamol underscored the importance of his participation in the Center for Women's Studies:

> Some of my students always ask me why I joined the Center for Women's Studies because they think that women's studies is the work of women or only women ought to join. I tell them that women's studies is not only for women, it's for everyone--to construct the understanding that everyone is equal. In Thailand men dominate society. I think it will take a long time to upgrade [the position of women]. This is one reason why A. Radida invited men to become committee members, to show that women's studies is not just for women; everyone has to help.

In addition to the commitment of CWS professors to work together, the participation of men and women professors at national women's studies seminars, including one man who headed another regional university's women's studies center, suggested that this value of women and men working together to do women's studies was shared by professors interested in women's studies throughout Thailand.

Doing Women's Studies the Thai Way

For CWS professors, the belief that men and women must work together to obtain equality for Thai women and men and to improve the position of Thai (rural) women separates them from the west. That is, Thai professors appear to share the perception that in the west women's studies is constructed by women alone, women who choose to define women's studies work apart from men. I posit that this commitment of Thai women to work together with Thai men constitutes one element of constructing women's studies the "Thai way."

When US professors began creating women's studies programs in the 1970s, they paid little, if any, consideration to constructing women's studies "the American way." They simply created women's studies within and alongside the US feminist movement. In Thailand, however, with the history of powerful and unwelcome US political, economic and intellectual involvements in the country, US and other western nations' constructions of women's studies are considered with caution (Bell, 1991).

CWS professor A. Malee spoke candidly about the western origins of Women's Studies and the urgency for Thai scholars to develop a distinctively Thai women's studies:

> Feminism originated in the west and the body of knowledge is western-oriented. But in Thailand we have to indigenize our own body of knowledge of women's studies and we have not done this so far....I really want to indigenize the knowledge in women's studies--but before I can indigenize I have to know exactly what that knowledge is.

A. Malee spoke of "indigenizing" women's studies knowledge. She and her colleagues do not want Thai women's studies to consist of western feminist writings translated into Thai with Thai introductions. A. Malee wants to understand and connect with extant scholarship on women's studies from the west so that she can know "exactly what that knowledge

is" in order to adapt it or to commence the development of a body of uniquely Thai, women's studies knowledge.

A. Malee and her colleagues conceive of their field research and training seminars as building this base of knowledge. At the same time they actively promote equality among rural women and men through academic service, that is, by offering training seminars for women on leadership, the law, research and running for political office. Curriculum and theory development take second place to the urgency of equipping women with skills to participate in rural development.

This commitment to constructing women's studies the Thai way is illuminated through a brief discussion of the disciplinary culture of Thai social sciences. Bell's (1991) work on the influence of the US on Thai social sciences provides an interesting frame for thinking about this. By 1974 8,000 Thai students had been trained in the US. Many studied the social sciences and returned to high positions in the Thai bureaucracy and to teach in Thai universities. Thus, American structural-functionalist scholarship and its bias toward political and economic social stability qualitatively influenced the development of social science research priorities, higher education curriculum, paradigmatic views of society and the translation of these views into public policy. In the 1970s student alliances with farmers and workers in the uprisings profoundly affected Thai society and social science scholarship. Students and scholars alike began to reject the functionalist paradigm that had little explanatory power to help them understand and change the conditions in which they lived. The revolutionary stirrings encouraged a proliferation of Thai Marxist studies which changed the face of the social sciences. Although no less western than a Weberian, positivist analysis, Marxist methodology emphasized the active relationship between social theory and social action and introduced analytical categories of conflict, class struggle

and exploitation specific to Thailand into social science discussions. This deep suspicion of theoretical frames which undergird dominant ideologies also prevails among a number of Thai social scientists today and it influences the research and scholarship of social science professors affiliated with the CWS, reinforcing both resistance to western feminist theories and the commitment to develop women's studies in a distinctively Thai way.

Shared and Diverse Conceptions of Women's Studies

While CWS members completely agreed that men and women should construct Thai women's studies together, dissenting voices quietly registered disagreement over the small size of the CWS committee and its range of activities. One professor suggested that the CWS should expand in size, another asserted that the CWS should begin to offer legal consultation services for women. These were individual ideas, however, and not widely shared. CWS professors demonstrated a greater range of diversity in their lack of consensus about feminism. And although they described CWS goals and activities similarly, their definitions of women's studies differed.

Feminism

In their study of women's organizations in Thailand, Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1991, p. 10) describe feminism in Thailand thusly:

> In western society the word "feminism" sometimes connotes a strong "anti-male" attitude. It often gets conflated with lesbianism. Because of this impression of confrontation (male-hatred), or individual pursuits (often related to "bra-burning," free sex), the word "feminist" is often disliked (frowned upon) or explained differently in the Third World, specifically in Thailand. There is no feminist movement in Thailand as a unified theory.

A. Radida concurs with this explanation of how Thai women, including those in the women's movement, reject calling themselves feminists. She offered this explanation:

> Not many women in the movement itself would consider themselves as feminists because maybe they don't see clearly what feminism means or they are quite reluctant to use the term because of the image of a feminist. A feminist to many of the women--not to mention the men--is seen as the radical, irrational extremist and not very sophisticated.

A. Radida added that being labeled a feminist is not always one's personal choice, but is related to the labels that others create:

> [The media] always classify feminist and intellectual women who work for women's rights and call them feminists. Personally I'm always seen as a feminist. Even the press when they refer to me wouldn't address me as an intellectual or as a professor. They refer to me as a feminist or activist. I'm surprised myself...[so it's not only what] one might choose to call oneself but it's also what people see you as.

While she does not consider the case of Thailand, Jaywardena (1986) argues that feminism is rooted in the traditions and activist movements of women throughout countries of Southeast Asia and that it is necessary to recall those origins lest Asian feminists dismiss feminism as uniquely western enterprise. CWS professors voiced the perception, however, that feminism is a western phenomenon, an anti-men, separatist movement. A. Malee asserts:

> Feminism for me is much different from how the west defines it. A feminist for me is the one who advocates--only advocates--for the rights of women and who advocates for gender equality. For me that's all...I wouldn't work in this if [we were] against men.

Two other women CWS professors, A. Kanchanaa and A. Linchee, distance themselves from the word feminist:

> I don't quite understand the word feminist. What does it mean really? I don't know and I don't care if I'm called a feminist or not. I just work in what I think is interesting and important....So far, when I have come across

> people who refer to somebody as a feminist, I think they say it with some kind of an attitude...not a very good attitude: "Oh, she's a *feminist*." It's not a good attitude....
>
> I don't say, "I'm a feminist." I say, "No, I'm not!" If you present yourself as a feminist, people immediately are against you no matter what you do.

While CWS professor A. Kamol understands feminism as a constructive force in Thai society, at the same time he recognizes the negative connotations of the term. He asserts that not only the broader populace but also RU students from his department unilaterally dismiss the concept of feminism:

> [When people talk about] a feminist in Thailand, I think they think that they're [talking about someone who is] active in fighting for women's rights. Another opinion is not so good. I understand what a feminist is but when I talk to another person--such as the political science students at Regional University--they don't find a good meaning any good points about feminism.

While CWS professors disagreed on the meanings of feminists and feminism, they did share the practice of not openly referring to themselves as feminists or to their work as a feminist project. They are creating a culture of women's studies but not in the context of a Thai feminist movement or shared understandings of feminism.

Definitions of Women's Studies

In addition to holding mixed understandings of feminism, CWS professors offer an array of definitions of what constitutes women's studies. Several professors speak of the emergent nature of women's studies and voice uncertainty about what exactly it is about. CWS professor A. Orapun, a woman, stated:

> [Women's studies] from my point of view? That's very hard. I think it's anything that's related to women's issues--research.

CWS professor A. Prasit, a man, added:

> Women's Studies is something we don't know much about. Any time we don't know much about something we call it "studies."

A. Kamol focused on the essential quality of women's rights as related to women's studies:

> From my opinion and only at Regional University, I think that when someone talks about women's studies they mean a group or an organization or a center that works with or is concerned about women and about making equality for both sexes--but I don't know; this is only my opinion.

A. Kanchanaa, an economist, asserts that women's studies is about equal rights but, even more importantly, in her opinion, offers an essential contribution to national economic development.

> [Women's Studies] consists of activities that relate to a woman's role, the ways in which women will be developed to be a useful resource for the economic development of the country--that's the ultimate goal. It's not that we want to have equal rights [for their own sake]....But if we are equal, if we give more attention to the development of the woman that means that we are developing our own economic resources. The woman is one of the human resources...a valuable human resource.

A. Radida offers this definition:

> I think [women's studies] is not only a concept, it's also a movement--[and it's] not restricted to only women--for people to participate in for the equal status of women and men. But it's not just raising the status of women, especially it means the equal status, not the improved status.

CWS professors speak of women's studies as anything that relates to women's issues, research, western knowledge that needs to be indigenized, an organization on the university campus concerned with women and equality and developing women as a valuable resource for national economic development. While they define women's studies in different ways, there is no evidence of conflict in this diversity. CWS professors' participation in and descriptions of CWS activities speak of shared understandings and priorities in enacting women's studies.

A. Radida spoke of reaching out to the rural women's groups as the CWS's "most urgent and needed strategy" to address women's concerns. A. Kanchanaa spoke of this as the Center's contribution to national economic development. Other CWS professors referred to work with rural women's groups as important in the struggle to achieve equality among women and men in Thailand. Through on-campus seminars CWS professors offer leadership and paralegal training and teach researchers to focus on women in their research projects. In village training seminars CWS professors urge village women to vote and participate in constructing a democratic society as well as to run for political office.

On the first day of CWS seminars on leadership training for rural women and for paralegals, CWS professors lectured on "Why we need to study about women" and "Women and the Law" respectively. The point of these sessions was to show participants the roots of women's subordination to men, set the stage for understanding "strategic gender interests" and build on this understanding through subsequent lectures and seminar activities.

Molyneux (1986) proffers that women's interests in particular socio-political settings be divided into strategic gender interests and practical gender interests.[33] Strategic gender interests are derived from the analysis of women's subordination and an alternative, "more satisfactory set of arrangements to those that exist" (p. 284). Women themselves inductively formulate practical gender interests in response to concrete conditions they experience by virtue of their gender in the

[33] Molyneux (1986) developed this analytical framework to assess particular government following the Nicaraguan revolution. Wieringa (1994) critiques the overuse of the framework and the assumption of strict divisibility between practical and strategic interests. She argues that strategic interests arise in the context of meeting practical interests. While I find Wieringa's critique compelling, I find the categories of practical and strategic gender interests useful descriptive categories for this set of data.

division of labor. Women come to understand *practical* gender interests from their own daily-life experiences whereas an awareness of *strategic* gender interests usually are not achieved through going about daily activities but require a level of conceptual understanding. Developing this kind of understanding of structural bias against women in society and long-term solutions to inequalities is the focus of consciousness-raising sessions where women learn about their strategic gender interests.

Through their social location in Thai society, CWS professors have been privileged to have access to formal higher education and to reflect on strategic gender interests. In CWS seminars they take responsibility for raising the consciousness of rural women about strategic gender interests and, at the same time, address the women's practical gender interests. Through seminar sessions on "why we need to study about women," CWS professors present the facts of discrimination against women in Thai society, underscoring gender strategic interests. Through sessions on herbal medicine and proposal-writing, the professors attend to participants' practical gender interests.

A. Radida and her colleagues invest much time and energy in training seminars. In so doing, they assign first priority to work with grass roots women and to training researchers; they give second place to graduate and undergraduate curriculum development.

CWS professors share a vision of how they will introduce women's studies courses over time--by proposing discrete courses on women through their respective departments. At present, however, their curriculum efforts involve integrating women's issues into departmental courses they currently teach.

The Integration of Women's Issues into RU's Curriculum

CWS professors integrate or infuse women's concerns into their teaching in several different ways. They illustrate points of a lecture with examples of women's concerns, tag stories about women at the end of lessons and assign research reports to their students.

A. Kamol gave examples of ways in which he includes women's issues in undergraduate law courses:[34]

> Every time I have a chance to include some problem about women's rights, I include it. For example, when I'm teaching about contracts I refer to the old contract law which limited woman's right to make a contract except with the consent of her husband--and now this law is abolished.
>
> I think that Thai society is a man-dominated society. Then when we talk about women's studies or feminism, many students protest, they don't agree. For example, almost all of my students think that their mothers do not work, do not earn a salary--only the father. But, in fact, doing work in the house *is* a kind of work. ....Or equal rights. It's very difficult to explain equal rights--why a woman can't do something but a man can. One profession that we talk about right now is the *nai amphur* (district officer). Women can't go into this profession, only men. Or like the governor. Now we have only one woman governor.[35] When we have opportunity to talk about women's rights, I will give the example like this.

In a class on planning and development, A. Malee discusses with the students how development planners must be aware of the needs of both women and men as they set up development projects; otherwise the project outcomes may not benefit the women. A. Kanchanaa includes women's issues in applied economics courses which she described as at a higher

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[34] Law is an undergraduate program in Thai higher education. Upon completion of the undergraduate degree in law, students--if they so choose--may study an additional year to become a barrister.

[35] Governors in Thailand are appointed officials from the Ministry of the Interior. Prior to January 1993 women were not allowed to hold the position of governor. District officers are also Ministry of the Interior appointees who head geographically smaller political units called *amphur* or districts. Women were not allowed to serve as district officers until late 1993.

level than theory courses. Her examples include unequal pay for equal work and the effects of unbalanced development. She described the latter as a chain reaction where farmers become low-wage laborers after being lured or forced into selling their land, who eventually sending their daughters into prostitution to supplement the family income. In anthropology classes, A. Prasit discusses women and work in different cultures and culture-specific practices such as cliterodectomy.

Whereas some professors include examples and information about women in their lectures, A. Orapun said she adds stories at the end of a class session to fill unused time. "Of course" she includes women's issues in her courses, she stated,

> ...but normally I don't know when. Sometimes when I have time and then the [lecture] topic is finished already but I have five more minutes, I don't want to let them out [because they disturb the other classes]...normally I'll keep them in class by giving them examples....

At the end of a lecture to an economics class of mostly men engineering students, A. Orapun told the story of four Burmese girls who had escaped from work in a brothel and went into hiding in a Buddhist temple near the university:

> I told them about the girls, how badly they must suffer...the class was so quiet--so I think it helped a lot. And I told them--most of the students are boys from Engineering--"You shouldn't go [to a brothel]; you should change your norms and values of being a man....You should stop doing that. You should change norms and values because (I used economics terms) when they have demand then they have supply. If you don't demand [it] then there's no supply." So they listened! The whole class was quiet....I don't know whether the results were immediate or not.[36]

[36] Third and fourth year men students, particularly those in certain men-dominated disciplines, were known to take first year "freshies" to brothels as part of their initiation into university life (The New York Times Magazine, 1991). The students who participated in my focus group interviews reported that they were not aware of students maintaining this practice; they cited fear of AIDS as the reason. I did not interview students from the men-dominated disciplines.

Not only does A. Orapun fill time at the end of the class period by recounting this story; she also fulfills her obligation as a Thai teacher to be students' moral guide by telling them that changing their practices can contribute to reducing the trafficking of women in the region.

Several professors assign research projects or written reports to allow or encourage students to think about women's issues. Law professor A. Kamol, asked the students in his criminal law class to write about the criminal offense of rape. He required students to examine a sample decision from the higher court on rape and to combine this with information gleaned from documents from the CWS's Information Center.

Each semester geography Professor A. Linchee assigns a research project to all Cultural Geography students. One year students interviewed students (all boys and young men) studying in various Buddhist temples in the community. RU students learned that most of the boys were from rural areas and had come to the temples to get a free education. A. Linchee explored with students the inequalities inherent in this system which offers an educational option to boys from rural villages which have poor-quality or no schools, but provides no parallel educational opportunity for girls. Another year geography students were scheduled to research "sacred spaces." A. Linchee expected that students might find gender implications in the study when they examined rituals in sacred spaces and discovered that only monks may conduct rituals. Women, even Buddhist nuns (*bikkhuni*), are not allowed to participate.

CWS professors do not merely integrate women's concerns into their teaching and assignments out of personal concern and commitment, they are also encouraged to do this through a curriculum project of the

National Commission on Women's Affairs. In 1991 the NCWA of the Office of the Prime Minister initiated a project funded through Canadian government aid money to integrate women's issues into required undergraduate general education courses. The project director invited interested professors from universities throughout the country to participate in an "action research" project. This meant that interested professors would speak with colleagues on their respective campuses about ways in which women's concerns had been and could be included in undergraduate courses. Professors from seven universities met in Bangkok on at least four occasions to report on the progress of their work. At the end of the project, the NCWA commissioned chapters to be written for a Thai language textbook on women's studies to facilitate and encourage the integration of women's issues into future undergraduate courses.

Systematic, cross-disciplinary integration aims for a larger audience where students from many disciplines and faculties hear about women's issues (Aiken, Anderson, Dinnerstein, Lensink & MacCorquodale, 1993). Many consider integration an important companion to women's studies courses. McIntosh (1983) considers integration an important phase of women's studies curriculum development through which CWS professors identify the womanless nature of the courses they teach and modify the courses to include women's experiences.

A. Prapun, a professor of Education and Humanities affiliated with the Regional Center for Women in the Faculty of Education, prepared RU's curriculum integration report for the NCWA. He described ways in which professors from Social Sciences, Education, and Humanities who teach RU's twelve required undergraduate courses currently do or, in the future, can integrate women's issues into course syllabuses. For example, the introductory course "Thai Society and Culture" emphasizes the changing role and status of women in Thai society. Lectures in

"Introduction to Civil and Commercial Law" may include topics of equal personal rights under the law, the development of family law which limited the rights of married women, and property relationships between husbands and wives.

In his project report, A. Prapun concluded

> In the BA level there are a lot of students and a lot of subjects to study. In the past, topics about women in anthropology, sociology and education or general science depended on the [individual] instructor and [her or his] teaching methods. There is no coordination or exchange of ideas or problems. Also there is limited time for each subject and a large number of students. Incorporating ways of thinking about women is only one subject [of many] and there is no discussion [about these matters].

A. Prapun asserts that systematic integration is not easy to accomplish when students must study many different subjects, or courses, when professors must teach large classes and when "ways of thinking about women" in any given course must compete with many other course topics. The problem is exacerbated, he adds, because no one coordinates integration efforts and professors do not exchange ideas about integration. A. Prapun implies that systematic coordination is preferable to having individual instructors integrate on their own but that coordinating integration efforts with an array of departments and faculties throughout the university is a daunting proposition made more difficult by the fact that there is no integration coordinator.

While integration is one approach to introducing the notion of women's studies to students and professors throughout the university, an alternative or companion strategy is the development of women's studies courses. The Advisor to the Prime Minister's Office, initiator of the NCWA integration project, described her ideas about the two different avenues of teaching women's studies in this way:

> My idea is that you always have to do both [integration] and women's studies course development). There is a need for the younger generation to be exposed to the issues and that

> is why you concentrate on knowledge and learning. But also you need in-depth studies and when you talk about in-depth studies you want to be more concentrated. Organization is needed for that sort of thing--that's why you have women's center or women's studies as an academic major or a division within the faculty.

While four Thai universities offered a few women's studies courses[37] and also participated in the integration project, women's studies courses were not yet a part of cultural enactments of CWS professors.

Women's Studies Courses

CWS professors described future plans to establish women's studies courses but offered a variety of reasons why such courses were not currently offered. From A. Radida's point of view, the preparation and collection of women's studies materials through the CWS's Information Center is the most significant stage of preparing for a "long term curriculum" in women's studies. In that regard the CWS is already preparing for women's studies courses. Other professors indicate that the CWS is not ready to offer women's studies courses. A. Kanchanaa cites the lack of resource persons, that is, professors with a background in women's studies, as the reason why women's studies courses cannot soon be introduced:

> Due to the constraint on resource persons that we don't have, I don't think we can offer courses that soon. We have discussed it, but not courses to give a diploma. We have a lot of training courses, but we don't give certificates or diplomas. I don't think we can have them; not very soon--not in 4, 5 years.

A. Orapun concurs with her colleague. In A. Orapun's presentation on the work of the CWS for Asian university administrators attending a conference sponsored by an area private university, two conference

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[37]While four institutions offer women's studies courses, students interest was low and the courses were not always taught (Eckachai, 1990).

participants inquired how women's studies were taught at Regional University. After the second professor re-phrased and asked a second time, A. Orapun declared to the group, "We're not ready yet!" She explained that CWS staff member Napaporn would soon pursue MA studies in the US and at that time she would dig more deeply into women's studies which had also been the focus of her US undergraduate studies. CWS professors anticipate that Napaporn will become a women's studies resource person and perhaps teach for the CWS on her return.

One professor suggested that including the development of a course of women's studies in the 1992 document was important primarily to have the necessary objectives that would fit it into the national plan so that the Center could be upgraded. The implication of her statement was that the discussion of women's studies courses was strategic and that developing them was not a priority.

Scholars have explored the ways in which the emergence of new fields of study in higher education are linked to societal and organizational factors. Some argue that, among these factors, are individual academics who strongly advocate for a new field and new initiatives buttressed by outside financial support (Gumport, 1987). Regional University's Center for Women's Studies clearly is led by an advocate but donors encourage one kind of development rather than another. Donors appear to have little interest in funding the development of an undergraduate or graduate course of Thai women's studies. One program officer who advocated funding Thai WID initiatives wondered what would be the purpose of such a curriculum. Other donors eagerly funded the CWS's training projects and the NCWA's national curriculum integration project, but I found no evidence of interest in funding women's studies course development. A representative from the Fulbright Commission, the agency that had agreed to fund Napaporn's advanced degree study in the US, urged her to focus on other areas

besides women's studies in her master's degree program. The implication was that Napaporn's BA in women's studies was sufficient and that she should explore other areas.

North American and Australian donors have funded individual CWS professors to attend WID courses in Canada and Australia; in 1994 and 1995 the Thai government funded Thai women and men students to go to the US or Canada to study women's studies. Unfortunately, some CWS professors' attempts to participate in these classes were foiled. An inaccurate blood report for a hepatitis test prevented one professor from studying in Australia; Thai government guidelines judged the professor who was very eager to understand and indigenize women's studies as too old to participate in the government-sponsored master's degree program.

An alternative to integration and to teaching a curriculum of women's studies courses is to offer select courses within a discipline. FSS Dean Suwit indicated that the FSS standing committee had agreed that courses about women could be introduced on a department-by-department basis. At least one other university in the country had already established this pattern. Further, at least three CWS professors indicated a shared understanding of how the CWS would proceed to develop courses on women in law, economics, political science in "four or five years."

In the meantime, while CWS professors were dealing with questions of what these courses would consist of and when the courses should be introduced, a sociology professor not affiliated with either women's center in the university was preparing to teach a course on "Sociological Perspectives of Women." A. Lawan had proposed and obtained approval for the course and planned to teach it in 1995, based on her research studies on issues of women and labor conducted together with the sociology department chair. A. Lawan's course proposal, the

first in the FSS but quite separate from the CWS, raises questions of a fragmented subculture of WS at RU. I discuss this at the end of this chapter.

Women's Studies Embedded in Cultural Practices of Teaching and Learning

CWS professors enacted women's studies as they conceived of it in "the Thai way" as embedded in Thai cultural practices of teaching and learning and conceptions of knowledge. Expressions of high esteem for teachers, students' obligations toward teachers, and views of knowledge as that which is disseminated are cultural values which shape the ways in which RU professors develop women's studies.

Within Thai society the teacher is a respected repository of knowledge (Bhamarapravati, 1990).[38] Mulder (1979) observes that to be called teacher (*khru*), professor (*aacaan*) or doctor (*mo*) confers high social visibility and means that "one will be consulted as a repository of the knowledge to which people pay respect" (p. 142). A teacher is a moral guide, a beacon for students who strives to disseminate accurately the knowledge she or he has acquired to students. The student-teacher bond endures for a lifetime and, with careful deliberation, one may draw on this relationship for support or assistance throughout one's life.

Students, in turn, accord their esteemed teachers deep respect. A *wai,* placing the hands together in a prayer-like position in front of one's face, is a symbol of that respect in Thai culture. When students enter class (especially when late) or leave (especially if early), they *wai* their professors. Students also *wai* professors when meeting them on campus; professors nod or, especially with graduate students, may *wai* in return. Once a year, from primary school through university, students

[38]Most often the teacher also is older than the student--an important dynamic in a socio-cultural context where elders are accorded respect in many different forms.

pay special respect to their teachers in a *wai khru* ("paying respect to the teacher") ceremony.

This deference to professors carries into the classroom where professors lecture and students take notes. With two exceptions, professors and students did not engage in conversation during classes I observed. In the two large undergraduate law classes, neither professors nor students raised questions. In economics and law classes of approximately 50 students, professors asked questions which elicited a one- or two-word choral response from the entire class, as is the pattern in primary and secondary schooling. In smaller classes, professors and students engaged in short exchanges. In only one of these small classes did I observe a student, a man, offer a lengthy opinion on factors contributing to the migration of ethnic minority people. A teacher's duty is to teach; a student's duty is to listen and learn and, when questioned, to respond. Three professors remarked that it was difficult to know if students understood examples about women integrated into their courses since Thai students are quiet and not very expressive.

The view of teacher as knowledge repository is reinforced through patterns of teaching and learning. Students may have a course textbook but they are not asked to read in advance of class sessions. Instead, the instructor distributes hand-outs and lecture notes s/he has prepared during or at the end of the class or refers to the text. While the contemporary nature of some professors' lectures conveyed fresh preparation, several professors from the CWS and beyond referred to their own texts and lecture notes or those of colleagues as out-of-date or in need of revision. Formal knowledge acquired through advanced degrees is often passed on to students in the form in which it was received (Mulder, 1979).

A professor from a Bangkok university, recently returned from advanced degree study in Australia, lamented that his experiment to require students to read assigned materials in the library prior to class was thwarted--by students who didn't comply and by professors who urged him to return to the Thai approach to teaching. Two CWS professors said they provide students with optional course-related readings by putting books on reserve in the library but students are not required to look at them. The view of knowledge that emerges from these data is that the teacher possesses the important knowledge. For students to articulate and apply that knowledge is paramount; outside texts are extraneous to important learning.

Academic Culture

The influence of colleagues on pedagogical decisions, such as not requiring students to use the library, reminds us that the Thai academic culture is also important when considering how professors approach matters of teaching, learning and curriculum development. Komin (1990) observes:

> Even in academic seminars where intellectual criticism has a legitimate place, the Thai still try to avoid direct strong criticism, if possible. Foreign observers would rarely find heated debates or arguments or strong criticisms in Thai meetings of any nature.

I observed this in a CWS seminar where the scholar, who was to critique research findings just presented, stated, "I agree with everything the guest speaker has to say," and then proceeded to construct her own very different analysis of the research study, a veiled critique of the researcher's presentation. Academic culture as professors described it and as I experienced it does not promote conversation about pedagogy, theory and curriculum or a vigorous exchange of opinions and ideas.

Knowledge dissemination

In the past, students "waied" their books because "books are our teachers" (S. Maneenop, personal communication, August 18, 1992). Mulder (1979) posits that traditional ideas of knowledge are exemplified in the curriculum for formal Buddhist learning (*naktham*), courses which emphasize memorization and rote learning and which give complete details of proverbs but leave one on one's own to infer and understand the larger system of Buddhism. Students' understandings of knowledge as contained in teacher-prepared texts or lecture notes resonates with this conception of *naktham* as teacher. One image this conveys is of knowledge flowing out of founts of wisdom with students receiving knowledge from its source.

"Dissemination" of information and of knowledge similarly connotes a one-way flow of knowledge from the teacher to the student, from one who knows to one who does not know. The MoUA's goals for higher education include "the need to expand higher education opportunity and disseminate knowledge at the university level to every region." Information dissemination also figures prominently in CWS professors vision for their program. In the initial proposal to establish a program for Women's Studies, A. Radida and her colleagues cited information dissemination as a high priority:

> Information and research findings will be disseminated by various means, such as provision of training, dissemination of documents and articles, publicity through the mass media, exhibitions and other media.

The more recent 1992 upgrade proposal listed similar priorities and objectives.[39] The national integration project began with an action

[39] The "Request for Operation of the Women's Studies Center According to [the Seventh] Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996)" lists the following areas of focus for the center: Information gathering and dissemination, training programs, collaboration with NGOs, research, national/international networking, women's studies courses and academic work, collaboration with Southeast Asian universities.

research project and with professors speaking with colleagues in their home institutions about their current experiences or interest in including women's issues in their courses. They identified professors who were interested or neutral as potential targets for the integration project. The project finale also followed the dissemination model: the NCWA commissioned Bangkok writers to prepare a textbook on women's issues which the Commission would disseminate to all universities throughout country for any professor to use in her/his disciplinary area. It could be considered one text of many but it is more likely that, with no other Thai language university texts about women, it will be used as the authoritative work.

Aiken et al. (1993) describe a different approach to integration at one US university which highlights cultural aspects of university integration projects. In the US project, 45 professors met in small groups on a regular basis throughout a semester to discuss feminist works. They argued about the relevance of these works for a particular course they planned to teach which they had agreed to re-design. This staff development approach to integrating gender issues into the university curriculum is carried on within an academic culture that promotes argumentation among academics, the challenging of ideas and a collaborative approach to course syllabus development. It reflects assumptions about teaching, learners, and knowledge which are different from Thai cultural understandings. Integration, as carried out by CWS professors and undergirded by the NCWA project, is consistent with Thai professors' commitment to disseminating information on women to students and colleagues.

CWS professors were interested no only in disseminating information to others, however, they also were interested in learning from rural women about their problems and their lives--and in disseminating this information to others. With encouragement from the

foundation program officer responsible for the project, CWS professors developed this dissemination plan:

> Documents used in the training project will be disseminated to various organizations as well as the public. Training materials as well as cases to be dealt with by trainees will contribute to the preparation of women's studies and law curriculum planned at the Faculty of Social Sciences, Regional University.
>
> The Program for Women's Studies will provide academics and non-governmental organizations with at least twenty case studies which are valuable first-hand information concerning women and the struggle for their rights. The PWS can encourage Regional to work in coordination with NGOs in solving problems for northern women when the Seventh National Education Plan of the university is implemented in the fiscal years of 1992 through 1996.

Twenty case studies for the university and NGOs were to be drawn from rural women's "struggle for their rights." From the rural women's stories the CWS planned to develop a women's studies and law curriculum. Anthropology professor A. Prasit spoke of the rural women as bearers of local knowledge, a kind of knowledge which CWS professors recognize they do not possess and which they value highly. For CWS professors to codify this knowledge, then, suggests a kind of turnstile role for the CWS as information gatherer and disseminator, the ones who take in knowledge and send it out. The turnstile is also a kind of gate and the gatekeepers--the professors--are those who decide whose knowledge is important and which knowledge comes in and goes out.

Gatekeepers of Knowledge

The enduring cultural view of teacher as respected knower and disseminator of knowledge places professors in the position of knowledge gatekeepers. They have access to knowledge about women and possess the means of disseminating this information--through training, publishing and sending out documents and through the mass media and exhibitions.

CWS professors' intention is to open the gate widely so that many will know about women's concerns and take action to solve women's problems. CWS professors' primary concern is knowledge dissemination which will empower and facilitate improved quality of life for rural women.

When rural women teach professors about their lived experience, professors codify and disseminate this knowledge back to the women themselves, to organizations and other women in similar positions, and to others within the academic community. The conception of knowledge as something precious which is acquired and disseminated places CWS professors in the powerful position of utilizing this knowledge to equip researchers with tools for conducting research about women. They also can utilize their knowledge to empower rural women through paralegal and leadership training. In addition, they also become the filter to decide which knowledge is shared with whom, which places them in a powerful position. The most important questions for gatekeepers in this context, however, are who keeps the knowledge and how wide open the gate is.

In their search to understand what a disciplinary field of women's studies in the Thai context consists of, however, CWS professors wait for resource personnel to be trained and for sufficient research and printed materials on Thai women to accumulate in the Information Center. They are able to focus on the dissemination of what they do know to others who do not. Professors open the gate and disseminate extant knowledge of the condition and position of Thai women to seminar participants. In their research and in their university teaching, however, they maintain a strong commitment to their respective disciplines and do not challenge the disciplinary epistemological assumptions interrogated by feminists in other countries.

Cultural expectations of teacher-as-knower coupled with the lack of resource people who are acquainted with the breadth and depth of women's studies literature, resistance to western conceptions of

feminism and feminist theory, the absence of a Thai feminism and many other different factors constrain CWS professors from developing of a Thai feminist theory or theories. As I interpret the data I assert that the construction of a Thai feminist theory or theories could provide multidisciplinary frameworks for researchers and students to analyze women's issues, advance women's studies in the Thai academy, and foster the exploration of women's studies as an interdisciplinary field of study in the university. I acknowledge that my location within the US academy together with a western view of the uses of knowledge influence my conclusions. In addition, however, I cite the development of women's studies in, for example, India (Chamberlain & Howe, 1995), as strong examples of ways in which theory generation, research, teaching and praxis interweave to create hearty women's studies/gender and development programs in a non-western setting.

Students as Cultural Members

For cultural values and concepts to endure, cultural members must transmit cultural expectations to the newest members, be they infants or older adults (Spindler, 1974). Within the university, professors dutifully disseminate disciplinary knowledge to their students; for CWS professors this includes integrating ideas about women and women's issues. Second- and third- year students mentor first-year students into university student culture. At the same time, all students construct their own understandings of what it means to be a woman or man student in the university, connecting gendered relations in the university with the gendered experience of home life.

Some CWS and RU professors described undergraduate students as not having sufficient experience to discuss ideas about women's issues in class. Others stated that it was very difficult to know what students

were thinking about information on women they integrated into their classes since Thai students are quiet and respectful and don't convey their emotions. The students I interviewed gave evidence of wide-ranging personal experiences of gendered relations as well as classroom learning about women's experiences. They also expressed strong emotions about women's issues. In the pages that follow I discuss women and men students' comments about personal and campus-related experiences of what it is to be a woman or a man in this Thai socio-cultural setting.

The overwhelming theme among women and some men students was the inequality of freedoms between men and women. Boys at home, young men on campus and men in society have greater independence and fewer responsibilities than girls and women. Girls and young women are restricted from many things their male counterparts are allowed to do and have more home and family responsibilities. Women students noted:

> I would like to be a man because women's rights and liberties are more boxed in than men's.
>
> Men have more rights; they can go out at night and women can't.
>
> My brother can stay out late; I can't.
>
> Neighbors talk if the girls get too much freedom.
>
> We have early curfew hours and have to climb up to the dorm room (from outside) if we're late--and girls are judged "good" or not on the basis of this.
>
> Thai men have more rights; they can travel anywhere. Thai women have to be body-checked when they go out of the country because they (the men) think we're prostitutes.

Young women students who live on campus in dormitories have a ten o'clock evening curfew; young men have none. In their study of opportunities and problems encountered by girls in Thai society, Archavanitkul and Havanon (1990) note that girls are treated more strictly and assigned increased duties at home, such as caring for

siblings and the elderly. Boys, on the other hand, are "allowed to have fun and spend a lot of time in out-of-the-house activities" (p. 20). Some young women students indicated that, due to their father's influence, daughters' and sons' duties at home were not so conventional:

> I am the only girl but I am strong because my father taught me to be.
>
> My father says that we should also teach girls to be independent.
>
> Father likes to cook so girls and boys in the family both cook--but it's a daughter's duty and a brother's option.

While girls immediately and consistently raised the issue of freedoms and duties, boys did not. One man student stated:

> There's no difference between how girls and boys are treated in the family. There's just a difference between older and younger children; the older ones need to be responsible for the younger ones who need to be taken care of.

Men and women students expressed mixed and contradictory understandings about familial, societal and personal expectations for them in society. Stereotypes associated with women and girls, in particular, predominated. Women students stated:

> Daughters are closer to the parents than the sons and should be more tender, softer. Boys are treated stronger.
>
> Women are neat and sweet; men are strong leaders and good decision-makers.

Men students added:

> Women always think about the details. There's no opportunity for women to work in high positions--because women can't make quick decisions; they think and think.
>
> Women are smarter than men; they get better grades.

The theme of men as good leaders and women as followers who attend to details but don't make good leaders prevailed among both men and women students. Young women shared these opinions:

> Women should be leaders, but in the family sometimes the women should follow the men. In decision-making women should be the hind legs [of the elephant].
>
> Men always are my leader...but sometimes we are equal.
>
> If a woman doesn't work outside the home she should do what the man, the breadwinner, says.

A man added:

> Men think they're superior, that they are the front legs of the elephant. I'd like to think that things are changing, however.

In fact, men students occupied positions of university student leadership in campus-wide organizations and in departments. Students reported that even in FSS departments where the majority of students were women, men were the leaders of student department organizations. Not all agreed that leadership arrangements should continue on this way. A woman student declared:

> Thai women think we are inferior to men. We should change this. (All focus group participants agreed).

In discussions of challenges or problems for women and men students, both women and men students cited student pregnancy, women students who become prostitutes, and verbal harassment. In all cases, except for verbal harassment and rape, students--men and women--blamed women for these problems:

> Women students get pregnant because they can't control themselves....Women don't handle independence well.
>
> We are women, we need only one thing: money. Student prostitutes get money to go out or for tuition or the family.

Men added to the list:

> When girls from far away villages come here and see civilized things--especially bad things like horse racing and alcohol--then they become prostitutes because they have problems with money or want a new experience.

> Some girls behave badly and live with their boyfriends. They have sex before marriage and have to drop out of school if they have a baby. There are HIV+ girls in all eight dorms except for one.

For themselves, boys listed that men students "can't control themselves; they play cards and drink and come home late."

A woman student spoke in contradictory ways about her experience as a geography student in a department dominated by men:

> There are more boys in geography because it's terrible for the girls. We can't do trekking or carry the cameras--that's the duty of the boys. But [when we go on a field trip] boys will say, "This is hard--can you do this?" And sometimes they don't let all the girls go on an outing.

Students learn of women's issues through course integration and expand their understanding of societal issues. They spoke of these issues separately from their own experiences and concerns, however. Due to RU professors' current integration efforts, students speak of learning in English class about women's participation in society, past and present, and about men's oppression of women. A male English student noted that when his professor spoke of oppression in the past she declares, "Now is the time for women to do something!" Undergraduate law students describe unequal treatment of women in family and property laws; a woman sociology student remembers a sociology lecture on prostitution. A geography student, a senior woman, explains how she came face to face with the unequal treatment of men and women in rural areas:

> [On a field trip] we interviewed men and women at the Family Development Project. Women get 80 baht and men 120 baht. They say that women "just grow" the crops but men spread the hay. When we studied this in class, we didn't believe it. But when we ourselves saw it, then we believed it--it's true!

For solutions to problems of raising the status of women in society, students' rely on people's good will to just "do better."

Women students asserted that women have to do more, to be better. Two men and several women students argued that men have to let women do more. Students lack a broad framework for discussing gendered relations and fall back on stereotypes of women and men as the reasons why things are the way they are, why some things can change and others won't. Through course integration students are learning where women aren't included and where they are treated unequally, but they do not yet have access to seeing the world from Thai women's standpoint, that is, to consider all of knowledge, theory, and analysis through women's eyes. Students understand practical gender interests from their own experiences and teachers' illustrations but they lack an understanding of strategic gender interests.

While CWS professors strongly value their grass roots work with rural women and value the rural women student's local knowledge, a different view of students emerges from professors' interactions with younger undergraduate students. I observed that professors take seriously their responsibility to transmit a body of academic knowledge to university students--both that which the professors themselves have received, and, in some cases, generated from their own research. As discussed with regard to the culture of teaching and learning, this dissemination or transmission is demonstrated through lectures, tests, teacher-prepared texts and lecture notes. This transmission involves professors telling undergraduate students about women's issues in their lectures and providing training in the law, leadership and politics for rural grass roots women. Exploring local knowledge does not necessarily extend to "grass roots" university students' local knowledge.

Professors and graduate students I observed and with whom I spoke did converse at greater length about issues, including women's issues. Challenging and transforming cultural beliefs about gendered relations is difficult for both professors and students. The formidable nature of

this task is illustrated in the next section by A. Pornthip's discussion with Education graduate students on norms and roles.

Challenges to Cultural Assumptions of Sexuality and Prostitution

While undergraduate students learn about women's issues in course lectures and research and field assignments, professors more frequently engage graduate students in class discussion. A. Prapun's report on RU's integration project states that graduate students have "maturity and sufficient experience to be prepared to discuss ideas about women." While graduate students may have more experience, challenging widely-held cultural beliefs about women and men, such as those articulated by the undergraduate students, is a difficult pedagogical task. Education professor A. Pornthip undertook this challenge in "Analysis of Essentials of Foundations in Education," a master's degree class at Regional University.

Approximately equal numbers of men and women students attended class the day I visited; most appeared to be 30 to 45 years old. A. Pornthip was the lecturer for this section of the team-taught course. Although the overhead transparency noted that the class was about societal norms and changing roles in Thai society, in fact, A. Pornthip was challenging students' ideas about sexuality in the context of prostitution. Following a brief lecture/discussion of the changing roles of societal institutions--the *wat* (Buddhist temple), the schools and the family, A. Pornthip initiated a discussion of Thai norms related to prostitution. The discussion evinced students' attitudes and beliefs about sexual roles of men and women:

> P: (In a discussion of multiple norms.) Or what about the problem of prostitutes? If a man goes to a brothel, there are three interpretations of this: 1) the prostitute is wrong, 2) both are wrong, 3) neither one is wrong. Who is wrong?
>
> Man: It's not wrong--it's a buyer and a seller.

> Woman: It depends on the status of the man. If the man is married and he goes to the prostitute, he is wrong. If he is a bachelor, he is not wrong.
>
> ...
>
> Man: A man goes to the prostitute because of his physical needs. (Students laugh.)
>
> P: If a woman who is married has a sick husband or the husband is not at home, can the woman do that [go to a prostitute], too? And how would society judge this situation?
>
> Man: Women can't do that because the woman is the wife and the mother. And the society values the role of mother very highly.
>
> Woman: That depends on the society.

The students' responses indicate their attitudes toward prostitution: visiting a prostitute is a business transaction and should not be judged; single men can frequent prostitutes since all men have sexual needs; women dare not visit male prostitutes because women are wives and mothers and motherhood is highly regarded. At another point in the class discussion a woman student suggested that since society is changing, the laws should change and legalize prostitution. One man stated that if there are no prostitutes, more women will be raped; another man added that as an occupation prostitution reaps a good income. Nevertheless, A. Pornthip pressed on, challenging dominant roles and norms of Thai society with regard to prostitution. She ended the class session by asking:

> P: How should we solve the prostitution problem?
>
> Man: We should find some vaccine to inject the men who are married and then they will stop going to the prostitutes.
>
> P: A research study shows that women have sex half as often as men. So the question is, where do the men go for the other half? The answer is, outside the house.

A. Pornthip proceeded to discuss research findings that showed that women in urban areas had sexual relations with their husbands less frequently than women in rural areas and the implications of this. A middle-aged student, a man, responded to this information by telling a joke about an elderly man who was accused of rape and accepted his punishment to let everyone think he was virile when he wasn't.

Men dominated the classroom conversation; at one point during the class the professor urged the women to speak out--even if other students in the class were their superiors at work, she urged the women to respond to participate in the discussion. One woman student appeared to resonate to the direction of A. Pornthip's questions by giving the example of female animals that have multiple partners as an alternative to the indisputable image of faithful wife and mother that her colleague had insisted on.

By including the topic of roles and norms for men and women in the syllabus, A. Pornthip and her colleagues are formally bringing gender-related concerns into a mainstream graduate course. In the class session discussed above, A. Pornthip introduces a high-profile, rarely-discussed topic and pushes her students to think about the implications of prostitution for men and women. The men appear to resist her challenge with their quips and the women students resist with their silence. The students don't engage in discussion with each other about norms and roles for men and women and they give A. Pornthip pat answers, but still she is making problematic, in a university course, the idea that men can go to prostitutes and women cannot. In so doing, she pushes the marginalized and often taboo topic of prostitution and sexuality and legitimizes the topic for advanced studies in education. She does not moralize with these graduate students; rather, she raises questions and poses more questions to their answers. In the course of her teaching she openly encourages the women students to participate.

A. Pornthip challenges her students to re-examine their ideas about the cultural norm of men frequenting prostitutes and their fundamental beliefs about sexuality. She uses the dominant language of her discipline of sociology--"roles and norms for men and women"--to introduce controversial, marginalize ideas about sexuality.

As this discussion of a graduate education class indicates, the enterprise of women's studies is not limited to the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Center for Women's Studies. Activities such as the classroom conversation discussed above raise questions about the development of a broader subculture of women's studies at RU. What are its characteristics? Do multiple efforts fragment or enhance the development of a women's studies subculture within the organizational culture of Regional University? I explore these questions below, primarily through a comparative discussion of the RCW and the CWS.

Fragmentation in the Women's Studies Subculture or The Center for Women's Studies is not the Center of Women's Studies

This discussion explores the emergent subculture of women's studies at RU, through a brief comparison of the organizational cultures of the RCW and the CWS. At the same time, this comparison provides an opportunity to bring together the three theoretical perspectives--structural, political and cultural--employed in this study and to see how together they give useful insights into different aspects of organizing women's studies.

Several men professors from the Faculty of Education established the Regional Center for Women (RCW) in 1990, seemingly in reaction to the perceived exclusivity of the CWS. One professor flatly stated that they were compelled to open the RCW since the CWS professors were not "open-minded." A second founding professor also mentioned "politics" as

the reason for two centers and noted that the two centers have distinct missions--the CWS works on curriculum, the RCW works with women in the region. In fact, as noted above, this was not correct since CWS professors had repeatedly stated they were not ready to initiate a women's studies curriculum and, with regard to curriculum integration, an RCW professor had conducted the NCWA integration study. Ostensibly the interest in "doing work on women" and acquiring resources to do that work prompted RCW men to start the second center.

While the two centers' modes of organizing differ, there were no signs of open conflict. The directors save face for each other; in fact, the CWS director had not been aware of the RCW's origins; she thought A. Pornthip had started the work on her own and was very supportive of A. Pornthip's work. Although the current center directors work together, more than one male Faculty of Education professor expressed discontent with the CWS. In addition, a disaffected former CWS member participates in RCW activities but not in those of the CWS. The RCW was sown from seeds of discontent which have not died. Paradoxically, yet not surprisingly in the context of "social smoothing" and maintaining "surface harmony," the two centers appear to co-exist in harmony. Yet the male education professors created a separate--and, in some ways, a competing--women's studies center.

Projects of the RCW indicate that its mission closely parallels that of the CWS. Both are involved in curriculum integration, work among grass roots women and publishing documents related to women's studies. The RCW is the center of curriculum integration at Regional University; the RU professor in charge of the curriculum integration project and the professor who conducted the NCWA integration study for the university both are members of the RCW Committee. The RCW is also the center of a leadership project for rural women which encourages and

prepares women to run for a seat on the village council (*sapha tambol*). These activities for women which are centered in the RCW's committee and working group, move the CWS off-center. The CWS still is *a* center for women's studies but no longer is it *the* center for women's studies. The RCW remains an autonomous program which operates out of a small office while the CWS has its own building and the status of a department. Nevertheless, at least two major donors have funded projects at both centers, suggesting that cultural enactments of women's studies at RU are fragmented.

The ways in which the directors and committee members have organized the two centers presents a striking contrast. The RCW operates inclusively with a large working committee and open meetings; the CWS makes decisions and conducts activities with a small working group. The Center for Women's Studies committee agreed to expand and invite others to join with them when the importance of doing that became apparent at a faculty standing committee meeting but prior to that the director had strongly defended her choice to work with a small committee. A. Radida established the CWS committee and advisory board with a group of eight similarly-minded FSS (and former FSS) professors to work together and alongside her. This organizational arrangement, as I observed it in 1993-94, resulted in a fairly cohesive group with a shared sense of mission and willingness to support the directions charted by the director with their advice and suggestions.

CWS planning meetings generally are reserved for CWS committee members and the secretary. The CWS committee invites professors from different disciplines and non-university resource personnel to lecture at seminars which they plan and in this way the CWS sees that it casts its net widely by including others in the execution of the Center's work. Some RU professors and administrators refer to the CWS's

organizational style, however, as exclusive rather than inclusive. The strong leadership of the director coupled with the small size of the CWS attracts the criticism that the CWS is exclusive and goes about its own work without considering the opinions of a broader range of people.

As the one in charge of the Center's work, A. Radida is linked most closely of all CWS professors to donors and to international networks. She travels frequently on Center-related work and pushes aggressively to execute the CWS's mission and expand its influence. This organizational pattern of a strong leader working with a small, loyal group of colleagues draws criticism as well as praise. Critics suggest that A. Radida is building a kingdom, expanding her personal power base. The experiences of professors engaged in women's studies across Asia suggests that this assertive leadership is critical in the development of women's studies initiatives (Asian Women's Studies Committee, 1994). The challenge to pervasive patriarchal notions of gender harmony under A. Radida's leadership has resulted in impressive growth for the CWS; one national leader observed that Regional's CWS has grown more dramatically than any women's studies center in Thailand and that this was due largely to A. Radida's efforts.

By contrast, A. Pornthip re-organized the RCW committee in 1993-94 and invited seventeen individuals to advise and/or work with her. These included Faculty of Education administrators and colleagues, community and NGO leaders, and professors from other faculties. She cast her net widely to include the voices of many people at the stage of planning and executing RCW activities. At the RCW planning meeting of 13 people which I attended, A. Pornthip stood in front of the group and facilitated the entire meeting. Men and women participants represented many different perspectives of thinking about women's issues. Men professors, however, dominated the conversation. Rather than women professors and village leaders taking charge of planning activities for

women in the region, men professors' extended commentary and advice silenced women participants and reproduced dominant cultural patterns of social interaction among men and women. Although the size of the committee makes it appear more inclusive, my observation of committee meeting interactions suggest that, in fact, women RCW committee members are more likely to be excluded and marginalized.

Tensions between organizing women's studies in what are perceived to be inclusive and exclusive ways are not easily resolved. The assertiveness of women leaders in a university dominated by men administrators, the size of a committee, and issues of shared ideology, control and whose voices are included and excluded are enduring dilemmas which women's studies organizers continually have to negotiate.

The presence of two women's centers with parallel missions along with initiatives of other professors in women's studies raises questions about the development of a broader women's studies subculture at Regional University. RU is not only the first university in Thailand to have a women's studies "department," it is also the first to have two women's centers. Individual professors of English, Communications and other fields who are not members of either women's center integrate women's issues into their teaching and conduct research on women. At least one other research institute conducts research on women and has sponsored a conference with a focus on gender. A sociology professor who is not affiliated with the CWS, initiated the university's first course on women outside the faculties of nursing and medicine. Diverse enactments of women's studies suggest multi-disciplinary, complementary efforts. At the same time, they suggest a fragmented subculture of women's studies, replete with paradoxes and contradictions (Martin, 1992).

While the two centers operated autonomously and not conflictually through 1994, the ever-present reality that higher education is part of

the national bureaucracy may change this peaceful co-existence in the future. The Budget Bureau's memorandum regarding the CWS's upgrade stated that that only one officially recognized and funded center for women will operate at Regional University. The implications of this decision were not clear in mid-1994 but were certain to raise questions of coordination, merger and the control of women's studies.

While bureaucratic decisions will have an impact on future directions of the CWS, so will political maneuverings and cultural practices.

Conclusions

A cultural perspective of organizations highlights cultural enactments of organizational members and cultural dynamics in which the organizational culture is embedded. The cultural perspective challenges the notion of reified structures and posits that organizational features reside in peoples' heads and shared and diverse meanings among cultural members constitute the organization.

At Regional University, shared and diverse understandings among CWS professors of women's issues and organizing to address women's concerns are embedded in the cultural contexts of the social sciences, academic culture, teaching and learning and conceptions of gender constructions. The interweaving of these constitutes the CWS's organizational culture. RU students and administrators cultural enactments along with those of individual professors and those affiliated with the RCW, constitute the broader emerging subculture of women's studies at Regional University.

The cultural, political and structural perspectives illuminate different dynamics of organizing and organizations. As the analysis has unfolded, so has a picture of the complexity and dilemmas of organizing

women's studies within the university. Chapter Six explores this complexity and these dilemmas through the metaphor of margins and centers.

CHAPTER SIX

DILEMMAS OF ORGANIZING WOMEN'S STUDIES AT THE MARGINS

> Organizations are generally complex, ambiguous, and paradoxical.
> --Morgan (1987, p. 17)

Analyzing the data of Regional University's Center for Women's Studies from three perspectives highlights the complexity of organizing women's studies in higher education. In this chapter I examine this complexity along with the ambiguities and paradoxes, or, as I call them, the dilemmas of organizing women's studies, by reviewing the analysis of the CWS from each perspective and from the three perspectives together. I trace the ways in which my thinking changed as I analyzed the data and I discuss the ways in which this analysis prodded me to think about this case study in terms of centers and margins. hooks' (1984) and Brimstone'S (1991) work on margins and centers pointed me to the dilemmas and contradictions of organizing the CWS. I employ the metaphor of centers and margins to discuss these dilemmas and I close with a brief discussion of the questions this work raises for organizing women's studies internationally.

Three Perspectives on Organizations

The analysis of Chapters Three through Five considered Regional University and the Center for Women's Studies in three different ways: as bureaucracies bent on maintenance and survival whose task is to ensure the smooth, efficient running of the organization; as arenas of competing ideas where conflict pervades daily life; and as cultural entities that are microcosms of the broader culture in which they are embedded. These three perspectives offer three distinctive, albeit partial, ways of looking at the CWS in the university context.

A structural perspective exposes the CWS's relationship to national Thai bureaucracy. The CWS resists certain bureaucratic guidelines for its own projects, at the same time it becomes more closely connected to the bureaucracy as it is upgraded to a department. While the university is less hierarchical than other sectors of the national bureaucracy, the university is a bureaucratic environment, a fact which is reflected in the organization of the CWS itself. Affiliative relationships are important for negotiating the Thai bureaucracy, yet CWS "Black Lion" professors who are Black Lions resist identification with that particular network. Center professors, nevertheless, do depend on personal relationships to help them negotiate the bureaucracy, as is illustrated through the process by which the CWS was upgraded. This less hierarchical structuring of the university equates not with tight coupling; rather, units within the university are loosely coupled. This loose coupling of the CWS to the university and to the Faculty of Social Sciences in which it is located allows the Center to develop autonomously and to grow by strengthening ties to organizations outside the university. Loose coupling also allows the university and different units within the institution to declare that the CWS deals adequately with women's issues on behalf of the entire institution and it allows university administrators to view women's issues as an optional concern for the larger organization. The elevation of the CWS's status from an autonomous, loosely coupled program to a more tightly coupled department within the FSS points to the possibility of conflict for the Center's organizers and university administrators to whom CWS most closely relates.

From a political perspective, the conflict at which the structural perspective hints translates into another example of conflict-as-usual within the organization. The case studies of the CWS's upgrade and the DAI grant to the Faculty of Social Sciences illustrate how resources--

material, human, and power itself--are limited and the ways in which interest groups fight for these resources. While the CWS is marginalized within the university, it is not powerless. CWS committee members use their power to maneuver at the margins in the university arena of competing ideas and discourses. The ways in which CWS professors and administrators deal with conflicts related to these challenges are embedded in cultural practices which value harmony and face-saving. The ways in which CWS professors conceptualize women's issues challenges the dominant discourse as does the very presence of the Center for Women's Studies on RU's campus. A paradox inherent in this resistance, however, is that those who resist the dominant ideology also may reproduce it, as the presence of the CWS building suggests.

A cultural perspective on the organization of the Center for Women's Studies reveals enactments of women's studies that are rooted in other cultures, for example, in Thai academic and social science culture and in Thai cultural assumptions about teaching, learning and knowledge. Characteristics of the CWS's organizational culture include shared commitments that men and women together should construct women's studies "the Thai way." CWS professors understand feminism and women's studies in different ways but they share a commitment to work chiefly with adults--rural women leaders and academic associates interested in conducting research on women--and secondarily with university students. Their enactments of women's studies consist of integrating women's issues into the curriculum, where CWS professors are gatekeepers of knowledge, and "activism" or academic service work among grass roots women. As members of the university culture, students construct their own understandings of gendered relations based on their experiences and perceptions of being a young woman or young man in the family and in the university. Challenging and questioning prevailing cultural beliefs about gendered relations and, more specifically, about sexuality and

prostitution is difficult, as the graduate class discussion with A. Pornthip illustrates. While A. Pornthip and CWS professors face a common dilemma in addressing these issues, the establishment and activities of the RCW and of other RU entities also provide evidence of a fragmented, emergent subculture of women's studies at RU.

Perspectives on organizations are "invented social constructs" which help us to "'make sense' of organizational processes" (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 175). A single perspective is useful but partial. While it is impossible to understand an organization in its entirety, utilizing a multiple-perspective approach enables us to apprehend some of the complexity of organizations and offers a rich analysis that can lead us down unforeseen paths.

When I commenced data collection, the working title of my research study was "Organizational Change and Conflict in a Thai University through the Introduction of a Center for Women's Studies." I selected research methods that would allow me to study a women's studies center at close range and I anticipated that my case study would illuminate how a Thai university addresses deals with diversity, through the lens of gender.

As I wrote Chapter Three and examined the data from a structural perspective, I began to ponder the meanings of "center." Regional University's Center for Women's Studies was a center or the center of what? In relation to what was it a center? These questions prompted me to think about the connections between centers and margins in women's studies and about the CWS's paradoxical position as a center in the margins.

As I proceeded to examine my data in light of the political perspective, two studies on rural women based on Foucault's (1980) notion of productive power pushed my thinking on organizing in the margins. Gallin's (1995) study of rural Taiwanese women and Villareal's

(1992) research among tomato-laborers discuss ways in marginalized women maneuver in the marginal spaces of society where they are located. This prompted me to think about CWS professors' creative, productive use of power in the margins of the university. Even though various political actors and the dominant ideology marginalize the Center, the cases in Chapter Four illustrate that CWS professors do have power and utilize this power to advance their own marginalized agenda.

Pondering the center-margins metaphor from a cultural perspective, I considered the ways in which actors transmit cultural knowledge of the center, for example, how teachers and students are to interact with each other while, at the same time, professors transmit to students the seeds of an alternative discourse which includes women. The analysis afforded me the opportunity to consider margins and centers from three different frames of reference: the structural, the political, and the cultural.

As I examine what had emerged from data analysis from these several organizational perspectives, I discovered that this case study was less a case of how the university deals with diversity issues and more a case which illuminates what it is to organize women's studies in higher education in a Third World country and in the broader context of women's studies international. From discussions among women scholars, Rao (1991) cites tensions between focusing on women and international development and focusing on women's studies and between attention to activism and attention to theory generation as two points of enduring conflict among scholars from First and Third World countries. This is a case study of one part of each of those tensions: developing women's studies which focuses on WID and on activism. In the English language literature on women's studies, this is the marginalized story: the story of professors in Southeast Asia who care deeply about equity issues for women and men grappling with how to organize and enact women's studies in their setting.

But even as this is a story from the margins, representing only one set of choices in the tensions Rao identifies, it is also a story of tensions in the margins. For the story of the CWS is a story filled with tensions and paradoxes. In addition to revealing a complex picture of organizing women's studies in a non-industrialized country of Southeast Asia, as described above this is a study of the ways in which the Center is positioned and positions itself both at the margins and in the center. Feminist authors bell hooks (1984) and Lyndie Brimstone (1991), writing from their different standpoints about margins and centers, give conceptual insight into these metaphors.

For hooks, who grew up in a southern US town where the railroad tracks demarcated her Black African American community from the White European American community, a clear distinction is apparent between margins and center. She writes:

> Our survival depended on an ongoing public awareness of the separation between margin and center and an ongoing private acknowledgment that we were a necessary, vital part of that whole. This sense of wholeness, impressed upon our consciousness by the structure of our daily lives, provided us an oppositional world view--a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity (1981, p. i).

Brimstone, on the other hand, a lesbian feminist British academic, emphasizes the fuzziness of the center-margins divide:

> Much as we might like there to be at times, the fact remains that there is no straightforward, easily identifiable opposition between centre and margins, oppressor and oppressed, for within the terms of this binary classification system the splittings are so infinite and so unstable that what we inevitably end up arguing about is the relative degree of participation each of us has in one or the other position at any given time (1991, p.125).

Brimstone challenges the idea of a binary opposition between margin and center, reminding us of the unstable and myriad splittings between the

margins and the center. hooks argues that her survival depended on an awareness of the separation between the two and that an understanding of the relationship between margins and center imbued her with a sense of wholeness and a new mode of seeing. Margins and centers: in the enterprise of women's studies are they separate or indistinct? I assert that they are both separate and inseparable. Working at the margins of the center, sometimes straddling margins and center and sometimes standing in one or the other is a paradox of organizing women's studies. The multiple perspectives analytical frame reveals the dilemmas and paradoxes organizational members live out and about which they repeatedly make choices.

Dilemmas of Centers and Margins

As this study unfolds, so does a series of dilemmas. One of these is about choices of how to organize decision-making and women's studies program activities in what are perceived to be exclusive or inclusive ways, as discussed in Chapter Five. Here I consider the key dilemmas of obtaining access to material resources and working within the national and university bureaucracy, and of enacting the Center's goals and priorities with regard to university classroom teaching, theory generation, and academic service activities.

The Center for Women's Studies is positioned and positions itself at the margins and in the center of resources. On an on-going basis, CWS professors negotiate the center bureaucracy and ways in which to organize and enact women's studies and promote a marginalized discourse in Thai higher education. The professors are both distinctly in the margins and in the blurry divide between margins and center.

The CWS is a center rich in human resources, women and men committed to women's studies, and in material resources from

international donors. It is a center of concentrated material, human and printed resources, a visible focal point of women's studies on RU's campus. It also exists at the margins of Regional University's material resources, however. Until the CWS was upgraded to a department in 1993, national budget allocations to higher education did not include the work of women's studies. National development priorities of the Thai government and of the MoUA fiscally support science and technology initiatives but not attention to women's issues. As of 1993, national funds for higher education have begun to support CWS staff members and, thus, the institutionalization of women's studies at Regional University.

Regional's progressive professors engaged in women's studies still live with this paradox. They are paid officials of the patriarchal government bureaucracy who must define their work in the language of the bureaucratic center and in terms of national goals for development; at the same time they resist these national goals by constructing an alternative woman-centered development agenda at the margins and resisting modernization claims through its activities.

The CWS must negotiate the language and structures of the bureaucracy in order to have access to the benefits and security of the center bureaucracy. To win a permanent place in the university the CWS had to wedge into the bureaucracy through the Seventh Five-Year Higher Education Plan and gain official approval from the MoUA's advisory commission. Center staff prepared the required 34-page document for the MoUA, demonstrating the ways in which Center activities were aligned with national goals for higher education and development. At the same time, in seminars and protest activities, CWS professors challenged and continue to protest the state's strategies for social and economic development.

The state bureaucracy is built on rationalist assumptions with

rationalist claims to progress through modernization. Long-range development plans, such as the Seventh Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996), establish goals for modernization and development through the nation's universities.

The dominant discourse of those in power at the center and the marginalized discourse of CWS professors constitute another tension. The MoUA speaks of equity in terms of regional and urban (Bangkok) universities and does not mention gender. The MoUA official speaks of gender harmony, rejects the notion of social conflict among women and men in Thai society and considers women's studies a "single issue" to be dealt with among many social concerns in Thai society. FSS administrators share the conception that women are one of many factors to be considered in confronting social problems. CWS members organize the Center around a commitment to eradicate inequalities among women and men in Thai society, to include marginalized women in the national development process and their voices in RU's curriculum. These alternative ideas are not widely shared among RU professors, MoUA officials or the majority of national government officials; the CWS ideology is a marginal one, which sometimes is accommodated but rarely heard from the administrative center.

It is important to note here that the bureaucracy is not a monolithic center. Different units are central and marginal to the national government. Within the bureaucracy, for example, projects of the National Commission on Women's Affairs in the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister is funded largely by outside donors, as is the case with the CWS. The NCWA grows and withers, depending on who is in charge, their access to outside resources, and their understanding of and commitment to the work.

Positioned in this marginal position of resource allocation, national bureaucracy and dominant discourse, the CWS carries out its

work. Through academic service, research and research training activities, CWS professors focus on rural women and development and define women's studies as activism. These priorities both place them in the center and ensconce them in the margins. Attention to academic service and seminar training activities over classroom teaching places the CWS in the center of economic and social development among rural women. Through seminars at the Center and in the villages, the CWS builds networks with NGOs, village women, and government organizations involved in development. By assigning highest priority to activist-WID work, however, the CWS accords second place to curriculum development and teaching, thereby marginalizing the Center's position in a university setting where teaching is considered the highest priority. As a non-teaching department in a university which requires all professors and most administrators to teach, the CWS's focus on academic service positions the department outside of the university's central mission--in the margins.

The MoUA highly values academic service to society, listing it as one of four priorities--along with teaching, research and the preservation of art and culture--for all Thai public and private universities. The university and the Faculty of Social Sciences also take seriously their responsibility to participate in academic service, as the struggle over the DAI grant illustrates. The MoUA, however, in the Seventh Higher Education Development Plan (1992-1996) together with university resources and budget allocation, give highest priority to teaching. While 2.46 percent of the national higher education budget is set aside for academic service, nearly 47 percent is allocated for teaching (MoUAa, p. 244). The CWS's priorities to work with rural women reinforce its position at the margins of the university.

In the ways in which they have chosen to address women's issues in the classroom, CWS professors are pushing marginalized women's issues

into the curriculum. They do this by integrating women's issues into their teaching and coursework. This choice to infuse women's issues into existing courses receives support from the center, that is, active support from the NCWA's national integration project, approval from the FSS administration, and tacit support from RU administrators since integration requires no funding from the university.

Integration does not constitute women's studies as a legitimate field of study parallel to all other university departments, however. Through integration alone women's studies remains invisible in the Regional University Bulletin of course listings and stands apart as an area from the disciplinary areas of knowledge in other departments which consist of defined bodies of knowledge, for example, sociology and law. In addition, professors are not publicly identified as connected to a body of knowledge called "women's studies" or "women's issues." Rather, colleagues and students view CWS professors as instructors of anthropology, economics or law. This "public invisibility" of women's studies within higher education relegates it to a marginal position in academic knowledge.

The choice to integrate women's issues into existing courses within particular disciplines allows CWS professors to maintain legitimacy with the center while working at the margins. CWS professors identify the womanless nature of the courses they teach and modify them to include women's experiences which McIntosh (1983) proffers is an important phase of women's studies curriculum development. But this modification through integration--sometimes labeled the "add women and stir" approach (Harding, 1991)--also reproduces the male-centered assumptions undergirding the disciplines and contributes to the marginal position of women's studies in the university.

From their research, reflection and work with women on women's issues grounded in their respective disciplines, CWS professors are in a

strong position to critique gender inequalities inherent in Thai political, socio-cultural, economic systems. Their publications, presentations, seminars and classroom teaching all give evidence to solid critiques of gender inequalities in Thai society; for example, the dearth of women university administrators and women politicians; juridical inequalities; economic development decisions which exclude women's; voices lack of participation in women from economic development decisions; sexual practices, women's migration and the transmittal of the HIV+ virus. The lack of tradition within Thai academic culture to generate new theories, however, leaves the university community without a framework to test a comprehensive framework to test out and examine connections among gender inequalities in the village, in the university classroom, and in the bureaucracy.

The absence of courses which re-vision the Thai experience through the eyes of women and of theories of women's experiences and gendered relations in Thai society has an impact on students, too. Lacking a conceptual framework of strategic gender interests, students articulate problems of women in terms of practical gender interests and fall back on their personal understandings and unchallenged stereotypes to make sense of issues for women and men in Thai society, concluding that if everyone tries harder things will get better.

The enactment of priorities which take precedence over theory construction or which delimit theory construction to a disciplinary framework appear to focus discussions on critique rather than on re-visioning society from Thai women's standpoint at the micro- and macro-levels. Given the strong impact of an alternative Marxist ideology on these social scientists in the 1970s, the construction of a theoretical framework of strategic gender interests for Thai women, and of theories grounded in Thai women's standpoint worked out with rural village women and university students alike could offer a powerful analytical tool to

both professors and students, including "grass roots" RU women and rural women students.[40] A dilemma, of course, is what greater attention to theory development would mean for the activism to which CWS professors are deeply committed.

In the context of women's studies internationally, the margins-and centers dilemmas which CWS professors must manage on a daily basis have implications for women's studies professors in other countries, for example, the challenge of negotiating organizational bureaucracy where there is a central ministry of education--and even in universities with greater autonomy. Women's studies partnerships with donors and acceptance of funds from the west can be construed as evidence of colonial patrimony in women's studies, welcome assistance for women's studies development, or both. Third World academics shun western feminist works, viewing them as another potentially western hegemonic discourse or, at the very least, inappropriate for the Third World context. Professors of all disciplines borrow and share ideas to create new understandings and while staying mindful of past and contemporary lessons of hegemonic knowledge. These thorny dilemmas, when seen from the Thai perspective, raise further questions about enactments of women's studies in specific settings.

The limits of women's studies approaches in other settings are revealed by this Thai case. With regard to negotiating the centers and margins of academic knowledge, the CWS's attention to academic knowledge raises questions about what it means for western university students not to focus on WID and activism, not to study notions of development and not to routinely conduct studies and research of Third World settings in their own cities and countries as part of women's studies. While women's studies and women and development may be more closely linked in European

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[40] Peggy McIntosh (1994) suggested the importance of viewing university students as women's studies professors' "grass roots" constituency.

higher education than in the US (Rao, 1991), a commitment to activism among and research with lower-class women in rural or urban areas is a strength of women's studies in Third World countries raises important questions for women's studies in First World settings.

The dilemmas of margins and centers I have discussed are intertwined, not separate; they are big themes that are interwoven, must be managed on a daily basis, and have implications for the organization, and the individual. I discuss enduring dilemmas in this study in the context of actors who, in their proposals, project evaluation reports, and in their mission statement talk about solving problems--identifying women's problems in order to solve them. Dilemmas, however, cannot be resolved. They must be managed. To consider these as dilemmas requires thinking about problems in a different way, a way that has personal, professional and organizational implications. Lampert (1985) writes of managing dilemmas in the organization of her primary school classroom. While she reaches temporary, satisfactory conclusions about dealing with such conundrums as attention to both gender equity and promoting critical thinking in the classroom, she proffers that these dilemmas cannot be resolved but can only be managed.

Whether in a primary school classroom or a university women's studies center, dilemmas within an organization are fascinating to ponder yet confusing to live out. It is intellectually engaging to contemplate dilemmas; it is personally and professionally challenging (and often exhausting) to continually negotiate them in daily organizational life. While theories of organizing may direct our attention to collectivities and, thus, beyond the individual, individual ramifications cannot be ignored.

Throughout the course of data collection I worked within three different organizations, two different universities and a foundation. As I reflect on the organizational dynamics and my membership in each

organization, I am reminded of the personal costs and public trade-offs for women activists/feminists negotiating enduring tensions and contradictions within an organization. These tensions are not "management issues" about which simple decisions can be made; rather, they are dilemmas that require thoughtful consideration and daily, on-going negotiation. As an organizational member, sometimes I welcomed these tensions, sometimes I ignored them, sometimes I was completely baffled. On occasion, I had to fight hard to remember that I was a person of agency with power when my work was marginalized or undermined by the more powerful. The women and men whom I interviewed and observed at Regional University spoke of similar reactions to negotiating organizational tensions in their work lives. The benefits and costs of living within the complex worlds of organizations--particularly organizations which problematize gendered relations--are many.

Perspectives offer no recipe for how to successfully create a women's studies program within a university in an economically developing country. The multiple perspectives do, however, paint a picture of the manifold, complicated and on-going challenges of organizing a program of women's studies at the margins of the university. Considering these challenges as dilemmas of working within organizations rather than as impersonal and bureaucratic or personal and idiosyncratic decisions directs our attention to the complexity of organizing women's studies in a particular context and points us to the critical task of engaging in international dialogue on women's studies. Viewing organizations and ways of organizing from different perspectives and managing the dilemmas of engaging in women's studies within organizations enables us to understand another dimension of the marginal and the central work of women's studies and to envision ourselves and our work in the way that hooks (1984) describes: aware of

the separation between margin and center yet acknowledging that we are a necessary, vital part of the whole.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF ACRONYMS

(Listed according to order of appearance in the text.)

RU - Regional University

CWS - Center for Women's Studies

WID - Women and International Development

UN - United Nations

TDRI - Thailand Development Research Institute

NCWA - National Commission on Women's Affairs

FSS - Faculty of Social Sciences

NGO(s) - Non-governmental Organization(s)

IC - Information Center

RCW - Regional Center for Women

PWS - Program for Women's Studies

MoUA - Ministry of University Affairs

LTP - Leadership Training Project (for Rural Women)

MPs - Ministers of Parliament

YMCA - Young Men's Christian Association

ICTW - Improving Conditions for Thai Women

DAI - Development Agency International

APPENDIX B

LIST OF KEY ACTORS IN THE STUDY

Center for Women's Studies

Director:	A. Radida
Secretary:	Napaporn
CWS Committee Members (women):	A. Kanchanaa
	A. Linchee
	A. Malee
	A. Orapun
(men):	A. Kamol
	A. Prasit
	A. Somsak

Regional Center for Women

Director:	A. Pornthip
A committee member (man):	A. Prapun

Administrators, Faculty of Social Science

A. Suwit, Dean

A. Wimol, Head, FSS Academic Committee

Other

A. Lawan (woman) FSS professor

APPENDIX C

LIST OF SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS[41]

1. Please tell me about your educational background. Where did you attend secondary school and university for undergraduate and graduate study? What was the topic of your MA/Ph.D. thesis?

2. When and how did you become interested in women's issues? How and when did you come to be involved in the CWS? In which Center activities have you been involved (seminars, publications, etc.)? In which activities are you presently involved?

3. As you recall, how did this idea for a women's center get started? Who was involved in the early years?

4. How has the membership of the group changed? How are new CWS members chosen? What is the selection process? How do people join/leave the CWS committee and advisory board?

How often do you meet together as a CWS committee/advisory group? When was the last meeting? What did you discuss? In which ways, if any, do tasks for men/women on the CWS committee differ?

5. What are your responsibilities as a CWS committee member? Is being a committee member different from being an advisory board member? If so, how? Have you had any role in writing proposals or working with foundations to obtain funding for CWS projects?

6. How is the CWS director chosen/reappointed? What are the director's responsibilities?

7. What are the special benefits of being involved in the center? (e.g. pay, promotion, status, opportunities for out-of-country travel, consulting). How do colleagues regard your involvement with the CWS?

8. What do other professors in Social Sciences say about the center? Do they ask about your activities? Do they attend Center activities? Are professors from outside the faculty involved in CWS activities? If so, who? In what ways?

9. Are you involved with other centers in the Faculty of Social Science? Please describe official or informal relationships between other centers and the CWS.

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[41] I prepared these questions for CWS professors and altered other interview questions according to the responsibilities of the interviewee and her/his relationship with the CWS.

10. How do the activities of the center fit with your work as a professor? How do they affect your "work load?" How many courses do you teach? (Give course titles, describe content. Do topics about women or gender issues surface in the course of your teaching? Do students show an interest in issues of women/gender? Give examples.

11. How is the FSS administration involved with the Center? How does the dean show his support for the CWS and for other centers in the Faculty of Social Science? Do you talk to the Department Chair about the CWS? Regarding what kinds of things?

12. Has this building made a difference in the programs of the WS Center? Has it made a difference in what others (faculty, students, community) think of the WS program?

13. What are the issues in which colleagues in your department are most interested? Do faculty groups tend to form around issues? Which interest groups have formed or are forming around those issues? With whom do they work most closely on these concerns?

14. What is "women's studies" and "feminism" a) for you; and b) as you think other Thai people (RU professors and students, the public) perceive it. There has been some discussion about offering a course or courses in Women's Studies. Could you tell me more about that?

15. What plans or vision do CWS committee and advisory board members and the director have for the future of the Center?

APPENDIX E

DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSORS INTERVIEWED ACCORDING TO FACULTY AND CWS AFFILIATION

	Professors Interviewed	CWS Committee Member
Faculty of Economics	3	2
Faculty of Education	4	0
Faculty of Nursing A. Wichit (Ac Dean)	1	0
Faculty of Humanities	1	0
Faculty of Social Sciences	23	6
Dept. of Political Science	14	3
Dept. of Geography	3	1
Department of Sociology/ Anthropology	6	2
TOTAL	32	8

APPENDIX F

ADMINISTRATIVE POSITIONS IN THE FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND THE RATIO OF PROFESSORS TO ADMINISTRATORS

Faculty of Social Sciences

Number of Administrative Positions:

Dean	1
Associate Dean	1
Assistant Deans	2
Department Chairs	3
Center Directors	5
TOTAL	12

Number of Professors by Department:

Department of Geography	17
Department of Political Science	35
Department of Sociology/ Anthropology	22
TOTAL	72

Ratio of FSS Professors to Administrators: 12:72

Approximately 17% of FSS professors serve in an administrative capacity.

APPENDIX E

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

1. Please give your name, your class (year you entered Regional University), the faculty in which you are enrolled and where in Thailand you are from. After you graduate what will you do? Why did you come to study at Regional University? After you graduate how will you find a job?

2. Do you think the status of women and men in Thai society is unequal? If so, how? Please give examples.

3. Do you have brothers and sisters? Are girls and boys treated the same in your family?

4. If you could choose, would you prefer to be born (or reborn) as a boy or a girl? Why? What problems do young women/men at Regional University face?

5. Describe "Freshie" initiation in your faculty. Did the senior male students persuade the freshie male students to go to a brothel?

6. What is the ratio of boys to girls in your faculty? Who are the student leaders (women or men?).

7. Do any of your professors talk about or assign projects on women's issues? Give some examples.

8. What's your definition/understanding of Women's Studies?

9. If the university or your faculty offered a course in women's studies would you enroll?

10. What do you think about the saying that a woman should be taken care of by three men in her lifetime, the father, the older brother, and the husband?

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