THE CONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP IN "PROGRESSIVE" THAI SCHOOLS AND IMPLICATIONS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the possibilities and challenges of education in Thailand that can contribute toward democracy and social justice by focusing on the process of citizen construction in an alternative and a democratic school. By drawing on theories and knowledge from various critical fields, this thesis attempts to establish that schools are sites of competing interests and functions. It investigates both the formal and hidden school curricula and pedagogical approaches to better understand the contradictive nature of school and the implications on the construction of citizens for democracy and social justice. This study also examines the influence of differing political, economic and cultural ideologies in contemporary Thai society in shaping education curricula and practices in the two schools and the ways in which the schools negotiate these various ideologies which affect the construction of differentiated citizenship.

Findings suggest that curricula and pedagogical practices drawn from experiential and inquiry-based learning, and a focus on real issues and concerns in the larger society, have the potential to contribute to the construction of democratic and justice-oriented citizens. However, there are certain areas of tension and contradiction in the school systems and practices which present challenges to education for democracy and social justice. Furthermore, while Buddhism plays a significant role in citizen construction in both schools, its contribution toward creating democratic and justice-oriented citizens remains limited. Finally, as the alternative and democratic schools are embedded in a stratified society, their constructions of differentiated citizenship pose an important challenge for education for democracy and social justice in contemporary Thailand.

KEY WORDS: CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION / DEMOCRACY / SOCIAL JUSTICE BUDDHISM / PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS

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การสร้างประชาธิปไตยและความเป็นพลเมืองในโรงเรียนไทยที่มีแนวคิดก้าวหน้าและนัยยะต่อความเป็นธรรมทางสังคม

THE CONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY AND CITIZENSHIP IN “PROGRESSIVE” THAI SCHOOLS AND IMPLICATIONS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

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บทคัดย่อ

วิทยานิพนธ์ฉบับนี้ศึกษาโอกาสและข้อท้าทายของการศึกษาในประเทศไทยต่อการสร้างประชาธิปไตยและความเป็นธรรมทางสังคมโดยมุ่งเน้นไปที่การศึกษากระบวนการสร้างพลเมืองในโรงเรียนทางเลือกและโรงเรียนประชาธิปไตย 2 แห่ง งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้นำหลักทฤษฎีและองค์ความรู้เชิงวิพากษ์มาใช้เพื่อพยายามชี้ให้เห็นว่าโรงเรียนต้องทำหน้าที่ตอบสนองต่อเป้าหมายที่หลากหลายและอาจขัดกัน โดยงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ศึกษาหลักสูตรและแนวทางการเรียนการสอนแบบที่เป็นทางการและหลักสูตรแฝงของโรงเรียนเพื่อทำความเข้าใจกับลักษณะและเป้าหมายของโรงเรียนและระบบการศึกษาและนัยยะต่อการสร้างพลเมืองเพื่อประชาธิปไตยและความเป็นธรรมทางสังคม นอกจากนั้นงานวิจัยชิ้นนี้ยังสืบสาวอิทธิพลของอุดมการณ์ทางการเมือง เศรษฐกิจและวัฒนธรรมในสังคมไทยร่วมสมัยต่อการกำหนดหลักสูตรและข้อปฏิบัติต่างๆในโรงเรียนรวมไปถึงการที่โรงเรียนทั้ง 2 แห่งต่อรองกับอุดมการณ์เหล่านี้ในวิธีที่ต่างกันซึ่งส่งผลต่อการสร้างความเป็นพลเมืองที่แตกต่าง

ข้อค้นพบจากงานวิจัยชี้ให้เห็นว่าหลักสูตรและแนวทางการเรียนการสอนที่ตั้งอยู่บนพื้นฐานของกระบวนการเรียนรู้แบบสืบค้นและการเชื่อมโยงกับ ประเด็นทางสังคมมีศักยภาพในการส่งเสริมการสร้างพลเมืองที่เป็นประชาธิปไตยและมีจิตสำนึกเรื่องความเป็นธรรม อย่างไรก็ตามวิถีปฏิบัติแบบไทยๆ และระบบปฏิบัติบางอย่างของโรงเรียนอาจส่งผลในทางขัดกัน นอกจากนี้งานวิจัยยังค้นพบว่าถึงแม้ว่าแนวคิดและหลักปฏิบัติทางพุทธศาสนาจะ มีบทบาทสำคัญในการสร้างความเป็นพลเมืองในโรงเรียนไทยทั้ง 2 แห่งแต่ก็มีบทบาทจำกัดในการสร้างพลเมืองที่เป็นประชาธิปไตยและมีจิตสำนึกเรื่องความเป็นธรรม ท้ายที่สุดสังคมที่มีการแบ่งช่วงชั้นของไทยเป็นข้อท้าทายที่สำคัญต่อการศึกษาเพื่อการสร้างความเป็นประชาธิปไตยและความเป็นธรรมในสังคมไทย

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
B.E.	Buddhist Era
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA	Education for All
ECT	Election Commission of Thailand
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIA	Health Impact Assessment report
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune-Deficiency Syndrome
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPPS	Institute of Public Policy Studies
KPI	King Prajadhipok's Institute
M, M2, M3/1…	Mathayom, Mathayom 2, Mathayom 3/class1
NCC	National Cultural Commission
NESDB	National Economic and Social Development Board
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NIB	National Identity Board
NIC	Newly Industrialized Countries
NIP	Office of National Identity Promotion
OEC	Office of the Education Council
OBEC	Office of the Basic Education Commission
TRT	Thai Rak Thai Party

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and research questions

Persistent socio-economic disparity and emergent and deepening conflicts now characterize Thai society. While the past 50 years of modernization and development has created wealth for a section of the population, many remain in poverty.[1] Violence in the three southernmost provinces that has continued for a decade has claimed over 5,300 lives with nearly 10,000 people injured (PRD, 2014). The last eight years has also witnessed a deepening political crisis that has led to polarization between different groups in Thai society. While the causes of these various phenomena are manifold, they arguably reflect an unjust and inequitable political and economic structure as well as the lack of a strong sense of justice and equality among the majority of the population. Changing these conditions requires a new vision of society based on the values and principles of democracy and social justice as well as citizens who will act in pursuit of such values.

While different institutions have a role to play in inculcating these civic virtues, it has been suggested that school is an important site for the development of democratic citizenship as well as social justice values and practices (Kymlicka, 2008). However, as schools are the product of competing ideologies, they themselves are sites of contradicting functions and aims. On the one hand, schools are sites of social and cultural reproduction in capitalist society and indoctrinate conservative values (Giroux, 2001; Harber, 2004). On the other hand, schools can become agents of change by supporting autonomy, critical thinking and challenges to social injustices (Davies, 2001; Apple and Beane, 2007). This study explores the limits and

[1] According to the World Bank, the poverty headcount ratio at the national poverty line in Thailand was 13.2 % in 2011 (www.worldbank.org/country/Thailand). However, regional and provincial poverty statistics indicate a higher incidence of poverty in the Northeast, and the three southernmost provinces of Thailand with the figures ranging from 17% in the Northeast to 23% in Pattani province (UNDP, 2007: 9).

possibilities of education and schooling in Thailand in promoting democratic and social justice values and practices by investigating the process of citizen construction in "progressive" and "democratic" Thai schools. The main research question posed is 'To what extent can education and schooling support and promote the construction of democratic citizenship and social justice in contemporary Thailand?' The following sub-questions are then asked to elucidate the core question:

1. What kinds of citizens are being constructed in "progressive" and "democratic" Thai schools?

2. What roles do the school curriculum and pedagogy as well as the school system and culture play in promoting or hindering education for democracy and social justice in "progressive" and "democratic" Thai schools?

3. How have economic, political and socio-cultural forces informed and influenced citizen construction in "progressive" and "democratic" Thai schools? And with what outcomes?

By focusing on two sets of factors, namely the internal educational factors including the school curriculum and various school practices, and the larger socio-economic, political and cultural influence on education, this study hopes to bring out both possibilities and contradictions in education and schooling in Thailand. Under the current context in which they operate, the education system and schools function to support the status quo at the expense of democracy and social justice. In order for it to become transformative, education must be seen as political. As such, this study attempts to "bear witness to negativity" with "a conceptual/political framework that emphasizes the spaces in which counter-hegemonic actions can, or do, carry on" (Apple et al., 2009: 4).

1.2 Schools, society and citizen construction: engaging in critical education research

The role of education and schooling in citizen construction has been examined through different disciplines and from diverging theoretical lenses. Within the traditional discipline of education, an important area of inquiry has focused on the role of the school curriculum and pedagogy in developing desirable knowledge, values

and skills for future citizens. Internationally, this type of inquiry has included studies on the development of moral, civic/citizenship or democratic knowledge and values through the school curriculum and various pedagogical approaches (see Grossman et al., 2008; Arthur, et al., 2008; Zajda and Daun, 2009; Kennedy et al., 2010). In Thailand, a number of studies on this topic follow a similar line of inquiry as they look into the effectiveness of particular learning content and pedagogical methods on the students' moral, ethical, civic or democratic values and behaviors among learners of different age groups. These include studies by Saranya (1997) and Nuchsuda (2001) on the impact of certain instructional methods or by Worarat (2003) and Kruewan (2008), who looked into particular education inputs/training on the development of democratic values and behaviors among learners. Findings from these studies indicate some positive trends in learners adopting and exhibiting democratic values and behaviors as a result of a particular education input and experience. It is important to note, however, that the democratic values and behaviors defined in these studies are similar and they reflect those prescribed by Ministry of Education.[2] Learning methods which were identified as useful for inculcating these values and behaviors include for example group discussions, role plays, field studies and participation in religious and community activities. Methodologically, these studies employed quantitative methods and the use of questionnaires as a tool to collect the opinions of teachers and learners.[3] While this set of studies provides an insight into the kind of teaching methods and educational input that can be useful in the inculcation of democratic and citizenship values in a classroom context, they are uncritical about the civic/citizenship values being promoted. Moreover, by focusing only on pedagogical aspects, they are unable to offer an understanding of the effect of various school experiences and contexts on citizen construction.

In this respect, a more comprehensive approach to understanding the functioning of schools in citizen construction as well as their limits and possibilities in

[2] These include three sets of moral virtues namely unity (*samakkhitham*), wisdom (*panyatham*) and respect (*kharawatham*). *(Note: Transliterations of Thai words in this thesis follow the Royal Thai General System of Transcription).

[3] In the case of Kruewan (2008), observations were made of students' behaviors after the provision of certain educational input.

promoting democratic and social justice values may be developed by drawing on the kind of critical theoretical knowledge produced in the fields of sociology, critical education, economics, politics and peace studies. Within these disciplines, the role of education and schools in social, economic and political/cultural production and reproduction are important areas of investigation and critique. Scholars from within these fields have highlighted the contradictory nature of schooling as being not only a site for inculcating values of democracy and social justice, but also a place where existing social and economic inequality gets reproduced, and undemocratic culture and practices are the norm rather than the exception.

First, schooling is seen as having a central role in reproducing and maintaining social and economic inequality in a capitalistic society. Two contemporary Marxist theorists, Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, argue that schools serve to reproduce social class and a particular kind of consciousness that serves the interests of the elite through their control and transmission of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Children of the upper classes are educated to self-direct and control others while those from the working classes are taught to conform to the norms of the workplace as prescribed by the dominant group (Hurn, 1985: 212). As such, "the division of labor in education, as well as its structure of authority and reward, mirrors those of the economy" (Bowles & Gintis, 1988: 237 – cited in Au and Apple, 2009: 84).

In a similar light, Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu argue that existing power relations and the dominant culture are subtly transmitted through cultural codes which are operationalized in schools including through classroom practices and the larger pedagogical discourse. According to these critical researchers, cultural reproduction in education serves to maintain the class-based structure of society, a system which Bourdieu termed "symbolic violence" (Giroux, 2001: 87). In addition, some critical educators and peace theorists assert that education institutions are engaging in producing and reproducing authoritarian values and different forms of violence through the system of school control and surveillance, as well as through the practice of corporal punishment which is regarded as a form of direct violence (Kanpol, 1999; Harber, 2004). Furthermore, from this theoretical perspective, inequality in educational opportunity constitutes a form of structural violence as it is

both a result and a cause of the deprivation of basic rights. Likewise, the use of culturally biased curricula and the absence of democratic practice in schools are considered aspects of cultural violence as these manifestations serve to legitimize direct and structural violence (Salami, cited in Novelli and Cardozo, 2008: 480).

As such, these perspectives suggest that schools are economic and cultural as well as political institutions. Studying the limits and possibilities of education for democracy and social justice in schools, therefore, requires investigating the various dimensions of education and schooling that may have become "normalized." In practice, this entails delving into the education and socialization process of schooling. Although this task suggests that it requires first and foremost an understanding of the process and the kind of knowledge, values, attitudes and skills that are transmitted through schools to young citizens, an inquiry of this nature in the Thai context is rendered more complex by several considerations which also inform the focus and the scope of this thesis.

First, there are several aspects of schooling other than the formal school curriculum and pedagogical approach that have important implications for citizen construction. It has been argued that the ways in which school routines and ethos are enforced and social relations are observed comprise one of the major forces of school socialization and of citizenship learning as important values and norms often get transmitted tacitly through this process (Giroux, 2001: 198; Thornberg, 2009). Despite its significance, this aspect of learning in school, which is known as the "hidden curriculum", has received scant attention from scholars of civic/citizenship education working from within the mainstream education field in Thailand. Nevertheless, a study by Usanee and Srichai (2010) which draws on theories of violence and reproduction to analyze various aspects of schools' hidden curriculum, which they argue reflect direct, structural and cultural violence, has helped to highlight the relevance of this aspect of 'incidental' learning in the process of citizen construction in Thai schools.

By venturing into both formal learning and the "hidden" area of school socialization, this thesis identifies several aspects of schools which reflect undemocratic and "violent" or repressive school practices. However, it also uncovers processes toward participation, reflective learning, social and environmental activism

and leadership development which carry important implications for education for democratic citizenship and social justice. As such, there are also tensions and paradoxes within and between these various aspects of the school experience which will be discussed throughout this thesis.

Second, the "official" and "hidden" school knowledge and practices are said to reflect the dominant values and beliefs of society. In other words, while education and schools in different parts of the world may serve individual development (as through acquiring of cognitive skills), they also function in the interests of the dominant cultural, economic, and political ideologies of that society (Lee, 2008). In the context of Thailand, an important ideology that has been part of the school curriculum since historical times is that of loyalty to nation, religion and the monarchy. Studies reveal that Thai school textbooks have been used to promote conservative political goals by prescribing consistently the notion of good citizens who are loyal to the three institutions, and who can contribute to the well-being of the nation by adhering to a moral way of life drawn on Buddhist principles and ethics (Mulder, 1997; Suwanna, 1998). More currently, in their study of the implementation of civic education in three Thai schools, Somwung and Siridej (2002) also found that despite the emphasis on different civic values between these schools,[4] all of them shared a common value of respect for the monarchy and adherence to Buddhism. Similarly, findings from this research indicate that Buddhist values and practices constitute an important part of daily school life in both schools under study. As such, Buddhism is considered an integral part of citizen construction in Thailand. While this thesis explores the implications of Buddhism on education for democracy and social justice in contemporary Thai schools, it also examines the influence of economic and political ideologies in contemporary Thai society on the shaping of knowledge and practices in the two case study schools.

Third, schools in Thailand – as in many developing societies – are operating within an unequal socioeconomic structure. At the same time, although Thai

[4] This study looked into three types of secondary schools (public, private and a university demonstration school) in the Bangkok metropolis area. It found that the public school with a large student body and average academic standards emphasizes discipline. The private Christian school stresses moral values based on religious teaching. Using a more experiential approach to learning, the university demonstration school focuses on teaching social consciousness.

schools follow the same National Education Curriculum, they possess a certain level of autonomy to devise their own curriculum and practices.[5] While such an arrangement may sound logical and progressive, such a policy can result in furthering this inequality and creating differentiated citizenship in a society with a high level of socioeconomic disparity as in Thailand. Internationally, there is a growing body of studies which suggest that students experience differentiated kinds of citizenship education based on types of learning programs and their socioeconomic backgrounds (Kahne and Middaugh, 2008; Ho, et al., 2011). While such a disparity in citizenship learning can have important implications for political and social equality, this aspect of citizenship construction has been subject to limited critical study in the Thai context. Although the study by Somwung and Siridej (2002) referred to earlier indicated that schools have some autonomy to pick and choose what civic/citizenship values they want to promote, it did not raise questions on the implications of differentiated citizenship learning on education for democracy and social justice.

In this respect, a study by Prompilai Buasuwan (2004) on the influence of globalization and education decentralization (as part of the on-going education reform) on citizenship learning offers some useful information. By focusing on one rural and one urban school,[6] the study found that teachers and parents in the two schools differ in their expectations of the values which schools should promote. Teachers and parents in the rural school preferred more traditional values such as generosity, respect for authority, moral values based on Buddhism and respect for elders. On the contrary, their urban counterparts regarded liberal values including critical thinking, leadership, freedom of expression and respect for opinions as more important. Prompilai concluded that due to the challenges of learning reform and inequitable distribution of resources, education decentralization has resulted in differentiated learning of economic as well as civic skills and outlooks between elite and the masses with the former benefiting more from decentralization (Prompilai, 2004: 256).

[5] According to the 1999 National Education Act (revised 2001), schools which follow the Thai National Curriculum are required to develop their own School-based Curriculum which intends to provide space for local innovation and appropriateness.

[6] In this study, Prompilai interviewed teachers and parents in one rural and one urban school for their perspectives on civic values that should be taught and learnt in schools. She also spoke to policy makers and educators at local and national levels to ascertain the same.

Although Prompilai's study provides important insights into the different values and outlooks between participants from two different socio-economic contexts and the challenges in implementing citizenship education in a rural context, suggesting a construction of differentiated citizenship, her analysis was based largely on perspectives of key stakeholders rather than coming from investigating actual practices in the schools. In this respect, this thesis differs from Prompilai's study in at least two important ways. First, while this study is also concerned with the effect of socio-economic contexts on citizenship construction, instead of focusing on stakeholders' perspectives, it attempts to delineate the ways in which schools embedded in different socio-economic contexts negotiate prevailing ideologies and policies to the effect of differentiated citizenship construction. Second, although this thesis takes an interest in policy implications, as it has the ongoing education reform as a backdrop, its interest lies in the internal working of schools in the process of citizen construction. Thus, its methodological approach focuses on understanding the different school cultures and practices through participant observations and interviews.

Altogether, the different considerations and studies above provide important insights into various areas of inquiry associated with the project of citizen construction in schools including: the role of the school's formal and hidden curricula, their interplay with larger socio-cultural, economic and political forces, and the ways in which schools embedded in different socio-economic contexts negotiate these prevailing ideologies. At the same time, they suggest that a diverse epistemology and information is required in engaging in a critical inquiry of this topic. In this respect, this thesis attempts to build on and delve deeper into the different aspects of inquiry, placing concerns for democracy and social justice at the center. Furthermore, while this research exposes the current realities of Thai schools, it also attempts to conceive possible ingredients of education for democracy and social justice in the Thai context. As such, this study hopes to generate some insights into the under-studied field of critical citizenship education and a greater interest in the important theme of education for democracy and social justice in Thailand.

1.3 Education for transformation: learning for democracy and social justice

Paulo Freire has articulated his notion of education:

> "There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it or it becomes the "practice of freedom" – the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world".
>
> (Freire, 1973, cited in Cerecer et at., 2010: 146)

The above passage from Freire illuminates how education can and must be transformative. The transformative possibility of education, as explored in this thesis, is linked to the extent to which education can challenge the status quo and promote democratic and social justice values through the construction of democratic and justice-oriented citizenship. In laying out the framework for education for democracy and social justice in this study, these concepts are examined below.

1.3.1 Education for democracy

Democracy is a contested concept. Diverse Western political philosophies have informed various conceptions of democracy and the corresponding roles of education in a democratic society. Contemporary conception of education for democracy can be said to draw on the political and social philosophy of John Dewey (1859-1952) who advocated the idea that "democracy is not simply a political mechanism or a set of individual rights. Rather, it is a society which has created the conditions under which its members can collectively determine the future of their society on the basis of their shared social intelligence" (Carr and Harnett, 1996: 60). Thus, for Dewey, the purpose of education in a democratic society is to enable the development of the social intelligence of the young by encouraging them to resolve problems of communal life through the process of collective deliberations and a shared concern for the common good (ibid: 63). In this regard, the role of schools is to

provide a democratic environment in which students can exercise their democratic way of life.

Beane and Apple (2007) also argued that democracy involves values and principles that constitute "the democratic way of life" (p.7). In their book, *Democratic Schools: Lessons in Powerful Education*, they outlined values and principles of democratic education that include not only widespread participation of students and other members of the school community in the decision-making process relating to various school affairs, but also an emphasis on structural equity. This latter aspect is concerned with ensuring that all students, regardless of their backgrounds, face no institutional barriers such as academic tracking and other arrangements that would prevent them from accessing and realizing the benefit of different school programs. Furthermore, education for democracy is concerned with democratizing the school curriculum in order for students to "learn to be 'critical readers' of their society" while enabling them to construct their own knowledge by considering a wider range of perspectives and voices beyond those endorsed by the dominant culture (Beane and Apple, 2007: 15-17). In this connection, a democratic curriculum also tries to extend the values of democracy by exploring problems and issues of the larger society as part of school learning experience. Lastly, Beane and Apple pointed out that the democratic way of life in schools also includes the ability for teachers, as professional educators, to exercise a meaningful control over their own work while also extending a democratic way of life to their students.

In this regard, education for democracy is concerned not only with a democratic school structure and processes or the democratizing of the school curriculum and pedagogy, but also a commitment to equality and social justice through such processes. As such, democratic education also shares a similar vision with that of social justice education. However, like that of democracy, there are also different conceptions of social justice which tend to make this goal of education more elusive. Thus, it is pertinent to consider various ideas of social justice below.

1.3.2 Social justice and social justice education

It has been argued that the universal concept of justice has its roots in the different religious moral values and principles. The religious teaching of Judaism,

Christianity, Islam and Buddhism emphasizes the importance of "sharing, equality of treatment, not profiting at the expense of the disadvantaged groups in society, the evil of greed, and rulers behaving righteously, fairly and justly towards their people" (National Pro Bono Resource Center, 2011; 5). Secular concepts of social justice that emerged in the western world during the Enlightenment period were associated with relationships and institutional arrangements – a 'social contract' between the rulers and their people – for the maintenance of a 'just' society. The idea that people possess certain inherent rights which cannot be taken away from them, as expounded by thinkers like Locke (1632-1704) and Rousseau (1712-1778) provided an important basis for the link between the preservation of individual liberties and equality on the one hand, and the realization of social justice on the other.

Contemporary western concepts of social justice entail different principles of fairness. However, there are various interpretations of this notion. The Utilitarian view of fairness as advocated by J.S. Mill was concerned with promoting "the greatest happiness of the greatest number" (Carr, 2008: 25). This approach to fairness has been criticized for benefiting the privileged classes since decisions may be taken at the expense of vulnerable or disadvantaged groups (National Pro Bono Resource Center, 2011: 6). A different notion of social justice as fairness based on distributive justice is put forward by John Rawls (1999) who posited the idea of justice based on democratic equality and the 'difference principle', which are concerned with distributive equity as well as efficiency. His view of injustice, as put by Grant and Gibson is that, "[it] is rooted in macro-level, political/economic structures that cause exploitation and material deprivation and prevent self actualization" (Grant and Gibson, 2010: 27). Rawls's analysis of equity in the distribution of resources explicitly recognizes that it should be "to the greatest expected benefit of the least advantaged" and with regard to offices and positions "…open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity" (Rawls, 1999: 72). Resources or the 'social primary goods' which should be distributed equitably, according to Rawls, include 'rights, liberty and opportunities, income and wealth, and the social bases of self-respect' (Rawls, 1999: 54).

Although Rawls's theory of distributive justice, which relates to justice in a systemic form, is influential, there are other views of social justice including one which does not support any kind of redistribution by the state but calls for it to protect

individuals' existing entitlements, as put forward by Robert Nozick, and one which advocates distribution based on the moral responsibility and behavior of individuals as proposed by Miller (National Pro Bono Resource Center, 2011: 7). Furthermore, there are also other scholars who perceive social justice beyond its distributive characteristic. Amartya Sen (2010) sees social justice as related to the capabilities of individuals to gain optimal well-being in their circumstances. His approach to social justice aims at making society less unjust instead of aiming at creating a perfectly just society. At the same time, Nancy Fraser (1997) argued that injustice stems not only from socioeconomic inequality but also from the discrimination and exploitation of people based on their different cultural identities. However, she accepted that in most cases, socioeconomic and cultural injustices are intertwined and tend to reinforce each other dialectically (Fraser, 1997: 15). In this respect, justice is not only about the redistribution of resources but also the recognition and acceptance of diversity.

Grant and Gibson (2010) argued for grounding social justice in the language of human rights. Drawing from Rawls's and Fraser's theories of justice discussed above, their interpretation of social justice implies recognition and support for both economic and social rights on the one hand, and respect for diversity and cultural pluralism on the other. In this respect, education with a social justice goal is concerned with challenging material inequalities and economic justice while at the same time embracing cultural differences and promoting pluralism. It is the kind of education, as Grant and Gibson (2010) put it, that "is committed to preparing students for a deliberative democracy that values diversity, social responsibility and human rights" (p.28).

While these various concepts of social justice offer a useful framework for moving toward education for social change, this study draws on three principles for social justice education put forward by Ayers, Quinn, and Stovall (2009) which include equity, activism, and social literacy. The first principle, *equity*, is about ensuring both equal access to education and equitable learning outcomes. The kind of education that must be made accessible to all children under this principle must be the one of "most challenging and nourishing education experiences", while equitable learning outcomes entail "redressing and repairing historical and embedded injustices" (p. xiv). As for the second principle, Ayers, Quinn, and Stoval see *activism* as a

democratic goal which promotes full participation of the young by preparing them "to see, understand and when necessary, to change all that is before them" (p. xiv). In this respect, activism is about providing the opportunity for students to become agents of change. Lastly, *social literacy* is concerned with "nourishing awareness of our own identities and our connection with others" (p.xiv) and an understanding of the historical, economic and cultural context shaping ideas and values in the global society and their implication for social justice.

In this respect, education for social justice shares similar values and principles with education for democracy. Learning values such as democracy, human rights, diversity and social justice as discussed above can partly be found in what is known today as citizenship education. However, it is important to note that not all citizenship education delivers the same messages, values and practices. There are also different conceptions of citizenship that underpin various approaches to citizenship education which need to be briefly examined.

1.3.3 Citizenship education

Historically, educating for citizenship has been an integral part of education, accompanying the growth of nation states and expansion of public education in different parts of the world (Arthur et al., 2008: 4). However, there have been diverging notions of citizenship which reflected the various political traditions and government regimes that prevailed in different societies (see Beiner, 1995). In this regard, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argued that debates about education for citizenship are essentially concerned with defining what kinds of citizens are needed to advance democracy. Both of these scholars and Print (2008) have similarly synthesized three conceptions of citizenship, namely personally responsible (traditional), participatory and justice-oriented.

First, a traditional conception of citizenship is associated with "a legal status of rights and responsibilities in a democratic system" (Print, 2008: 96). Thus, education for citizenship focuses on knowledge about the nation's history and governmental system. At the same time, building character and personal responsibility by emphasizing values such as honesty, integrity, self-discipline and hard work is an important aspect of personally responsible citizenship. As such,

citizens are expected to contribute toward society by paying taxes, abiding by the law, possessing good characters and volunteering for their community (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004: 240- 241). This is different from the second conception of citizenship which regards citizens' active participation in political and civic issues such as voting and community-based efforts as crucial for an effective democracy. Education for citizenship, therefore, focuses on developing necessary knowledge and skills such as in research, planning and organizing work to enable students to take active part in a democracy. With respect to the third conception of citizenship, Print (2008) noted that citizenship is about the "citizen [as] one who pursues social justice, purposively attends to matters of injustice and attempts to change people's values and attitudes towards their fellow citizens" (p.96). As such, the aim of education for democratic citizenship is to engage students to become agents of social change by addressing issues of discrimination and oppression. According to Westheimer and Kahne (2004), while the notion of justice-oriented citizenship shares an emphasis on engaging in collective community life, its focus on addressing social issues and injustice makes it somewhat different. In any case, it can be said that both conceptions of participatory and justice-oriented citizenship are linked to the ideas of education for democracy and social justice articulated earlier, which also constitute the conceptual framework for this study.

While there is diversity in citizenship education across different societies, studies have shown that citizenship curricula in Asian countries tend to focus on reinforcing cultural traditional, social cohesion as well as moral virtues and personal values (see different chapters in Grossman et al., 2008). This is also the case in Thailand where civic education has traditionally focused on learning about Thai history, loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy, formalistic notions of democracy and the inculcation of good persons and good citizens based on Buddhist moral values (Mulder, 1997; Lakkana; 1999; Kupluthai, 2009). However, the crises in the Thai politics and economics in the 1990s led to new understanding with regard to the idea and practice of participation, democracy and citizens' rights. At the same time, there has been a growing interest in the promotion of child-centered learning that can have an important influence on citizenship and democratic education. Considering the changing context, this study intends to explore the extent to which citizenship learning

that takes place within and beyond the civic education curriculum contributes to education for democracy and social justice in "progressive" and "democratic" schools under this study.

Before considering "progressive" and "democratic" schools under this study, it is important to note that given that there are varied ideas of citizenship, the term 'citizenship learning' used in this thesis does not connote any particular conception of 'citizenship' identified above but refers to a broad process of 'learning to be a citizen' in society. Similarly, the term 'education for citizenship' does not indicate a specific notion of citizenship unless indicated. However, the term 'democratic citizenship' used in this thesis is linked to the notion of education for democracy and social justice described earlier in this section. It is also associated with the concepts of participatory and justice-oriented citizenship. Lastly, the terms 'education for democracy' and 'education for democratic citizenship' are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

1.4 Progressive and democratic schools

In the field of education, the term progressive education is commonly understood today as pedagogical progressivism. It is often referred to teaching approaches based on the needs and interests of learners, reflecting also the developmental stage of the child. Education progressivists see teaching the skills to learn a subject as more important than teaching the subject content itself. The former usually involves exploratory, self-directed and collaborative methods of learning. Students play an active role in their learning experience by engaging in projects of interest to them and/or of social relevance (Labaree, 2007). This is in contrast to what might be understood as traditional education approaches where the learning focus is on subject content with didactic or rote methods as common practice. Although the differences between educational progressivism and traditionalism may be perceived to be methodological, Carr (2003) argued that there is a normative difference between the two traditions.

At one end, educational traditionalists see the need for human beings to be initiated into the received wisdom and values of a given society or culture in order to

become 'civilized'. Hence, education is considered in its reproductive role, that is, as an "instrument by which a given community ensures the continuity of its way of life" (Carr, 2003; 218). At the other end, progressivists perceive that people are innately good and they see education as a means to develop individual capacities for effective democratic participation. Pedagogical practice based on direct experience of the world is regarded as enabling the development of "responsible democratic citizens capable of concern more for the common good than for self-interest" (Carr, 2003; 222). In this respect, progressive education shares the idea of education for democracy discussed earlier. However, it has been pointed out that through much of its development and transformation, the democratic and social justice ideal embedded in progressive education has not been adequately articulated while exploratory and collaborative learning principles have been reduced merely to pedagogical technique (Carr and Hartnett, 1996).

In Thailand, education progressivism is linked to the 'alternative' education movement. Despite its various definitions,[7] the alternative education movement in Thailand - as broadly understood today - stemmed from a reaction against the rigidity of the formal education system and its increasingly alienated learning content and methods removed from the daily experience of children. An early product of this movement, the well-known Children Village School established in 1979, drew on the branch of the western progressive education tradition of A.S. Neill, who saw that human nature flourishes best in conditions of freedom.[8] Serving mostly children from disadvantaged backgrounds, the school nurtures egalitarian and democratic values through direct and democratic experience. The study of Pornphan

[7] There are four main definitions of alternative education including i) education and learning in non-mainstream education systems e.g., the concept of de-schooling; ii) education for children with special needs and gifted children; iii) education that emphasizes holistic learning and diversity of learners; and iv) education/schools with higher levels of autonomy than regular schools (see Pokpong and Sunthorn, 2012)

[8] This is a live-in primary school located in a provincial area. It occupies a large area of about 200 rai and consists of about 135 children and nearly 50 adults who are teachers and guardians. Children and adults live together in a family- and community-like atmosphere.

Verapreyagura (2000) on the development of civic virtues in this school[9] identified four important conditions which enable the construction of civic virtues: i) adherence to the ideology of a learning community; ii) the presence of a physical and social context that is supportive of this ideology; iii) the adoption of a horizontal social structure; and iv) the availability of social capital. Under these conditions, Pornphan argued that community members cultivate civic virtues of self-discipline, public consciousness, cooperation and participation, as well as moral courage and adherence to a democratic ideology. In this respect, she suggested that it is difficult to develop these civic virtues in the setting of a formal and rigid schooling system (Pornphan, 2000).

Nevertheless, after the creation of the Children Village School, a number of new schools with an alternative educational vision and learning approach have been established (Pokpong and Suntorn, 2012). Some distinctions have been made between alternative education that operates within the formal education system and community-based, non-formal alternative education.[10] The formal alternative schools, which are the focus of this study, draw on various branches of progressive, child-centered learning traditions developed in the West.[11] These schools have adopted project-based, experiential and active learning concepts and integrated curricular approaches that have enabled them to offer a variety of learning experiences to students.[12] In addition, many of these alternative schools have also applied Buddhist principles[13] to the teaching-learning process while promoting a balance of

[9] The tile of the study is "Social Construct of Civic Virtue in Thai Community". The school under this study was referred to as *rongrian khunatham haeng khwam pen phonlamueang* โรงเรียนคุณธรรมแห่งความเป็นพลเมือง [School of civic virtues]. From the description of this school in the study, it is understood that the school is the Children Village School.

[10] The non-formal alternative school system includes ,for example, home schools and community-based schools (see Suchada et al., 2005 and Jones, 2008 for discussion of these schools)

[11] These include the Montessori, Waldorf, Neo-humanist and Constructivist models.

[12] See the summary of concepts and learning approaches of a network of 12 alternative schools by Mira Mahawongse, 2008

[13] The emphasis on Buddhist values and practices may vary from school to school. For example, Sathya Sai school in Lopburi Province has been recognized as a model Buddhist school by the Ministry of Education although its official approach as described by the school's founder is one based on human

technological know-how, localism and the values of Thai-ness. In this respect, these alternative schools in Thailand seem to be capable of offering diverse learning possibilities for their students.

This thesis argues that the democratic and social justice potential of alternative schools, especially the one under this study, lies in their curricular and pedagogical practices focusing on project-based and reflective inquiry, localism ideology as well as reconstructive Buddhism that promotes self and social development. However, as this thesis will illustrate, pedagogical progressivism was not meant to serve democracy and social justice goals but rather individual development and the economic purpose of education. Furthermore, despite attempts by the school to adopt a disciplinary system that can be seen as reflecting the idea of democratic control and a more egalitarian school structure, there are certain tensions and paradoxes in such practices. The context and challenges of this alternative school are somewhat different from the so-called "democratic" school in this study, as discussed below.

Democratic schools in Thailand, particularly the one examined in this study, earn their titles from the National Identity Board (NIB) through the Office of National Identity Promotion (NIP).[14] The definition of "model democratic school" [15] given by NIP is as follows:

> Educational institutions offering the basic education curriculum under the administration of the Office of the Basic Education Commission, the Private Education Commission, Local Administrative Office, the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority and Border Patrol Police Units, which carry out learners' development activities, in cooperation with all stakeholders, to develop genuine democratic practices and characteristics for learners that include *panyatham* (wisdom); *kharawatham* (respect) and *samakkhitham* (unity) in accordance with the curriculum, age and level of education.

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values education promoted by its spiritual leader, Sathya Sai Baba (see Jones, 2008, for more discussion of this school).

[14] The Office of National Identity Promotion is an administrative unit of the National Identity Board (NIB).

[15] The Office of National Identity Promotion initiated a Model Democratic School project in 2005.

> [The schools should] also organize activities to instill a correct consciousness about politics and the democratic system of government with the king as head of state, [and for learners to] maintain and promote rights, duties, freedoms, and respect for laws, equality and human dignity; to be proud of Thainess and to protect common and national benefits; and to provide opportunities for the community to participate in education development. [The schools should] carry out these activities successfully and can become models for other schools.
>
> (Office of National Identity Promotion, 2008: 13. Author's translation)

The definition of democratic schools above reflects a mixture of traditional and liberal values and aspects of democracy which are considered important in contemporary Thai society. First, democratic characteristics identified in this definition are drawn from Buddhist virtues and ethics of wisdom, respect and unity.[16] Second, democracy with the king as head of state reflects the notion of democracy as a governance system unique to Thailand. Third, democracy is also seen as associated with the liberal notions of rights, duties, freedoms, and respect for the rule of law, equality and human dignity. Finally, adherence to and protection of Thai culture and the national interest constitutes an important aspect of Thai democracy. This combination of values also reflects the aim of Thai education as articulated in the National Education Act of 1999.

In this respect, democratic schools in Thailand are defined within a paradox of traditional and liberal Thai democratic discourse. As this thesis will illustrate, despite the formal recognition and adoption of liberal democratic values of rights, equality and freedoms in the education goal, there are limited processes and practices which reflect these values in Thai schools. On the contrary, learning that emphasizes obedience, respect for authority and individual moral virtues continue to be promoted. Furthermore, both progressive and democratic schools in Thailand are situated in a stratified society where a differentiated education system is also promoted. In this respect, while progressive education carries some potential to serve

[16] The word *tham* – as in panya*tham*, kharawa*tham* and samakkhi*tham* is a form of the Buddhist term 'dharma' which refers, among other things, to the teachings of the Buddha.

democratic and social justice goals, the traditional contexts in which progressive pedagogical praxis operates can become a hindrance to the nurturing of democratic and egalitarian values. Likewise, a segregated education system presents a real challenge for education for democracy and social justice, as will be evident in this thesis.

1.5 Methodology

This study began as an attempt to understand what goes on in schools that may contribute positively or negatively to the construction of citizens who would uphold the values and practice of democracy and social justice. Taking schools as a unit of analysis for citizen construction, this research is careful in not seeing schools as a black box with an 'input-output' mode of operation. As a researcher, I am aware that there are multiple factors which influence the shaping of knowledge, values and behaviors of an individual student other than school education. Family, peers, the media and the context of the larger society play an important part in the (political) socialization of the young. However, the outcome of any socialization can be difficult to measure. Nevertheless, studying how schools function to construct democratic citizens within the dynamic tension of the larger society can offer a critical reflection of some of the challenges and how they might be overcome.

In order to investigate citizen construction, this thesis employs case study methods as in intensive research design. According to Morrow (1994), in intensive research design, "each case resembles others of that type, which allows construction of limited generalizations, as well as explications of the individual case" (p. 251). This research is also distinct from the previous studies on education in Thailand discussed earlier in this chapter in at least four aspects. First, it looks into so-called "progressive" and "democratic" schools rather than just any public or private schools in the mainstream education system. Second, it considers a number of aspects of the school experience as affecting citizen construction, rather than focusing on any one particular factor. Third, it places concern for democracy and social justice at the center of the inquiry. Lastly, the dynamic relations between society, school and citizen construction are exposed.

1.5.1 Case studies selection and research sites

As pointed out earlier, the focus on the two special categories of school in this research has to do with their transformative potential, one case linked to progressive pedagogy while the other one recognized as a democratic school. However, I need to be honest in saying that the identification of the 'democratic' school for this research was an ambiguous decision to begin with. Despite the broad definition of a democratic school in the National Identity Board's statement above, democracy as promoted in Thai society is understood to follow a 'thin' concept of electoral politics. Thus, schools which are recognized as democratic by the Thai state may be so in a minimal version. Selecting one such school for study implies accepting this limitation.

In selecting the schools as case studies, I listed three 'alternative schools' which meet the criteria for this research[17] and three democratic schools.[18] The focus on secondary level education in this study is based on the understanding that citizenship learning is more rigorous at this level compared to the primary one. My plan was to conduct a research in two schools, one from each category above. For the alternative schools, selecting one out of the three schools identified was relatively straight forward as two of them did not agree for me to carry out the research in their schools.[19]

[17] This includes the geographical limitation that the school should be in Bangkok and its vicinity in order to allow the researcher to visit the school on a regular basis over an extended period. Other criteria for selection of the alternative schools included the conditions that the schools must offer classes at the secondary level and follow the Thai National Education Curriculum. Lastly, the schools must not be boarding schools.

[18] The three schools were taken from the list of 2010 model democratic schools provided by the Office of National Identity Promotion. The criteria for selecting the three schools were similar to those for selecting the alternative schools, with the exception that the democratic schools be public instead of private schools.

[19] For all three schools, I made initial contact by telephone. One of the schools that declined said it did not have policy to cooperate in this kind of study. The other school that declined was sent a formal letter explaining about the research project and two phone calls were also made to the vice principal explaining the project and answering her concerns. Although the vice principal sounded sympathetic to the proposal, I was told that the school was not ready for this study.

I was fortunate to be welcomed by the Rainbow School[20] which became the site for my field study for the next year. The Rainbow School is, in fact, known to be a pioneer of alternative education of its kind in Thailand. It was among the first alternative day schools to cover twelve years of basic education using the Thai national education curriculum. However, like most alternative schools in Thailand, the Rainbow School is a private school. When the school was opened for enrollment in 1997, the small group of students who attended the school during its early years were largely children of educated middle-class parents including those with a supposedly progressive vision who supported education reform. Located in the outer suburbs of Bangkok, the school occupies a spacious area of about 50 rai.[21] The large space and the natural setting of the school with appropriately-designed buildings which provide a clean and safe environment are also attractions for a number of students and parents. Hence, the school quickly gained popularity especially among parents with younger children. Each year the demand for places in the kindergarten section of the school exceeds its capacity and about one third of applications have to be turned down. The student body grew from about 260 in 1997 to about 1200 during the first fourteen years of operation. During the period of this research, there were approximately 370 students in the secondary section of the school. The majority of the students have been at the school since either kindergarten or primary school. The number of teachers in the secondary section was about 50, making the student-teacher ratio quite low at about 8: 1.[22]

Although the Rainbow School does not claim to be a democratic school, it has a unique pedagogical and curricular approach as well as horizontal school structure which can be seen as counter-hegemonic to the dominant educational culture and practices centered on textbook-based, examination-driven learning and bureaucratic control. The curriculum and pedagogical approach adopted by the school can be seen as contributing to the ability of students to construct their own knowledge and to learn to become socially responsible citizens. The school is also careful about

[20] A pseudonym.

[21] 1 rai = 1,600 square meters.

[22] Ministry of Education recommends a student-teacher ratio of 25 : 1.

not having its teachers exercise authority and power over their students. These practices can have a positive impact on democracy and social justice. Nevertheless, while it could be said that an alternative school like the Rainbow School has a great potential to bring about changes in education toward a more critical, democratic and socially-oriented learning, there are certain areas in the seemingly unconventional and egalitarian school culture and practices which reflect traditional thinking and conformity to dominant societal values. Such tensions are apparently not uncommon in a rapidly modernizing society like Thailand. This understanding provides an important insight into the role of education and its prospects and challenges in harnessing democracy and social justice in Thai society.

With regard to the selection of a democratic school, I did not encounter any major problems in randomly picking a name out of the three schools[23] identified from the 2010 list of model democratic schools provided by the Office of National Identity Promotion. Chaisri Secondary[24] is a small-size, co-education secondary school serving almost 300 students with approximately 25 teachers. The school first earned its title as a model democratic school in 2008. The school was recognized as a "Prototype Democratic School" in 2010 since it had been able to maintain the model democratic school status for three consecutive years including 2010. At the school entrance, there is a big banner displaying a picture of student representatives and the school principal holding an award plate. The message in the background reads "Congratulations to the students and faculty of Chaisri Secondary on the occasion of being presented a 'Prototype Democratic School' Award."[25] However, it turns out that Chaisri Secondary represents an ordinary Thai public school. Located in Nakhon Pathom Province to the south of Bangkok, the origin of Chaisri Secondary dates back to 1942 when a respected abbot of a temple in the district set up a private school that

[23] The three schools that met the selection criteria included two schools in Nakhon Pathom Province and one school in Bangkok.

[24] A pseudonym.

[25] "Prototype Democratic Schools" refer to schools which have been recognized as "Model Democratic Schools" by the Office of National Identity Promotion for three consecutive years.

served students in primary and lower secondary classes.[26] As there were no other secondary schools nearby, Chaisri Secondary became popular. The children of merchants and government officials as well as those of local people attended the school. The current school principal proudly mentioned to me during our first meeting the names of some high-ranking police officials and politicians who were alumni of the school. However, after the adoption of the National Education Plan in 1977, private schools were brought under the administration of the Ministry of Education. Chaisri Secondary also went through this process. The school was also moved to the current location nearby with a larger space and offering classes at the secondary level while closing down the primary level classes.

The area where the school is currently located is semi-urban populated by a mixed group of residents, some of whom are originally from the area while others are internal migrants. In fact, this vicinity seems to have been a site for industrial development since the early stages of Thai economic development: the first garment factory was set up in the area in the early 1960s. There are currently a number of factories and big manufacturing plants in the school vicinity. Despite this, visiting the school can still feel like being in countryside in transition. Just opposite the school gate, cows are nibbling on the green grass in an open field with a big "For Sale" sign. In this context, the school currently serves students largely from a lower socio-economic background. As such, aside from its democratic school title, the reality of the school is such that there are many challenges associated with the socio-economic context of the school and students themselves. Nevertheless, I never closed any windows of opportunity to look for what might be counter-hegemonic practices in this school.

1.5.2 Areas of inquiry and data collection

This research inquires into two important areas of formal schooling including the school curriculum and pedagogy, and the school system and culture. Curriculum includes both the formal and 'hidden' curriculum. The first refers to the

[26] The education system in Thailand was a seven-three-three system before changing into to a six-three-three system (six years of primary, three years of lower secondary and three years of upper secondary) in 1979.

objectives and learning principles which schools have made explicit as well as arrangements for extracurricular activities, while the latter entails "norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of end or goals" (Apple, 2004: 78-79). As such the 'hidden curriculum' is also related to aspects of the school system and culture which include written and unwritten rules/codes of conduct as well as the relationships between teachers and administrators and between students and teachers. The focus on pedagogy includes the broad teaching and learning approach adopted by the school/teachers as well as specific teaching methods which can be observed through teaching and learning in classrooms and other settings.

My initial plan was to carry out the field research based on a whole-school approach, using semi-structured and unstructured interviews with school administrators, teachers and students, as well as school and classroom observations. With this design, I also had in mind a specific focus on students in Mathayom 2 and 3.[27] This consideration was based on the fact that in Thailand compulsory education covers up to the end of lower secondary education or Mathayom 3. However, as I began my research I realized that students in Mathayom 2 were quite young. Some of them were younger than 14 years old, which was my cut-off age. Although I did some interviews with students in Mathayom 2, I decided not to focus specifically at this level. Besides, by taking on a whole-school approach, I began by observing anything that was happening in the schools and talking to anyone available. While I have tried to retain the focus of my classroom observations on Mathayom 3 classes, the whole-school approach has naturally expanded the range of my informants. In both schools, I became familiar with students in Mathayom 4, 5 and 6, interviewing them as well as observing them in their classes and during their participation in extra-curricular activities.

The situation is similar with the teachers. While I initially focused on teachers responsible for social studies in Mathayom 2 and 3, over time I became acquainted with teachers in other classes and subject areas and was able to also interview them. However, it must be noted that in a small public school like Chaisri

[27] This is equivalent to Grade/Year 8 and 9 in the American and British education systems respectively.

Secondary, there are only one or two teachers covering one subject area for all six levels. In the subject area of social studies for example, there are two teachers for nine classes which include two classes each for Mathayom 1-3 and one class each for Mathayom 4-6.[28] A younger teacher is responsible for teaching the four classes in Mathayom 1 and 2 while another, more senior teacher teaches the rest.) This is different from the situation at the Rainbow School where one teacher covers one subject for each class level. As a result, at this school I was able to interview four social studies teachers while at Chaisri Secondary there were only two teachers to be interviewed. Thus, for the latter I adjusted some criteria in selecting teacher informants to include those who have been in the school for more than ten years and some newer ones. This has allowed me to gain a better insight into continuity and changes in some of the school's practices over the years. Throughout my field study, I found that there are many factors that influence research and data collection in Thai schools, including some of my own biases.

1.5.3 Doing research in Thai schools: gaining access, making observations and conducting interviews

Schools are, by nature, exclusive institutions. They are considered sites for knowledge (re)production and transmission, with perceived and real authority over a section of people – the students. In many Thai schools, and particularly the ones that are considered "special", school rules and practices are considered sacred and what goes on inside the school walls and in the classrooms is sometime beyond the awareness of outsiders – especially those who are outside education circles. Although many Thai schools have become more open to outsiders, the thought of having a stranger going in to "see" and to talk to students and teachers on the very broad topic of 'construction of democratic citizen' would understandably be received with some caution. While some prospective schools decided not to risk being scrutinized at all, the administrators at the Rainbow School took it in a good spirit albeit with some sense of anxiety. When I was explaining the research objectives and process to the school director at the Rainbow School, she remarked that "this is an important

[28] At the lower secondary level (Mathayom 1-3), each grade is divided into two classrooms: classes number one and number two.

topic...but you see, some people came to look at what we do and they said we are not the way we told them." She also admitted that "this is a sensitive issue because it concerns the school's image" (Fieldnotes, 26.05.11). The school director told me that she needed to consult with the school's founder before taking a decision. Nevertheless, once I received the green signal from the top administrator then making myself 'fit in' with the school environs and find my way around, meeting and talking to students and teachers was less of a challenge than at Chaisri Secondary.

At Chaisri Secondary, gaining access to the school was a more straightforward process since the school was officially recognized as a model democratic school and I approached it from that angle. After I had made the initial contact with the school, I was told that I should meet the school principal to whom I explained the research objectives and process. The school principal gave me some background about the school and the democratic school project. However, due to his busy schedule I had a chance to interview him only once during my time at the school.[29] Furthermore, once the school principal had agreed for me to do the research, I found that meeting and talking to students and teachers here was not so easy. Unlike at the Rainbow School where I was introduced to different teachers and was able to become acquainted with them through my participation in various school activities, at Chaisri Secondary I almost had to be tied to the one teacher who was responsible for the democratic school project and who acted as my 'host' in the school. In the beginning, I spent a lot of time observing her classes and interviewing her. Other teachers were initially reluctant to talk to me and would refer me back to this particular teacher. Although I was able to become acquainted with other teachers over time, I realized that my approach of using the "democratic school" as an entry point had limited my ability to access and experience Chaisri Secondary in the way I was able to achieve at the Rainbow School. Nevertheless, during the one academic year I was able to participate in different school activities and be part of the school routine and talk to more teachers and students than I had initially planned.

[29] My appointments with him were either cancelled or postponed three times before I was finally able to interview him.

My field research was carried out over one academic year from June 2011 to May 2012.[30] As I conducted my fieldwork in both schools simultaneously, I made it a schedule to spend two days a week at each school. At the beginning however, I tried to alternate the days I went to the schools so that I would have an overview of the school routine for the week. Then I began to keep a schedule of a fixed two days a week for each school based on the schedule of classes which I intended to observe. However, I was flexible with my time when there were special activities/programs at the schools. Overall however, I ended up spending more days at the Rainbow School since there were more opportunities to engage there.

For both schools, I usually arrived at the school in the morning before classes started and as such I was able to occasionally observe the morning rituals. Then I either observed classes or other school activities, or, after I became more acquainted with the teachers and students and when time permitted, I would informally talk to and/or interview them. While at the school, I took my lunch in the school cafeteria/lunch hall. At the Rainbow School, this offered an occasion to meet with some other teachers since all teachers, except class advisors, would normally take their lunch – served complimentary by the school – together at the lunch hall while students would take lunch in their classrooms with the class advisors. However, this was not the case with Chaisri Secondary, where - as in most public schools - students buy their food from the cafeteria and eat there, while the teachers may also take their lunch there or eat in the staff room. In any case, I did not have many chances to take lunch with the teachers and students at Chaisri Secondary. In the afternoon, if there were no special activities, then things became quieter in both schools. If there were classes or activities to observe or an opportunity to talk to students and teachers then I would stay at the school in the afternoon until the end of the school day. This happened more often at the Rainbow School. At Chaisri Secondary, since there were fewer classes which I could observe, I often spent the afternoon writing up my notes from the morning observation. Occasionally, I was able to do interviews with students and teachers here in the afternoon.

[30] The normal school academic year in Thailand runs from mid-May to March, with a school break in October. However, the Rainbow School uses a three-term system. In 2011, there was severe flooding in Thailand and most schools in Bangkok and vicinity had to be closed from October to mid-November.

1.5.3.1 Classroom and school observations

In both schools, I began my research by observing social studies classes. One class session lasted 50 minutes at Chaisri Secondary and 60 minutes at the Rainbow School. However, once a week, students at the Rainbow School spend two consecutive sessions for social studies, Thai language and sciences in order to allow more time for project-based learning. I made a guide list of things to observe including classroom environment, pedagogical approach/teaching methods, classroom management/discipline, teaching/learning content, student behavior, etc. I would normally sit in the back of the class (or in case of the Rainbow School, on one side of the classroom) to observe and take notes.

Delamont (2008) noted that one difficulty about doing observation in educational settings is to be able to see the unfamiliar: “as educational researchers have been students and pupils … it is hard to concentrate and ‘see’ things in our own culture” (p.42). This was the case for me at Chaisri Secondary where teaching and learning is carried out in a more traditional way, with a teacher-centered and memory-based learning approach, something which I was familiar with during my own time in a Thai secondary school. Thus, after two weeks of classroom observation, I found it difficult not to sink into the familiar. However, observing social studies classes at the Rainbow School was a more interesting process. The classroom environment, subject content and teaching methods in classrooms at the Rainbow School offered a less familiar sight and experience than what I had during my own school time. This made it possible for me to stay alert. Altogether, I observed 20 classes at Chaisri Secondary and 33 classes at the Rainbow School. Furthermore, I had a chance to teach some of the social studies classes in both schools, which also helped me to become more acquainted with the students leading to opportunities to later interview them.

Aside from classroom observations, I also participated in or observed a number of extra-curricular activities organized in both of the schools. Some of such activities included: teachers’ day ceremony, Buddhist day activities, teacher training and student seminars at the Rainbow School; a merit-making/educational fundraising event, an ethical-moral training camp and Children’s Day celebrations at Chaisri Secondary.

1.5.3.2 Interviews and focused group discussions [31]

In both schools, classroom observations took some time before I began to engage in unstructured interviews with teachers and students. For teachers, I would find time between classes to talk to them. For the semi-structured interviews, I developed a list of questions to ask. The lists are slightly different for the two schools.[32] The interviews lasted between 20-60 minutes each. In both schools, most teachers were interviewed at least twice over the months of my fieldwork. I would ask permission to record the interview when possible. Each teacher was also asked at one point to sign an interview consent form. In total, I interviewed 6 teachers, 2 school administrators,1 staff member and 1 parent at the Rainbow School; and 8 teachers and 1 administrator at Chaisri Secondary (with an average of 2-3 hours for each person at the Rainbow School). Interviewing students required permission or endorsement from the teachers, especially at the Rainbow School where students were always engaged in academic learning or other scheduled activities. This is different from the situation at Chaisri Secondary where students have more free-time when some teachers had to be absent from a particular class or on a particular day. This happened a few times on the days I was at the school. As there were usually no substitute teachers, students were to stay in their classroom or sometimes were allowed to go to the library or hang out in the school yard. I was able to talk to some of them during such times.

In both schools, I usually talked to students in groups as they felt more comfortable than being interviewed individually. I found that students at Chaisri Secondary were more reluctant to talk to me than those at the Rainbow School. The former were more timid and were not critical about the various school practices and the teachers. Members of the student council were the ones whom I was able to talk to the most. The focused group discussions and interviews with students lasted about 30-60 minutes each. In total, I conducted focused group discussions and interviews with 57 students from both schools.

For school administrators, at the Rainbow School I had many occasions to conduct formal and informal interviews with the assistant principal of the

[31] See Appendix A for a list of interviewees and focused group discussion.

[32] See Appendix B for samples of interview questions.

secondary school section[33] who was assigned by the school's founder to 'oversee' my time at the school. However, although I made several requests for an interview with the school's founder, who also acts as the principal of the secondary school section, I was never given an opportunity to do so.[34] Given my insistence, toward the end of my research I was directed to interview the school's director who was assigned to talk to me on behalf of the school's founder.[35] However, since I had interviewed the school's director earlier in her own capacity, in the second interview with her I used another set of questions which had been prepared for the school's founder. The only time I was able to have a small conversation with the school's founder was when I was participating in one of the teachers' planning sessions for the new school year. The school's founder came to join the session to provide feedback to the teachers. When I raised some questions about the plan, the school's founder responded. In this respect, although I draw on records of interviews given by the school's founder on different occasions, perspectives from administrators belong mainly to the assistant principal of the secondary school section and the school's director, who often referred to the views of school's founder when explaining different school practices.

The situation was less complicated at Chaisri Secondary where there is only one school administrator for this small school. I first had an introductory meeting with the school director before the start of the school year. A formal interview with him however took place during the second school term after a couple of reschedulings due to his busy schedule. Despite being relatively new to the school,[36] the school director provided useful insights into the condition of schools serving children from a lower socio-economic background that need to respond to different policy demands.

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[33] There are three sections at the Rainbow School: pre-primary, primary and secondary. Each section has its own school principal and assistants.

[34] I was told by the assistant principal, through whom I made the requests, that the school's founder had a very busy schedule.

[35] This interview took place in May 2012, almost one year after I began my research at the school.

[36] The school director took up the position at Chaisri Secondary in 2010.

1.6 Research limitations

One of the clear limitations for this research is concerned with the different quality of data between the two schools. As I had more opportunities to engage with students and teachers at the Rainbow School, the kind of information and "stories" I was able to gather from the school was considerably more diverse than that obtained from Chaisri Secondary. While this has enabled me to gain important insights into the working of the Rainbow School, this became more limited with the case of Chaisri Secondary. Nevertheless, I have been able to capture most of the main areas of inquiry in both schools.

1.7 Thesis structure

The scope of this thesis is broad. In exploring the possibilities and limits of education in the construction of citizens, this thesis deals with the working of society and the schools by highlighting the tensions and contradictions that exist in each layer.

Chapter One introduces the context and the theoretical approach of the thesis while also providing the conceptual frameworks for exploring education for democracy and social justice in this study. The idea and context of progressive and democratic education/schools in Thailand which constitute the unit of analysis in this thesis is then introduced. This chapter also discusses research design and methodology in detail.

Chapter Two consists of two main parts. The first part discusses the competing political, economic and personal development goals of education and the roles of the school curriculum and pedagogy in serving these different goals. This is necessary in order to highlight the multiple demands on education and its relationship with the political/cultural and economic ideologies of the larger society. The second part of this chapter examines the historical development of Thai education. It attempts to synthesize aspects of a textbook-based citizenship curriculum to demonstrate its conservative political and cultural goals. By also considering school textbooks prepared during the current education reform period, this chapter explores the

continuity and changes as well as the tensions in citizenship ideology endorsed by the Thai state.

Chapter Three then discusses economic, political and religious ideologies in contemporary Thailand, highlighting the multiple and, at times, competing visions and schemes of thoughts. These include the localism-liberalism economic ideology; the traditional/formal-communitarian-participatory notions of democracy; and state-sponsored and reconstructed Buddhism. These varying ideologies provide the contexts for interrogating differentiated citizen construction in the two case study schools.

Chapters Four, Five and Six delve deeper into the working of the schools. Chapter Four explores the possibilities and challenges for the school curriculum and pedagogy in contributing toward education for democracy and social justice. It considers first the diverse contexts of the education system and schooling in contemporary Thailand before examining the different curriculum and pedagogical approaches adopted by the two case study schools and their implications for democratic and citizenship learning. The influence of localism/communitarian ideology on the school curriculum in both schools is also explored.

Chapter Five examines the paradoxes of and tensions in citizenship learning through the workings of the school system and culture that include the school's morning assembly routine, school disciplinary policies and systems, as well as the formal and informal school structure. It also attempts to delineate the influence of formal vs. communitarian notions of democracy on the school structure and the implications this has on democracy and citizenship learning for the students in the two schools.

Chapter Six continues to focus on school culture and practices and their implications for citizenship learning by exploring the influence of state-sponsored and reconstructed Buddhism on citizen construction in the two schools. This chapter also raises questions about the implication of an individual-centered approach to ethics for an understanding of social justice from a more structural perspective.

Chapter Seven revisits and synthesizes the different arguments and themes made in this thesis. It highlights the fact that "progressive" schools in Thailand are operating within a powerful national ideology and a stratified society. In order to

move toward an education that can generate critical reflection, democracy and social justice, it is argued that not only must contradictions in education system and schooling be exposed, but a new discourse in education must be created that places democracy and social justice at the center.

CHAPTER II
EDUCATION, SCHOOLS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF CITIZENS

Exploring the role of education and schools in citizen construction entails defining the aims and socialization processes of education and schooling. However, education and schools around the world do not exist in a vacuum. What goes on in schools can be said to reflect the historical and prevailing social, political and economic contexts of the particular society. In other words, education and schools around the world, including Thailand, are required to respond to various political, economic, social and cultural needs of society. Such different demands on education have important implications for the development of the educational curriculum, pedagogical approach as well as structures and systems of education and schools. This, in turn, determines the nature and process of citizen construction as well as the limits and possibilities of education for democracy and social justice.

This chapter consists of two main parts. The first part discusses the various goals which education and schools are supposed to serve, noting that there are different dynamics associated with the seemingly straightforward role of education. It also introduces the areas of inquiry in this study by delineating the concepts and the working of the school curriculum and pedagogy in relation to citizen construction. The second part of the chapter delves into a historical account of Thai education, illustrating its conservative political and cultural goals. It is argued that one of the challenges for education for democratic citizenship and social justice in Thailand lies in the narrow political and cultural focus of Thai education promoted since historical times, which remains influential today. At the same time, the role of education in serving the economic and individual needs for upward mobility has been less effective, making education a tool for maintaining differentiated citizenship in Thai society.

2.1 Purposes of education

Throughout history, education has arguably been used to serve three major purposes: political/cultural, economic, and personal. Although in most cases, education systems and institutions are required to respond to these different goals simultaneously, a schematization of these educational purposes intends to elucidate the different priorities and dimensions of the various demands on education which can at times be in conflict.

First, an important goal of education since historical times has been political. However, there are two distinct perspectives with regard to the political purpose of education. On the one hand, education is required to prepare citizens to participate effectively in a democracy. The kind of education system promoted by this perspective is one in which social differences between citizens are minimal so that there is a common set of experiences which can in turn facilitate agreements on political and social policies. The education practices in this system are characterized by whole-class instruction, the stress on general over specialized education, as well as a focus on inclusion over separation of students. Furthermore, education which prioritizes the goal of democratic equality would place an emphasis on enabling learners to think critically, to make sound judgments and to take informed decisions on essential aspects of political and social life (Labaree, 2007). Seen in this light, the goal of democratic equality can be said to embrace the idea of education for democratic citizenship and social justice discussed in Chapter 1.

On the other hand, there is also a more conservative view of this political goal which sees the purpose of education as maintaining social order and people's loyalty toward the ruling regime (Frazer, 2008; Davies, 2008). In this context, education and schooling serves, as Frazer pointed out, "[to instill] the appropriate kind of knowledge, conduct and character, as that is understood by the government and ruling elites, for citizenship in the state" (Frazer, 2008: 286). This has been the case with education in many countries including Thailand. The role of education and schools in Thailand as agents of indoctrination has been documented by several scholars (see for example Mulder, 1997; Lakkana, 1999; Connors, 2007) and will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

The second purpose of education is concerned with the economic dimension and social efficiency. From this perspective, education and schooling is to serve the economic needs of society by providing workers with skills required to fuel its economic growth. This can be done through specialized kinds of learning that enable students to take up appropriate future careers (Labaree, 2007). With this system also come the practices of tracking and ability grouping of students. The social efficiency focus of education has also gained support from international institutions like the World Bank, which has recognized this social efficiency goal of education as contingent to the success of developing countries' economic development and poverty eradication. One of the goals of the Education for All (EFA) agenda agreed upon by international agencies and country representatives at a Bank-sponsored international conference held in Thailand in 1990 was to ensure basic education for children, youth and adults. This would serve, as pointed out by Coraggio (1994), to build flexible human capital for the global economy. In any case, with increasing global economic competition and the need to sustain the nation's wealth, education policies in most countries today are dominated by economic concerns. The Thai education policies of the past few decades have also been driven by a similar kind of economic interest.

The next purpose of education is associated with the economic goal of education but with more focus on serving the individual's social mobility. Under this goal, education is supposed to provide people with opportunities for upward mobility: those with more and better education generally have more chances to get better jobs (with supposedly higher pay). In Thailand, education credentials are an important consideration for upward mobility as they are used by employers to select potential employees despite the formers' concerns over the quality of education in preparing workers with appropriate skills (Wiroj, 2007). Labaree also noted that when social mobility becomes the key purpose of education, the "system needs to provide individuals with forms of social distinction that mark them off from the pack by such means as placing them in the top reading group, the gifted program, a higher curriculum track, or a more prestigious college" (Labaree, 2007: 121). This kind of practice has become widespread in many countries over the last decades, including Thailand. As such, both the social efficiency and social mobility goals of education are in conflict with the goal of democratic equality.

Finally, the child-development goal of education is concerned with preparing students as human beings or individuals by focusing on providing a learning environment and content appropriate to the needs, interests and developmental stage of the child (Labaree, 2007; Cerecer et al., 2010). On the one hand, this education goal can be said to reflect an important aim of education as stipulated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that "…education of the child shall be directed to: a) The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential" (CRC, Article 29 1 (a)). On the other hand, this education goal is closely connected to the practice of pedagogical progressivism which has become influential in Thailand with the rise of the idea- and knowledge-based economy during the last two decades.

It is clear that the different goals of education reflect competing political/cultural, economic and personal demands on the system. It has been pointed out that while some goals are given more emphasis during a particular time, it is seldom that the democratic aim of education is considered as a priority (Cerecer et al., 2010: 146). Furthermore, the various goals of education also inform the development of the school curriculum and pedagogy, which in turn, influence the construction of citizens by the institution of schools. The section below considers these two components of education and schooling in detail.

2.2 Curriculum, pedagogy and the construction of citizens

2.2.1 School curriculum

Within the field of education, curriculum is variously defined. Definitions of curriculum may encompass a narrow view of the curriculum as learning content and a set of subjects, or a broader understanding of curriculum as "everything that goes on within the school, including extra-class activities, guidance, and interpersonal relationships" and "what an individual learner experiences as a result of schooling" (Oliva, 2001: 3). These different dimensions of curriculum also connote two types of curriculum which are in operation in schools, namely the formal, planned or overt curriculum and the hidden curriculum. The formal curriculum refers to the objectives

and learning principles which schools have set out as well as arrangements for extracurricular activities, while the hidden curriculum entails "norms and values that are implicitly, but effectively, taught in schools that are not usually talked about in teachers' statements of end or goals" (Apple, 2004: 78-79). As such the hidden curriculum forms part of the school culture which includes written and unwritten rules/codes of conduct as well as the relationships between teachers and administrators, among teachers themselves and between students and teachers.

It has been argued that the school curriculum – especially for citizenship learning – also reflects the cultural, political and economic context of the larger society (Grossman, 2008; Lee, 2008; and Kennedy, 2008). The relationships between curriculum – both overt and hidden – and cultural, political and economic aspects of the larger societal contexts are discussed below.

First, the cultural view of the curriculum sees the school curriculum as representing a selection from the culture. That certain knowledge, values and practices are chosen for emphasis while others are ignored and excluded is not unintentional (Apple, 2004; Lee, 2008: 217). It has been pointed out that with the dominant culture being distributed and legitimated largely to the benefit of the elite, the school curriculum serves the function of cultural reproduction of education – the idea which was also discussed in the previous chapter. In the context of Asian societies, it can be argued that values embedded in the culture, tradition and religion of a society usually become integral aspects of the formal citizenship curriculum. Thus, in East Asian countries where Confucianism is still regarded as the core cultural tradition, values being promoted through the school curriculum include filial piety, obedience, social responsibility and harmony (Lee, 2008; Doong, 2008). Meanwhile, in Malaysia and Indonesia where Islam represents both the national culture and religion, the emphasis of the citizenship curriculum is on forging a shared national identity founded on its religion and geographical roots (Lee, 2008; Bajunid, 2008). In a Buddhist country like Thailand, Somwung and Siridej (2002) noted from their study, which was concluded before the implementation of the new Education Act of 1999, that the civic education curriculum placed a strong emphasis on moral values and conduct based on Buddhism as well as respect for the monarchy. As will be seen in this thesis, Buddhism has been an integral part of the construction of citizens in

Thailand since historical times. Good Buddhists are considered as morally good persons who are, at the same time, regarded as good citizens. As such, religious and cultural values underpinning the curriculum also serve the second dimension of the curriculum which is a political one.

Lee (2008: 221) argued that "the choice of cultural emphases is always underscored by a political purpose" and therefore, the curriculum is perceived "as a tool to shape the beliefs and value orientations of its citizens." The citizenship curriculum, in particular, can be seen as "a reflection of the nation's requirement of its young people as citizens, [and as such], will reflect current values and priorities that are subject to change and revision depending on the salience of particular ideologies…" (Kennedy, 2008b: 486). One of the most important political tools in the context of schooling and education has been school textbooks. Since the content of textbooks can be seen as representing the views and interpretations of the state on different subject matters, textbooks can be seen as political (Mulder, 1997; Giroux, 2001). As will be illustrated later in this chapter, Thai school textbooks during different historical periods prescribed a shifting notion of democracy and the corresponding characteristics of good citizens required to uphold such democracy. At the same time, certain traditional values, especially those drawn from Buddhist virtues and ethics, have been consistently promoted through school textbooks along with the image of a peaceful nation where citizens dutifully act in accordance with their role and status. Arguably, such values and image have been used to serve the purpose of nation building and maintaining social order, reflecting the conservative political goal of education.

Another critical aspect of the school curriculum that is concerned with politics has to do with the shaping of ideological knowledge and values through daily school practices which can be considered as part of both the overt and hidden curricula. Citing Aronowitz and Giroux, Lee (2008: 223) noted that "ideology has a material existence in the rituals, routines and social practices that both structure and mediate the day-to-day workings of schools." Similarly, Thornberg (2009) observed that the emphasis on regulation of students' conduct and behavior through formal and informal school rules constitutes an implicit aspect of citizenship learning. Here, the hidden curriculum – the organization of school including school routines and rules, the

school system and structure, as well as the relationships among administrators, teachers, and students – can be directed toward authoritarian values, preferring passivity, consensus and stereotyping (Harber, 2004; Apple, 2004) or it can be guided by values of democracy and social justice, thus, fostering active participation, equality, diversity and critical thinking (Apple and Bean, 2007). In this respect, Lee (2008) argued that the hidden curriculum is influential in citizenship learning, especially with regard to political socialization. Findings from this thesis reveal that elements of the hidden curriculum, including daily school practices, school rules and disciplinary systems as well as the relationships between different school actors, act as powerful forces undermining the potential for democratic and social justice education in schools where an innovative curriculum, child-centered pedagogy, or democratic practices are formally promoted. Respect for authority, hierarchy and differentiated citizenship are important aspects of the hidden curriculum observed in Thai schools.

Aside from the cultural and political bases of curriculum development, the economic dimension of global capitalism along with the development of new communication technology has become the third and probably the most powerful driving force in shaping the school curriculum in the 21st century (Kennedy, 2008a). The close connection between the economy and the school curriculum is evident through the changes in curriculum focus in different parts of the world, and particularly in Asia, which have accompanied the new economic thinking that emerged since the end of the last century. Citing Ritchie, Kennedy (2008a) noted that this new economic theory sees economic growth as dependent more on innovation and technological progress as well as the intellectual knowledge and skills of workers more than the old model of growth based on physical plant and infrastructure investment or on the promotion of labor-intensive industry. In this new notion of growth, problem solving and critical thinking skills become drivers for new ideas and products to be developed, thus creating new markets and new demand.

According to Kennedy (ibid), the idea of a knowledge-based economy became more prominent in countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand especially after the Asian financial crisis in 1997. Subsequently, there have been changes made in the curricula of these countries toward an integrated curriculum and child-centered and inquiry-based learning which is intended to produce citizens for the new economy.

However, while schools in Thailand have been pushed to adopt a new curriculum and a child-centered pedagogical approach aimed at developing new sets of skills to serve the idea-based economy, not all schools have been able to move in this direction. It is evident from this study that the school serving children from a lower socio-economic background continues to apply a traditional curriculum and pedagogical approach that can be characterized as deficit-based, while the school that caters for children from more affluent classes has adopted an innovative curriculum and critical learning approach. This situation has resulted in a differentiated citizen construction between schools that mirrors existing social and economic inequality in Thai society. The implications of the different socio-economic contexts on the construction of citizens and education for democracy and social justice will be explored throughout the thesis. Next, the role of pedagogy and citizen construction will be examined.

2.2.2 Pedagogy and citizen development

For most people outside the field of education, the term 'pedagogy' is simply understood as teaching methods. However, within the education discipline itself the understanding of pedagogy involves a more complex conceptualization of the process of human inquiry (Alexandra, 2008). In discussing citizenship pedagogies in Asia and the Pacific, Grossman (2010) proposed a working definition of pedagogy as "the whole context of instruction, learning, assessment, and the actual operations involved including the techniques, strategies and methodology applied to facilitate student learning, within and beyond the classroom" (p.15). It is argued that not only does the way by which knowledge or subject matter is selected, as in curriculum development, offer powerful teaching about what and whom the school and society value, but the way that learning materials are organized and delivered to learners also provides a strong message about the kind of students and citizens desired by school and the larger society (Apple and Beane, 2007; Grossman, 2010). In this respect, a pedagogical approach or orientation adopted in one context is often closely connected to how education and curriculum goals are conceived in that same context.

Referring to Miller, Evans (2008: 523-4) discussed three pedagogical approaches for citizenship learning which follow the different curriculum orientations discussed earlier. The first one is known as 'transmission' or content-driven teaching

approach. In this orientation, teachers who are seen as possessing knowledge of specific disciplines are to deliver the content of the subjects to students who are presented as passive recipients. Such knowledge transmission takes place largely in classrooms as they are considered the primary location of learning. This transmission mode of teaching and learning is largely used when the emphasis of education and the curriculum goal is on inculcating nationalistic values and ideology or on social efficiency.

The second pedagogical orientation, known as a 'transactional' approach, focuses on meeting specific needs of the society, economy or individuals. In this approach, knowledge is seen as not fixed and open to manipulation. Thus, learning takes place through dialogues, problem-solving activities and active-inquiry processes associated with the development of creativity, critical thinking and problem solving skills (Evan, 2008). Clearly, the skills intended to be developed through this transactional learning mode are considered important ingredients for new economic development. At the same time, this pedagogical approach is also adopted by a curriculum which prioritizes child-development goals as it is seen as more capable of meeting the specific needs of individuals.

The third approach is a 'transformative' orientation which focuses on developing a whole person by emphasizing both personal and social aspects of education. In this approach, learning objectives go beyond achieving a set of core knowledge or thinking skills but integrates 'skills that promote personal and social transformation' – defined as harmony with the environment as well as political and social change (Evan, 2008). It employs various forms of dialectic and collaborative inquiry and encourages learning through engagement with the local community. In this regard, Banks (2009) describes the process of a transformative education that begins with having a curriculum and pedagogy that embrace pressing social problems while engaging students to work on, identify and implement solutions to those problems.

A key aspect of the ongoing Thai education reform that was launched at the turn of the century is concerned with learning reform that boasts the principle of child-centeredness, i.e., that all learners are capable of learning and self-development. The learning process is to shift from the transmission of knowledge to a focus on

developing students' ability to think by themselves, to express their opinions and to create their own body of knowledge. The role of the teacher in this process is to facilitate and encourage learners to explore and acquire information through the use of information technology and other available resources.[1] Thus, Thai learning reform intends to serve the self-development of citizens while also responding to the challenges posed by the idea-based economy. However, studies on Thai education reform have indicated that there are gaps in the implementation of learning reform due to the lack of confidence, knowledge and skills to apply the new teaching approach and methods on the part of Thai teachers. In a study by Nattaporn Lawthong (2010) on pedagogies for citizenship education in Thailand, it was found that Social Studies teachers were most confident in using lectures, group work and classroom discussions as their teaching methods while relying on work sheets, textbooks and question-and-answer sessions as their classroom activities. The teachers in this study were reportedly least confident in applying problem-solving and research work as teaching and learning methods (p.213). While this thesis also finds that gaps in the implementation of learning reform do exist, especially in the school serving children from a lower socio-economic background, it further indicates that there are challenges in practicing 'progressive' pedagogy in a private alternative school which lie in the tensions between progressive education ideas and the system of assessment posed by the larger education system. In addition, although a transactional teaching and learning approach carries some possibilities for democratic and social justice learning, its practice does not automatically or necessarily bring about education for democratic and social justice. In schools where the possibilities for democratic and social justice learning exist, such visions and goals must be articulated.

2.2.3 Tensions in the school curriculum and pedagogy

The foregoing discussion indicates that the school curriculum and pedagogical approaches are products of different educational philosophies, competing personal, political, cultural and economic goals of education and the different socio-economic contexts of schools. Kennedy (2008a) argues that the current education

[1] Section 22, National Education Act 1999

reform agendas in countries in the Asia-Pacific region embrace a mix of different curricular and pedagogical traditions, reflecting the "competing and conflicting demands of postmodernist societies" (p. 20). It is no surprise that there are ideological and practical tensions embedded in the school curriculum and pedagogy which can have varying consequences for citizen construction. One area of tension in curriculum and citizen construction lies in the liberal vs. traditional or global vs. local nexus. Kennedy (2008a) pointed out that while many Asian countries have adopted economic liberalization as the pathway to future growth and have subsequently geared their education direction and practices toward building citizens for the global economy, the leaders of these nation states are at the same time trying to maintain their traditional social and political values (p. 22). As a result, the progressive values and critical thinking skills required for citizens in a liberalized and ideas-based economy run into tension with conservative cultural and political norms and practices promoted by the nation state.

Several authors writing on current Thai education reform also anticipated challenges for the Thai education system in preserving Thai identity and values while producing citizens with critical thinking skills who can compete in the global economy (Witte, 2000, Annop and Mounier, 2010). One of the challenges can be gleaned from the study by Prompilai (2004) on the influence of globalization and decentralization on civic participation of Thai students. Her study indicated that there are differences in value preference between rural and urban parents and teachers with the former preferring traditional values while the latter embraced a more Western/liberal outlook.[2] Rural teachers and parents, for example, expressed concerns over the negative impact of Western values of freedom and equality as promoted in education reform on the behavior of their students/children. On the contrary, urban parents associated the value of freedom in the school context with the decreasing authority of teachers. This implies that the ability of their children to express themselves more

[2] The traditional values identified by participants in this study included: generosity, patronage/family interdependence, respect for authority, adherence to Buddhism, respect for elders, respect for the monarchical institution and patriotism. At the same time, Western values identified were: competition, freedom, equality, respect for the rule of law, and respect for others' opinions.

freely would enable them to develop leadership and creative thinking skills. Hence, urban parents prefer that the school emphasizes this value. These differences in value preferences suggest that teachers in differing school contexts may choose to emphasize one set of values over another as they feel that they must respond to local needs. While this thesis also reveals that there is differentiated citizenship learning between schools embedded in different socio-economic contexts, it further indicates that the dichotomy identified by Prompilai (2004) is less rigid in this study as the two schools adopt both liberal and traditional values. However, as will be later seen, there are tensions between traditional and liberal values in the progressive urban school where both sets of values are consciously embraced.

Another area of tension in the school curriculum and pedagogical approaches in general is located in the different philosophies and competing goals of education including personal, economic and political goals as discussed earlier in this chapter. A school curriculum and pedagogy founded on personal development goals would give more importance to ensuring that teaching and learning is carried out based on the capacities of learners at different stages of growth. This child-centered curriculum approach focusing on the unique character of individual learners would be in tension with a curriculum approach that is geared toward the goal of social efficiency for which education and the school curriculum are seen as having a central role in preparing young people for future adult roles that effectively meet the needs of the economy and society. Finally, a school curriculum and pedagogy that is based on the goal of democratic equality or social reconstruction would try to prepare future citizens "as agents of social change and social justice" (Kennedy, 2008a: 20). This 'social reconstruction' or transformative curriculum and pedagogical approach is markedly different from the one geared toward social efficiency or one that aims at inculcating nationalistic values or maintaining social order and existing inequalities in society.

With the recognition that tensions exist between school curricula and pedagogical approaches that try to respond to competing values and aims, the possibilities of education for democracy and social justice will need to be explored through the working of a school's overt and hidden curricula as well as pedagogical approaches that are shaped by these differing educational philosophies and goals.

This thesis argues that one of the main challenges for democratic and social justice education in Thailand lies in the fact that the goal of democracy, that is, the creation of a critical citizenry and a more egalitarian society, has not been in the forefront of Thai education history, including the on-going education reform. As will be illustrated in the next section, Thai education throughout much of its history has served a mix of political/cultural and economic goals. However, the political/cultural goal of Thai education has been a conservative one with a focus on the construction of good citizens who are loyal to the three institutions, rule-abiding, and dutiful in their respective roles. The idea of democracy presented in Thai school textbooks has also shifted, and served mainly to legitimize the ruling authorities. At the same time, despite attempts to make education responsive to the country's and the individual's economic needs, this aspect has been less successful. The role of education in preparing citizens for the world of work has also created a differentiated education system that carries important implications for education for democracy and social justice.

2.3 Education and citizen construction in Thailand

2.3.1 Education during the absolute monarchy

Historically, education and learning was associated with the Buddhist religion. Male children were sent to Buddhist monasteries for religious learning and literacy while girls stayed at home to help with cooking and housekeeping in preparation for married life (Somwung and Siridej, 2002: 121). In the reign of King Chulalongkorn (1853-1910, reigned 1869-1910), a modern form of education was developed as a result of the changing social, political and economic context of the country under external and internal pressures.[3] One of the main impetuses for the introduction of a formal education system during the reign of King Chulalongkorn was to prepare manpower to serve in the modern state apparatus brought about by the

[3] See Wuttichai Mulasilpa (1986) for a detailed discussion on education reform in the reign of King Chulalongkorn

King's own administrative reforms. Another important aim of modern education was to develop young people to become good citizens (Wit, 2001). Thus, aside from establishing special schools to educate the children of aristocrats to become civil servants, King Chulalongkorn also supported setting up schools for the masses by expanding the traditional system of schooling in Buddhist monasteries "with the view to provide equal education opportunity to nobles and commoners" (Wuttichai, 1986: 57). However, it was clear from the King's speech given toward the end of his reign in 1908 that education for the masses would have a different aim than that for the nobilities. Hence for the masses,

> "… the purpose of teaching shall aim at the following outcomes:
> To seek knowledge for wisdom, ability and good behavior; to continue one's family line; to be kind to siblings; to have unity between spouses; to be honest among friends; to be thrifty; to be kind to others; to support the common good; to abide by the law; in time of need to help the country; to be bravely loyal to the King; to remember royal kindness; and to be loyal to the monarchy at all times." (Wuttichai, 1986: 61. Author's translation).

The purpose of education for the masses as reflected in the King's speech was geared toward creating harmonious relationships and instilling patriotic values among citizens. This was done through the teaching of the Thai language, geography, history and moral education where students learn that they should love their own families, schools and nation and contribute toward their well-being (Kupluthai, 2009: 36-7).

Wit (2001) pointed out that the development of education for commoners during this period enabled their upward social mobility since there was an urgent need for human resources in the new administration. The government also used education as a means to screen the best students for leadership positions through the provision of scholarships to study at a higher level in foreign countries. At the same time, in order to encourage citizens with basic education who could not find employment in government offices to carry on with their traditional occupations, vocational education was set up. Students who were not able to continue to secondary education could take

vocational learning for 2 years (Vichai, 2007: 93). In this regard, modern Thai education slowly became a tool for categorizing and differentiating people for different positions in society.

The idea of education for the masses including vocational learning was further pursued in the reign of King Vajiravudh (1881-1925, reigned 1910-1925) who succeeded his father, Chulalongkorn. The Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in 1921 and mandated that young boys and girls be educated in both basic and livelihood skills for four years or until the age of 14 so that they would be able gain basic knowledge for living and being good citizens (Wuttichai, 1998: 167).[4] Furthermore, Anderson (cited in Connors, 2007) noted that during King Vajiravudh's reign, school education was used along with other projects "for the purpose of producing endless affirmations of the identity of the dynasty and the nation" (p. 37).

School textbooks used during this time prescribed good citizens as those who show gratitude to the government and loyalty to the nation and the monarchy, with the image of the state being projected as paternal (Lakkana, 1999). Instilling proper behavior also became a subject of the standard curriculum for which a textbook entitled *Sombat khong phu di* (Qualities of the High Born) was written. The book prescribed what may be called 'palace manners', instructing children and citizens to be respectful, likeable, dignified, good-natured, selfless, trustworthy, and free of vice. Baker and Pasuk (2009) pointed out that this text "began a tradition of state manuals for the instruction of children and citizens" (p.67). Furthermore, extracurricular activities became an important part of building good citizens. The Education Ministry introduced boy/girl scouts, physical education and the practice of standing in line as a means of physical and discipline training. In particular, scouting (which was introduced by King Vajiravudh, who also became the first patron of Thai scouting) "aimed to develop a wholesome personality and loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy, and to encourage patriotism, unity and endurance…" (Wit, 2001: 39). In this respect, the adoption of the triadic ideology of "Nation-Religion-Monarchy" derived from the British maxim of "God, King and Country" became an important aspect of Thai civic values and a symbol of the Thai national identity until today.

[4] It was noted that by mid 1920s, 40 per cent of children aged 7-14 attended school (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 67).

2.3.2 Educating good citizens in a new democracy: the shifting ideas of democracy

Thailand became a democratic country with a constitutional monarchy in 1932 when King Prachatipok (1892-1941), who succeeded King Vajiravudh in 1925, was overthrown by a group of revolutionaries who "justified the revolution on the grounds of economic nationalism, social justice, humanism and the rule of law" (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 119). Entrusted with ideals of liberalism, one of the important tasks of the new regime was to expand compulsory education as a basis for democratic participation.[5] At the same time, the new government saw the need for citizens to become knowledgeable about the democratic form of government as well as to be aware of their duties and relationship with the state. This task was carried out through the introduction of civic education or *nathi phonlamueang* – literally mean 'duties of citizens' – as a new subject in the 1937 curriculum, in addition to the component of moral education or *sinlatham*, already established in the previous curriculum. However, Kupluthai (2009) noted that the subject of "civic and moral education" served to transmit a constitutional and democratic ideology in accordance with perspectives of the ruling elite (p. 62).

Civic education textbooks during this period contained explanations of the functioning of the system of constitutional government including the three branches of power and the roles of government in taking care of citizens. Moreover, there were descriptions of the election process and explanations of the rights of citizens under a constitutional democracy. However, the notion of the rights of citizens as conceived during this early democratic period was limited to those of civil and political rights, as explained in a secondary level textbook:

> "As citizens, we have many rights. Primarily, we have the rights to life and to our own property which others cannot violate if it is against the law. …

[5] This was done in accordance with the revolutionary government's vision that the new democratic regime required the participation of an educated citizenry. While half of the MPs were initially appointed, a constitutional mandate was made to have MPs fully elected within ten years after the four-year compulsory education scheme was implemented in all sub-districts of Thailand (Vichai, 2007: 108).

> Moreover, the government has extended political rights to us, namely the rights to elect representatives to parliament and to run for office. [Such practices] provide opportunities for everyone to take part in the governing of the country. Only countries with a democratic regime enable citizens to have political rights." (Sahas, cited in Kupluthai, 2009: 64. Author's translation).

Along with an explanation of the functioning of the new regime and the rights of citizens, school textbooks also prescribed the duties and qualities of good citizens including loyalty to the triad of nation, religion and king as well as to the newly proclaimed constitution. Particularly, students were urged to "honor and follow the constitution wholeheartedly and sacrifice their lives to protect the constitution if need be" (Ministry of Education, cited in Rangsima, 1995: 114). At the same time, in support of the democratic ideal, secondary school textbooks projected the notion of good citizens as those with the courage to express their own opinions, as well as the ability to think critically and not be easily led by other people. Such characteristics of good citizens were promoted as desirable for the constitutional form of governance (Kupluthai, 2009: 75).

However, the liberal ideal and democratic outlook introduced during this early democratic period was overshadowed by the new nationalist culture defined by Phibunsongkhram who was prime minister from the end of 1938 to 1944. During his rule, Phibun's government issued a series of 'state edicts' as a way to strengthen the nation through redefining its history and culture (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 132-3). Important practices prescribed by edict which continue to be observed today include rituals for honoring national symbols such as the flag and anthem. Observing these rituals became a national mandate after the adoption of the National Culture Act of 1942, which incorporated a number of state preferences, including the practices of saluting the flag and singing the anthem. This aspect of state edicts has since become an integral part of school life. As will be illustrated in this thesis, these rituals have been used as a basis for the construction of loyal and obedient citizens in contemporary Thai schools. Moreover, the qualities of good citizens as those who are

able to think critically and express their opinions as projected earlier became undesirable during the authoritarian rule that followed.

During the 15 years of military dictatorship led by Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikachorn from 1958-1973, indoctrinating the ideology of nation, religion and monarchy constituted an important aim of the national education curriculum. The content of primary school textbooks during this period, as reviewed and analyzed by Rangsima (1995) and Lakkana (1999), prescribed good citizens as having the duties to contribute to the prosperity of the nation, through the payment of taxes among other things, and preserving arts and culture. There was a return to the idea promoted during the period of absolute monarchy that the nation is one big family with the king and queen as parents and citizens as children who should be obedient, feel gratitude and sacrifice their personal interests for the good of the family. In addition, good citizens were to be disciplined and follow the government's directions in order to ensure an orderly society. The rights and freedoms of citizens were to be exercised within certain limits so as not to create tensions and problems (Lakkana, 1999: 145). Furthermore, the military government neither upheld the constitution nor the practice of representative parliamentary system. As such, students learnt that democratic rule did not require elections, and principally involved government in the people's interest. Sarit claimed that this was the system of a democracy "appropriate to the special characteristics and realities of the Thai" (Thak, cited in Connors, 2007: 50). However, this notion of democracy came under certain challenges over the period that followed.

Before discussing this in the next section, it is important to point out that throughout the first forty years of the development of Thai democracy, the idea of differentiated education conceived since the period of absolute monarchy continued to persist. Despite the interest of the revolutionary government in encouraging the democratic participation of citizens through the implementation of four years' compulsory education, the National Education Plan of 1932 continued to divide citizens into those with basic knowledge who would contribute to the country through their livelihood skills and those who would contribute more intellectually to the nation. The plan stated:

> "those who complete compulsory education with sufficient knowledge to be citizens of Siam, are citizens who can take up occupations, who know the rights and duties of citizens, who can contribute to the nation through their own occupations, which they were born to do"; and "the high born who complete secondary education, who are said to have qualities sufficient for middle level citizens, and who will communicate their thoughts/ideas to contribute at the local or national level proportionately" (National Education Plan, 1932 cited in Sakchai, 2005: 4. Author's translation)

Furthermore, in 1951 when the new national education plan was adopted, the school curriculum was revised to include 'practical' education in order to stimulate more interest and ability among learners "to become acquainted with and diligent in using their hands to do work which would form the basis for right livelihood" (National Education Plan 1951, cited in Jaroon, 1989; 37). Thus, there was an increasing focus on the livelihood and economic efficiency goal of education. While this period also saw an expansion of secondary education, the new secondary schools that opened during this time were equipped with 'training sheds' for students to engage in learning various practical skills (Jaroon, 1989). Although it was pointed out that from its inception, vocational education did not receive much interest from students who preferred employment in the civil service, practical learning and job readiness has remained an integral part of Thai education policy. At the same time, this aspect of education carries important implications for education for democracy and social justice, as will be later examined in this thesis.

2.3.3 Democracy with the king as head of state

Events during the 1970s marked an important development in Thai democracy. A student uprising against military dictatorship in 1973, despite a counter-revolution in 1976, led to some openness in politics characterized by the emergence of a party system under military-led governments (Connors, 2007). The National Education Plan of 1977 set out several goals which were reflective of the

dynamic of democratic development and the political crisis at the time. Some of the goals included:

> "(2) To have an understanding of and be enthusiastic to participate in democracy with the king as head of state, and to uphold the institutions of Nation, Religion and Monarchy; …
> (4) To have a collective consciousness of being Thai and being part of humanity, to love the nation, to be aware of national security and safety of the nation, and to participate in protecting the nation;
> (5) To uphold equality, truthfulness and justice; …
> (8) To have the ability to communicate, understand and cooperate with one another; to seek truth; to take creative initiatives and to solve problems and conflicts through wisdom and peaceful means"
>
> (Sakchai, 2003: 6-7.Author's translation).

For the first time, school textbooks introduced the notion of 'democracy with the king as head of state' which was to become the standard explanation and understanding of Thai democratic development for the next decades. According to a secondary school textbook belonging to this new curriculum, a democratic regime can be classified according to different criteria – one of them being the 'head of state', with the head of state being either a monarch or a president. Although the textbook did not indicate that Thailand has adopted this classification of democracy, by indicating that the Thai kings had held the position of head of state since historical times it is to be understood that the notion of 'democracy with the king as head of state' was a natural development (Jaroon et al., 1981: 146, 177). Thus, the textbook delineated principles and characteristics of democracy with the king as head of state especially with regard to the role and authority of the monarchy. Students also learned that earlier Thai monarchies were supportive of democracy and had been preparing for the democratic transition of the country. At the same time, the Thai monarchy was projected as a 'symbol of continuity' and 'the fountain of honor' for the pride and joy of all Thais (ibid: 306, 308).

In addition to an emphasis on the role and importance of the monarchy, secondary level civic education textbooks during this period continued to provide detailed information about the constitution and system of governance as well as the election process and various laws (Kramol et al., 2001).[6] Furthermore, concepts of the rights, freedoms and duties of citizens and how they were prescribed under the constitution were also explained in the textbooks (see for example in Jaroon et al., 1981). It must be noted however that although a list of the rights and liberties of Thai citizens under the constitution was given, the idea continued to be projected that rights and freedoms may be exercised within certain limits. Thus, students learn that "there may be different types and levels of rights and freedoms in each country depending on the necessity, problems and the level of progress of the country" (Jaroon et al., 1981: 263). Similarly, with regard to the idea of good citizens, although a primary school textbook explained that "people in a democracy should be rational in solving problems, respecting rules and the voice of the majority while listening to the opinions of the minority; collaborate for mutual benefit, compromise and love justice…" (Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, 1990, cited in Lakkana, 1999: 151-152. Author's translation), Lakkana noted that good citizens were also portrayed as those contributing to the common good and volunteering for the state – the idea that was found in earlier school textbooks.

In this connection, Mulder (1997) pointed out that primary school textbooks prepared under the 1990 revised curriculum saw individuals as basic moral agents who needed guidance and moral knowledge in order to contribute to desirable conditions in society. Thus, a good person or a good citizen is the one who is dutiful in their respective roles and status (e.g., as a mother, a child, a teacher and a student) starting from within the family, community and then on to the nation. The moral knowledge and conduct to be learnt and practiced by individuals as prescribed in the textbooks included those of cooperation, diligence, perseverance, economical, respect for rules, self-discipline and thirst for knowledge. Students learned that individuals who possess these desirable qualities can contribute to the peaceful functioning of

[6] These laws included, for example, various administrative regulations concerning birth, marriage, and identity cards; tax laws; criminal law; labor law; laws on forest protection and conservation of endangered species; and national heritage protection (Course So. 306, Kramol et al., 2001)

society while those with opposite behaviors would suffer negative consequences of their own making such as poverty (Mulder, 1997: 30-33). Mulder argued that this "individual-centered approach to ethics provides the means of glossing over the structural causes and systematic problems of corruption, exploitation and social injustice, thus making the ideology propagated at the school very much a tool in the service of the rich and powerful" (Mulder, 1997: 61).

It is important to point out here that while civic education has become a source of learning about civics since the end of the absolute monarchy, the Thai state has continued to draw on Buddhism to instill moral knowledge and behaviors in its citizens. In her study of the role of Buddhism as a system of knowledge in Thai society, Suwanna (1989) found that despite the changes in the education curriculum over different periods from the early 1900s to 1978, moral education[7] embedded in the teachings of Buddhism had continued to prescribe the virtues of good persons that cannot be divorced from those of good citizens. Thus, good persons and good citizens are those with gratitude, honesty, discipline and loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy. Similarly, Mulder (1997) noted that students learnt from primary school textbooks that the Buddha taught people to be docile, diligent and perseverant. At the same time, religion teaches order, self-discipline, honesty and punctuality, which makes people refrain from engaging in bad acts. As a result, "people who are religiously good will also be tractable subjects who, because of this, contribute to the country's prosperity, stability and peacefulness" (Mulder, 1997: 37).

Furthermore, the image of the nation as presented in the textbooks has been one of an ideal, rural, and conflict-free community. High school textbooks described Thai society as unique, with the king as head of the state; and with people adhering to Buddhism as well as Thai traditions and values including gratefulness, respect for seniors and fun-loving (Vichai et al., 2001: 48-9). Although there was recognition of emerging social and environmental problems, the issues were seen as resulting from negative foreign influences and rapid economic growth which required revisiting age-old Thai heritage and traditions. At the same time, individuals were urged to take responsibility for tackling these emerging problems. Thus, in the upper

[7] This included teaching about the history of the Buddha, various Buddhist principles, Buddhist ceremonies and important Buddhist days (Suwanna, 1989: 51).

secondary school textbooks one finds descriptions of recommended solutions to different social problems that had been identified.

In this respect, it can be seen that the political and cultural goal of mass education in Thailand since its inception has been a conservative one. Despite the adoption of a democratic form of government and attempts by the Thai state at different times to project the ideals of liberal democracy and the language of rights and freedoms, such efforts were largely formalistic. The focuses of civic education textbooks were on providing didactic knowledge about the governmental system; inculcating loyalty to the key institutions; and creating an orderly and harmonious society through instilling values and behavior of good citizens rather than exploring social diversity and examining tensions in the society which could be valuable in addressing any underlying causes of conflict in a democracy.

The school textbooks referred to above were used until the beginning of the new millennium when a new National Education Curriculum was adopted in 2001,[8] after the launch of the current education reform which has promised to bring about a synoptic change in the Thai educational scene. The remaining of this chapter examines continuity and change in political and civic ideas of the Thai state as transmitted through current civic education textbooks.

2.4 Civic and citizenship learning through contemporary school textbooks

In reviewing civic education textbooks prepared under the 2001 and 2008 revised curriculum, it was found that there are several aspects of citizenship knowledge and ideology which are both similar to and different from those prescribed under the previous curricula. On the one hand, like those in the previous curriculum, civic education textbooks belonging to the 2001 and 2008 curricula contain detailed

[8] The 2001 National Education Curriculum and its 2008 revision contain 8 Study Areas including: 1) health and physical education; 2) arts, music and dramatic art; 3) mathematics; 4) Thai language and literature; 5) social studies, religion and culture; 6) science and technology; 7) foreign languages; and 8) career and work education.

explanations about the constitutions[9] including the rights and duties of citizens, the functioning of the government system at both the national and the local level, and various laws. On the other hand, there appears to have been some positive developments with regard to the concept of good citizens toward a greater recognition of democratic values and characteristics. However, upon closer examination it was found that elements of traditional notion of citizenship continue to be promoted. Similarly, despite a greater emphasis on the role of citizens in participating in civic and political life, the underlying idea of citizenship continues to be embedded in the notion of the good citizen who can contribute toward maintaining a peaceful and orderly society. At the same time, although the image of Thai society is no longer presented as peaceful and there appears to be a greater recognition of problems in Thai society, solutions to the problems as presented in the textbooks continue to rest on an individual-centered approach to ethics. The section below examines in greater detail changes and continuity as well as the tensions in the three themes of civic/citizenship learning.

2.4.1 Good citizens in a democratic way of life

The first aspect concerns the notion of good citizens. In reviewing textbooks belonging to the 2001 and 2008 revised curriculum, it was found that the notion of good citizens has been emphasized at both primary and secondary level. At the primary level, the concept of good citizen was explained through the prescription of a 'democratic way of life' drawn on a set of Buddhist virtues. According to civic education materials prepared under the 2001 curriculum for Prathom 6[10], this notion of democracy entails "a way of life based on the principle of self-reliance, using wisdom to solve problems, listening to opinions of others, being helpful and sharing, being responsible and cooperative in developing family, local community, society and the nation" (Ministry of Education, 2006: 72). In order to lead a democratic way of life, students are told that they should adhere to three Buddhist virtues: unity or

[9] Textbooks prepared under the 2001 curriculum contained explanations of the 1997 Constitution while those written under the 2008 revised curriculum covered the 2007 Constitution.

[10] This is the last year of primary education.

samakkhitham, wisdom or *panyatham* and respect or *kharawatham*. The virtue of unity listed in the textbook is realized by practices such as cooperation in accordance with each other's roles and duties; adherence to rules and regulations; no division by race, religion or culture; working as a group and sharing benefits; and listening to other people's opinion with reason. Practices under the value of wisdom cover, among others, the use of reason; having an interest in other people's opinions; being responsible and trustworthy; respecting the rights and duties of individuals; and using resources efficiently and reasonably. Lastly, the virtue of respect prescribes practices such as being polite in accordance with Thai culture, protecting national arts and culture, respecting the king and honoring people who have contributed to the country (Ministry of Education, 2006: 72-76).

In this regard, it can be observed that the link between Buddhist virtues and democratic characteristics noted above reflects continued use and influence of Buddhism in the process of citizen construction in Thai society. However, while the notion of a democratic way of life drawn on this set of Buddhist virtues prescribes democratic and right-respecting practices, it is also evident that traditional values and behaviors such as loyalty to the monarchy and adherence to Thai culture continue to be promoted. Thus, civic education textbooks prepared under the current education curriculum prescribe both liberal and traditional values and characteristics of citizenship. The projection of multiple citizenship values and characteristics can also be observed in a Mathayom 1 civic education textbook prepared under the 2008 curriculum in which students are told that their roles and duties toward society and the nation include not only abiding by laws and regulations and respecting the rights of oneself and of others, but also adhering to traditional norms. However, the ways that the two sets of values are presented in this school textbook are not very coherent.

While students learn that everyone has certain rights which are guaranteed by laws that cannot be violated, the textbook provides examples of violations that are based on both the legal concept of rights and the Thai cultural norms. For instance, examples are given of what can be clearly considered as legal violations such as consuming alcohol in forbidden areas and reckless driving that leads to accidents. At the same time, inappropriate behavior of children toward parents, which is considered to be against Thai cultural norms, is also presented as a violation of rights.

Concerning this point, the textbook explains that "children under the legal age[11] are under the authority of their parents who have the right to punish their children appropriately in order to discipline them[12]… thus, [if children show inappropriate behavior toward their parents], this violates the legal rights of the parents; and such acts should not be committed because it is the norm that children must respect and obey their own parents" (Tawat et al., undated 2008 Curriculum: 6).

In this regard, it can be seen that although there appears to be a greater recognition of democratic values and the concept of rights in current school textbooks, the way that certain rights are understood is still embedded in traditional notions of authority. By prioritizing the legal authority of parents and cultural norms of gratitude and respect, the idea that children also have the right to protection has not been properly considered in the above example. Furthermore, the traditional characteristics of good citizens continue to be reinforced in the same school textbook which explains that showing gratitude to parents, wearing appropriate dress and paying respect to seniors are important norms and rules of Thai society that young people should observe (ibid: 7). As such, there are possible tensions between conventional norms and what is expected of young people on the one hand, and the emerging ideas of democracy and rights on the other, which need to be reconciled in the school curriculum.

2.4.2 Participatory vs. personally responsible citizenship

The second area of the school curriculum that reflects the dual characteristics of citizenship education during this time concerns a growing interest in engaging young people in civil and political life and the development of a more active citizenship. Given the democratic development of the 1990s[13] and the political

[11] According to the Thai law, the age of majority is set at 20 years old. Alternatively, youths can achieve legal autonomy if they are married after reaching the age of 17, with the consent of their parents or guardians.

[12] Article 1567 (2) of the Civil and Commercial Code states that those with parental authority over children have the right to impose "reasonable" punishment for the purpose of discipline.

[13] The 1990s saw a movement toward political reform which culminated in the adoption of the 1997 Constitution.

conflict that has emerged since late 2005,[14] school textbooks in the current curriculum have put more emphasis on the role of citizens in actively engaging in civic and political life. In this connection, the civic education textbook for Mathayom 2 explains the importance of citizens taking collective action to address economic, social and political problems facing Thai society in addition to exercising their voting right. Hence, according to the textbook:

> "The democratic process attaches a great importance to the idea of the equality, rights, freedoms and duties of individuals such that all Thais who have reached 18 years of age have equal rights to vote for national and local representatives. However, if the Thai people do not collaborate to advance the economic, social and political development of the country by doing things to their own liking, the problems that the country is facing will become more serious; and the democratic process will become less effective or ineffective…" (Kramol et al., undated 2008 Curriculum: 14. Author's translation).

Following this, the textbook prescribes three areas of political and civic engagement by Thai citizens. In the political area, students are told that the Constitution of 2007 guarantees the rights and freedoms of citizens to engage in i) peaceful protest to express opinions toward government policies and measures; ii) setting up political parties; iii) setting up associations, unions, cooperatives, non-governmental organizations or other interest groups; and iv) monitoring state officials through the provisions of the constitution. It is interesting to note that with regard to setting up interest groups, the textbook explains that student alumni often set up associations to contribute ideas and finances toward improving their old schools. At the same time, farmers would come together as cooperatives to support each other and to bargain with middle-men or to seek support from the government. Similarly, workers/employees would form unions to negotiate for better welfare and wages from

[14] The on-going political crisis began in late 2005 when anti-government groups rallied for the resignation of the then Prime Minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. Tensions and divisions between the pro- and anti-government groups escalated into violence from 2006 onward.

their employers (ibid: 14-16). As such, the examples of different interest groups reflect various dynamics and tensions in contemporary Thai society that were not discussed in the previous curriculum.

With regard to civic engagement, students are told that good citizens in a democracy should take part in activities to promote social and environmental development and protection. Some of the social development activities prescribed in the textbook include: child and youth development, curbing social problems such as drug addiction and crime; providing welfare support to people with disabilities; supporting monasteries to enable them to become places for spiritual development for members of society; and preservation of traditions, local knowledge and local and national arts and culture. Likewise, students learn that citizens can contribute toward environmental protection by maintaining public roads, monitoring vandalism of public places and monitoring those who trash the rivers and destroy the forests (ibid: 16-18).

Despite projecting a more active role for citizens however, it can be seen that the idea of democratic citizenship continues to be embedded in a conventional notion of good citizens who, by adhering to their respective roles and responsibilities, can contribute toward the peaceful functioning and progress of the Thai society. Hence, the textbook concludes that:

> "When all members of society develop themselves as good citizens by being rational and behaving according to their status, roles, rights and duties, respecting the rights of others, being public-minded, respecting the law and adhering to moral and ethical practices … the country will be peaceful and free of conflict … the country will develop and progress rapidly" (ibid: 19. Author's translation).

While the above statement suggests a notion of good citizens, it also reflects a concern over ongoing conflicts in Thai society. This leads to another aspect of citizenship knowledge that is concerned with the image of and solutions to problems in Thai society.

2.4.3 The changing image of Thai society

Unlike earlier textbooks in which the image of the Thai nation was presented as peaceful and harmonious, school textbooks prepared under the current curriculum acknowledge the changing image of Thai society by discussing problems and conflicts that have emerged in recent years. In a civic education textbook for Mathayom 3 prepared under the 2008 revised curriculum, there is a learning unit entitled "Problems of conflicts in Thai society and their solutions." At the beginning of the unit, students are told that each society faces different kinds of conflict and that there are various problems in Thai society caused by political, economic, social and cultural factors. In reviewing the contents of this unit however, it was found that although the discussions of different problems contain some structural perspectives, the analysis tends to vary in quality and coherence.

In discussing political problems, for example, the textbook explains the nature of conflict in Thailand as arising from different political ideologies between opposing groups that are linked with "the desire of each group to use political power to seek benefits for themselves by attracting the masses to become their allies…." (Suchada and Taweepong, 2012: 66. Author's translation). At the same time, conflict in the three southernmost provinces is explained as resulting from inappropriate exercise of state power since historical times that has alienated local people from their own culture, and claims that the Thai government is trying to resolve the problem through peaceful means.

Afterward, the discussion shifts toward economic and social causes of problems. Here, students learn that there is inequality in economic development and income between urban and rural areas leading to problems of rural-urban migration and a low quality of life of slum dwellers. The textbook further explains that there are corrupt politicians and unscrupulous people who take advantage of the poor who lack information, access to funding and government support. Students are then told that this situation has led to poor people becoming easily misled into committing crimes and other illegal acts. While the textbook does not suggest solutions to this problem of economic inequality, it goes on to explain that that there is also a problem of social inequality emerging from traditional Thai social structures that divides people into two social classes, a situation which, according to the textbook, has been used to fuel

ongoing political conflict. In this case however, students are told that "although there are some problems of class inequality in Thai society, this issue can be solved if all parties adhere to ethical conduct …. by not using their status to take advantage of other people…." (ibid: 68-9. Author's translation). Lastly, students learn that there are cultural factors which contribute to the on-going political conflict. The textbook explains that Thai people lack rational thinking due to their traditional belief in superstitions and spirits and, therefore, Thais would believe in whatever they hear without making rational considerations. As a result, "they fall prey to politicians with conflicting political ideologies who lure them onto their side" (ibid: 69. Author's translation).

In this respect, it can be seen that the analysis of the causes of the conflict in Thai society as presented in current school textbooks tends to focus on undesirable behavior at the individual level. Although there is some recognition of structural causes as in the case of unequal rural-urban development, the discussion of the problems remains limited and reflects a narrow understanding of the issues. Furthermore, where concrete suggestions are made, students are told that solutions lie in improving and adjusting individual behavior. This pattern of problem solving is particularly evident toward the end of the learning unit where although the recommendations on conflict reduction and reconciliation proposed by the National Reconciliation Committee are presented,[15] students are told that they can lead a happy life and help lessen conflicts over different political ideologies by adhering to the following practices: tolerance, adoption of the sufficiency economy in daily life, developing self-esteem and emotional intelligence, and using reason in consuming news and information.

As such, civic education textbooks written under the current curriculum continue to lack critical reflection and do not present a promising avenue for democratic and critical citizenship learning. However, while school textbooks represent the official view of the state on different issues and hence constitute an

[15] The recommendations proposed 3 stages of actions: immediate, medium and long term. In the immediate term, actions should be taken urgently towards a peaceful and fair election while restoring justice for those affected by legal measures. In the medium term, studies should be conducted on a reconciliation process and on developing a democratic culture in family, community and the nation. In the long term, civil society must be strengthened.

important aspect of citizenship education, the way this official knowledge is used in practice also depends on the context as well as the curriculum and pedagogical approach adopted by the schools. Moreover, there are various economic, political and cultural factors and developments in contemporary Thailand that have influence over the school curriculum and practices. These aspects will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III
CHANGES AND CONTINUITY IN CONTEMPORARY THAILAND

The final few decades of the last century saw Thailand undergoing changes in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Economically, the country rapidly transformed itself from a predominantly rural and subsistent society to a market-based economy while becoming more integrated into the forces of globalization. Although economic development has brought new opportunities for people in different sections of Thai society, it has not effectively contributed toward a more egalitarian and democratic society. At the same time, while the economic crisis in 1997 generated a rethinking of the Thai development path toward a more balanced growth and localism ideology, a liberal economic agenda has continued to prevail. Similarly, in the political realm, crises in domestic politics in the early 1990s and the subsequent political reform process have led to the emergence of a new understanding of democratic citizenship based on the concept of participation, rights and justice. However, along with the development of participatory democracy, the traditional notion of good citizens embedded in moral and cultural values continues to be promoted. Furthermore, socio-economic changes in the past decades have generated a renewed interest in using Buddhism to strengthen individuals' moral values while also serving to counter the forces of globalization. These shifting contexts and tensions as well as their implications on citizen construction are the focus of this chapter.

This chapter argues that despite its democratic aspirations, the current education reform embraces a mix of competing ideological elements that include liberal economic ideology, communitarian development philosophy as well as a traditional political and cultural agenda. While these various forces exert important influences on education policies and practices in Thai schools today, schools in Thailand which are embedded in different socio-economic contexts negotiate these ideologies differently, with the effect of differentiated citizenship construction. As

such, the ideological dichotomies and existing inequalities in Thai society operate to undermine the potential of learning reform to facilitate the development of a more critical and democratic citizenry as well as the creation of a more egalitarian society.

First, I will discuss changes and development in the economy and the two streams of development ideologies that inform the direction of education and practices in contemporary Thai schools.

3.1 Economic development visions and the education dilemma

Thai society was largely a peasant society until about half a century ago. Although the country and its economy have been slowly transformed since the mid-19th century with a growing rice trade and expansion of the national capital, the period of rapid economic development began in earnest after the Second World War when Thailand launched its first five-year National Economic Development Plan in 1961 with assistance from American experts.[1] The next three decades saw economic expansion stemming from intensive agricultural production and a growing manufacturing sector. By the early 1980s Thailand had become the world's largest rice exporter. At the same time, the manufacturing sector grew as many foreign firms moved labor-intensive industries to Thailand to take advantage of lower labor costs. By 1984 the share of GDP from industry exceeded that of agriculture (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 212). From 1987 onward, Thailand experienced a long period of economic boom. The country's GDP grew from an average of 6.5 % during the pre-boom period to 9.2% from 1987 to 1996, with some years of double digit growth. During that decade, the Thai economy was described as "the fastest growing in the world" (Warr, 2005: 3) and the country was to become the 'fifth tiger' – joining the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) of Asia.

It has been pointed out that the country's economic boom was largely accounted for by growth in foreign direct investment and a high rate of domestic

[1] In the fight against communism during the cold war era, the USA poured financial and other resources into Thailand to promote economic growth in the name of development (Baker and Pasuk, 2009).

capital while education expansion and improvement in the prior decades[2] made little contribution to Thailand's economic growth (Warr, 2005). This was due to the fact that secondary school enrollment rates in Thailand had been quite low until the last decade, which undermined the possibility for the country to develop its economy based on advanced technology that required workers with higher skills. In 1998, seventy-two percent of the Thai workforce still had only primary education or less, a figure which was among the highest of all the ASEAN countries (Sirilaksana, 2005: 252). Although secondary enrollment has improved significantly during the last ten years[3] and tertiary education has also expanded,[4] the Thai education system is still not able to prepare graduates with the skills needed for the new economic model that requires competencies in information technology, communication and leadership skills (Somchai, 2012: 16).

At the same time, both economic and education policies have not been effective in contributing toward the development of a more egalitarian Thai society. Despite the increase in educational attainment of the Thai workforce, the country still depends on a labor-intensive and export-led economic development strategy adopted since the 1970s (Somchai, 2012: 16). Not only is this development model no longer effective in reducing poverty, but it has also contributed toward sustaining inequality by keeping those with comparatively fewer opportunities where they are. This is because although students from lower socio-economic backgrounds may have access to more years of education, their counterparts from better-off families also have more opportunities to enhance their education and learning through specialized programs, additional years of study and extra-curricular learning arrangements. Furthermore,

[2] Compulsory education was extended from 4 to 7 years under the National Education Plan adopted in 1960. However, by 1975 only a little over 60% of the school-age population completed the seven years of compulsory education (Vichai, 2007:30). The new education curriculum adopted in 1978 reduced compulsory education to 6 years while also introducing a new learning approach that was supposed to enable students to think and solve problems by themselves.

[3] Compulsory education was extended from 6 to 9 years in 2002. Gross enrollment for compulsory education increased from 84.01% in 2003 to 100.7% in 2010, but declined to 89.8% in 2013. At the same time, gross enrollment at the upper secondary level increased from 58.7% in 2003 to 78.6% in 2013 (OEC, 2007; 2014).

[4] The number of graduates from tertiary education increased from 81,500 in 1992 to 274,473 in 2009 (Niphon et al., 2012: 4).

Oudin (2010: 178) pointed out that workers with lower secondary education or vocational diplomas today take up the same low-skilled and low-paying employment as their parents did three decades ago with only four years of education. As such, this education-economic dynamic also carries important implications for differentiated citizen construction by the schools. As will be evident in this thesis, the two schools under this study are preparing their students for participation in very different kinds of employment markets. At the same time, they are responding to the dualism of the country's development direction that has been operating in parallel for nearly two decades. These two streams of development vision and agenda are discussed below.

3.1.1 Returning to the roots: localism development ideology

When the crisis in the financial sector broke out in mid 1997 the Thai economy sank. The crisis took away jobs from more than 2 million people (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 259). Although it was felt that the crisis affected people in the upper income classes more than those with lower incomes or people who have their roots in the countryside, statistics showed that the burden of the economic crisis eventually fell on those with lower incomes. By 2000, the incidence of poverty in the North and Northeast regions had risen higher than in 1996 (Isra, 2005; 145,148). In any case, the impact of the economic crisis generated a rethinking of Thailand's development path toward the direction of community-based development and a call for a revival of the agricultural sector.

Yet, it must be noted that while the economic crisis of 1997 may have spurred a debate on the future of Thailand's development path, critiques of urban-centered, market-based and top-down development have been made since the 1980s by drawing on the idea of localism. In the context of the economic crisis, many of these alternative ideas gained recognition and have since become a key ideology guiding the country's development direction. Pasuk (2005) noted that several main themes form the thrust of the so-called 'localism discourse.' First, the Buddhist conception of moderation has been drawn on to counter the mainstream economic idea that promotes over-consumption. Venerable P.A. Payutto or Prathammapidok, a prominent Buddhist monk, called for an economy that regards moderate or wise consumption as the source of well-being. The second key idea concerned the revival of the community as a

moral concept that can be used to resist the forces of globalization while also acting as the base for a new long term bottom-up development strategy. In this connection, the revival of the rural economy with a focus on the agricultural sector became another important theme. For this third theme, proponents of community culture and rural economy ideas including Chatthip Nartsupa and Saneh Chamarik saw that the village economy needs to connect to the national economy, "with the ultimate objective of a national prosperity founded on the flourishing of local community economies" (cited in Pasuk, 2005; 171).

Along with the revival of community and agriculture also came the use of local knowledge and wisdom as a way to cope with the forces of globalization. The term *phum panya*, which means "local knowledge or wisdom", became widely used in the wake of the economic crisis, although this term had been in circulation since the early 1980s. In a similar way, the idea of self-sufficiency and self-reliance also became very prominent especially after the King' speech given on the occasion of his birthday in December 1997, which suggested a partial return to the sufficiency economy, also generated a greater acceptance of the idea among different sectors of society. While the eighth five-year National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) already saw a shift away from a growth-centered development approach, the ninth plan (2002-2006) officially adopted the sufficiency economy philosophy as a new development paradigm. This shift has continued to the present eleventh five-year plan (2012-2016) (NESDB, 2012). Likewise, the constitution that was adopted in 2007 required the state to promote and support a policy based on the sufficiency economy (Article 83, Section 7, 2007 Constitution).

Different aspects of the localism discourse have found their way into education. First, the philosophy of the sufficiency economy has found its way into school textbooks and practices. More significantly however, localism ideology became one of the key focuses of the National Education Act of 1999 which allows the inclusion of 30 percent locally-determined curriculum to accommodate local needs. At the same time, this policy is intended to enable students in different parts of the country to develop awareness and appreciation of their local norms and values as well as local crafts and know-how (Annop and Mounier, 2010: 65). However, while this policy can be seen as enabling a greater participation and democratization of Thai

education, it also reflected negative sentiments of Thai policy makers over the economic crisis that was linked to the failure of Western knowledge. In his conceptualization of the revival of Thai wisdom, Rung Kaewdang, the chief architect of the education reform, noted that:

> "In the past forty-years … Thailand's economic and social development … depended too much on Western knowledge and know-how. …. The economic crisis that has occurred … was the outcome of such a mistake. …. We discovered that we had pursued Western ways of development and entirely neglected our own indigenous or local knowledge, the splendid treasure that has played important roles in building the nation's unity and dignity. Now it is the time we should turn back to our own philosophy, our own culture, and our own indigenous knowledge…." (Rung, 2001, cited in Jungck, 2003: 28).

In practice, although the local curriculum, especially the concept of local wisdom, has become popular in schools, this idea has been implemented with varying intensity and for different purposes. As will be illustrated in this thesis, both schools under this study have taken up the localism ideology and the idea of local wisdom in their teaching and learning in different ways. In the private alternative school, the localism ideology serves a practical pedagogical use as local communities become the sites for experiential and inquiry-based learning. This pedagogical approach is believed to enable the development of creativity, analytical thinking, and problem-solving skills considered by the school as necessary for economic and social life in the 21st century. This is unlike the case of the democratic school, which is a regular Thai school, where the concept of local wisdom is used along with learning practical skills that can help prepare the students for a local livelihood. This difference reflects the diverging social and economic contexts that the two schools are embedded in, and hence the kind of citizens each school is aiming to produce. At the same time, it reflects the growing demand for education to meet diverse economic and individual development needs and the duality of the direction of development that Thailand has been following. At one end, this economic dualism is concerned with the localist

economic ideology discussed above. At the other end, it is related to the kind of liberal economic agenda that has dominated Thai economic policy and practices over the last decade.

3.1.2 A liberal economic agenda

While the alternative development ideas based on localism and moderation gained strength in Thailand after the 1997 financial crisis, the official economic direction (directive principles of state policy) as prescribed in the 1997 Constitution was the one of a free market economy (Article 87 Section 5, 1997 Constitution). Furthermore, although the 2007 Constitution stipulated the promotion of the sufficiency economy philosophy, the free market economic system continued to be prescribed (Articles 83 and 84 (1), Section 7, 2007 Constitution). Likewise, despite the emphasis on the sufficiency economy and the strengthening of local knowledge and culture, competition in the global market remains a central concern in the country's economic and social development plans (NESDB, 2002-2006 Plan; 2007-2011 Plan). Furthermore, after the crisis of 1997 the Thai economy has become even more integrated into the world market, with an increase in foreign investment and an adoption of a number of liberal economic policies including trade liberalization, deregulation and privatization as part of IMF conditionality (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 259).

When Thaksin Shinawatra as head of the Thai Rak Thai (TRT) party became prime minister in 2001, it was expected that some of the liberal policies imposed by IMF would be modified, considering Thaksin's stance against foreign dependency. However, not only were such plans dropped, but Thaksin also moved toward attracting foreign investment to help boost the Thai economy (Pasuk and Baker, 2009: 122). Moreover, although the Thaksin's government drew on localism to shape his economic policy, the self-sufficiency philosophy and the concept of localism became blurred with Thaksin's project to extend capitalism to the rural communities and to increase national competitiveness. The government implemented a number of the so-called populist programs including the one million baht village fund, the "One-

Village, One Product" project[5] and the 30-baht universal healthcare scheme to increase income for the local grassroots while also helping them to reduce their expenses. Pasuk and Baker (2009) noted that Thaksin himself saw this strategy as a means to deepen and expand capitalism (p.118). Furthermore, by tapping into "local ingenuity and wisdom" and the country's "rich natural assets" instead of reliance on foreign resources and technology, Thaksin's government hoped to strengthen Thailand's competitiveness (cited in Pasuk and Baker, 2009: 115). In this respect, although the policies implemented by the TRT government may have helped to generate greater economic power for people at the grassroots, most of these programs run counter to the idea of the sufficiency economy as they encourage consumption and indebtedness. Interestingly, these populist policies have largely been institutionalized over the last decade despite political crises and changes in government. From 2000 to 2011, the average household debt increased from 68,405 baht to 134,900 baht (with the average for only indebted households jumping to 241,760 baht) (NSO, 30.06.2013). Moreover, when the Pheu Thai government led by Thaksin's younger sister came to power in mid 2011, it implemented a new set of populist policies including 'first car' and 'first house' subsidy programs which have seen household debt surging even further (Matichon online, 30.06.2013). Ironically, the current eleventh National Economic and Social Development Plan (2012-2016) continues to embrace the sufficiency economy as the guiding philosophy for the country's development approach. In light of the uncertainty in the current global economy, big business in Thailand is also tapping into the sufficiency philosophy to provide a cushion for their enterprises (Krungthep Turakij online, 02.07.2013). Seen in this light, the two streams of development practice have been running in parallel for nearly two decades, leaving people in this country to find their own ways to adopt and adapt the two very different concepts. This dichotomy has also translated into education policy and practice which have tried to balance the dual objectives of reviving communitarianism and the sufficiency economy while promoting economic competitiveness at the global level. This is done through the adoption of localized and

[5] This project, which was taken from a Japanese model, provides credit for community enterprises. When the project was launched in 2001, about 6,340 villages applied to join the scheme (Pasuk and Baker, 2009: 105)

life-long education on the one hand, and the promotion of modern knowledge and technology as well as child-centered pedagogy on the other hand (Annop and Mounier, 2010). However, as will be illustrated later in this thesis, these diverging policies and strategies carry some implications for the construction of differentiated citizenship and education for democracy and social justice. The next section explores changes and continuity in Thai political ideology.

3.2 Democracy, participation and good citizens in contemporary Thailand

The ideological dichotomy in contemporary Thai society has not only been expressed through a global-local framework nor has it been confined only to the realm of economics. As will be illustrated in the following discussion, there are both continuing and shifting ideas in the political and cultural spheres, especially with regard to the project of democratization, that have influenced the shaping of democratic ideas and practices in education. On the one hand, the Thai state has been prescribing democracy as a system of government in a Western liberal notion while emphasizing the procedural aspects of a representative democratic system and the notion of good citizens linked to individual moral and ethical conduct. On the other hand, social movements and proponents of localism paved new ground for participatory democracy through a process of political reform. However, while the democracy movement has generated a new understanding and practice of participatory democracy based on concepts of rights and justice, traditional ideas of democracy and good citizens continue to be promoted. Furthermore, the concept of participation has been defined by intellectuals and think-tank agencies to support communitarian democratic projects centered on conventional notions of civic responsibilities. Thus, social justice has not been in the forefront of Thai democracy discourse. These varying concepts of democracy are discussed below.

3.2.1 Toward a participatory democracy

As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the main focuses of democratic projects by the Thai state since 1932 has been to define democracy as a

representative governance system in which citizens have duties and responsibilities to contribute to the well-being of the nation according to their respective roles and status. Despite the prescriptions of the principles of the rights, liberties and equality of citizens, the exercise of these values had been rather limited. However, a movement for political reform and democratization that emerged in response to the money politics of the late 1980s and the political crisis in 1992 brought about a shift in Thai political ideology. Social movements of different groups of people including farmers, fishers, women workers and slum dwellers mobilized against what they perceived to be unjust development practices by the state and private sector that deprived them of their rights and livelihoods. The movement, which shared basic concerns over the damaging impact of economic and cultural globalization with intellectuals promoting the idea of localism, called for participatory democracy and a reform of political institutions in order to establish a balance of power between the state and civil society.[6] These forces had gained strength in the 1990s and played an important role in the drafting of the 1997 Constitution which recognized a wide range of rights of citizens and communities.

However, while people at the grassroots and NGOs have been calling for the greater participation of people in decision-making processes, international financial institutions like the World Bank played a critical role in making the idea and practice of participation part of the official international development agenda. As part of its new conditionality framework, the Bank required that country governments engage societal and community actors in the provision of public goods while reducing the burden on the state, a plan which would ultimately advance market-based capitalism (Connors, 2007: 189). In any case, the idea of citizen and community participation in this new development paradigm resonated well with the aspirations of progressive Thai NGOs and intellectuals who advocated a reduced role for the state and a greater involvement of civil society. Thus, it has been suggested that the ideological shift toward a more participatory democracy (the democratization project) in Thailand, may be seen as "an integral aspect of the economic and ideological

[6] See Pasuk Phongpaichit (Editor) (2002) for a discussion on different Thai social movements and their mobilization in the 1980s-90s.

restructuring accompanying a new stage of globalization in the capitalist world economy" (cited in Connors, 2007: 289-90).

In the same way that the new development and political ideology of the grassroots shares the same language of participation as that of the international agencies promoting global capitalism, the peoples' democratization project become appropriated by intellectuals and the Thai state who would define the scope of this project. Connors (2007) argued that the intellectuals who advocated ideals of localism after the 1992 political crisis saw the community as the basis for democracy as they were capable of self-reliance and taking care of their common problems. This quality of civic responsibility at the grassroots is considered as social capital which can provide a strong moral base to sustain democracy. However, Connors observed that while recognizing local identity and advocating participatory democracy at the community level, the thinking of localism intellectuals carries "a strong current of elitism", as it regards the middle class as the agent of democracy (Connors, 2007: 225). While intellectuals see communities as the sites of learning and the practice of the principle of self-reliance, they considered themselves to have the role "to lead by first understanding the conditions and worldview (local wisdom) of the villagers" and by engaging with issues that emerged in communities (Connors, 2007: 226).

The observation made by Connors may be valid only to a certain extent: when academics or urban-based development workers work with community people to understand and help local villagers think through the problems, get organized and define solutions, it can be perceived as being elitist. However, the nature of intellectuals' engagement with the locals has been evolving and an equal partnership between the two sides has become more expected. Furthermore, in the context of the progressive school under this study whose learning approach appears to follow Connors' description above, the observation made by Connors becomes less valid. While it is the case that students from the school are from middle- and upper-class backgrounds and that the school also embraces a localism ideology, the students' engagement in the communities does not seem to suggest an elitist view of democracy. Through a community-based learning approach, students at the school have the opportunity to spend time with local villagers who have become successful in their practice of self-reliance. In addition, they are also taken to communities which have

been affected by development projects to learn about the problems that local people face. However, instead of leading them, the students are expected to learn moral lessons from meeting with local people (Interview, Teacher B, 10.02.12). At the same time, the students feel that they can "learn from good people who are doing something good" (FGD, M5, 6.02.12). Besides, it became evident through this study that as students learn to raise questions and engage with the villagers in finding solutions to the problems in affected communities, both parties derive mutual benefit from this experience. In this respect, the communitarian ideology linked to the notion of participatory democracy can provide an important avenue for citizenship learning beyond the school context.

Nevertheless, there continues to be different practices linked to the Thai democratic project. On the one hand, while communitarian democracy and ethics have influenced a section of what may be considered the progressive middle-class and the grassroots, for the majority of the population and particularly in the area of formal education, democracy remains first and foremost a form of representative government. This notion of democracy has continued to be framed within electoral politics with the primary role of citizens as voters. Moreover, there are a number of state agencies that have continued to propagate democracy from a more conservative/traditional frame. This aspect of democracy is explored in the next section.

3.2.2 Moral and cultural democracy

In more recent Thai history, the agencies that have assumed the role of inculcating a democratic citizenry from a cultural perspective are the National Cultural Commission (NCC) and the National Identity Board (NIB). Established in 1979 and 1980 respectively, both are products of ideological reformation of the 1970s[7] and they share a similar objective of harnessing an ideology/moral unity founded on the idea of 'Thai-ness.' In the early 1980s, the NCC tried to propagate the idea of the 'oneness of Thais' while promoting what are seen as desirable Thai qualities[8] and the upholding of

[7] This period was marked by the student uprising in 1973 and its suppression by a military dictatorship in 1976 which saw their leaders joining the Communist Party of Thailand in the jungle.

[8] These qualities included self-reliance, diligence and responsibility, thrift, discipline and observance of the law (Connors, 2007:233).

the three national pillars (Connors, 2007: 233). Meanwhile, the NIB was tasked to promote the institutions of monarchy, religion and nation as well as the value of the democratic system with the king as head of state. In 1984, it released a publication entitled *Knowledge about Democracy for the People*, which as Connors pointed out, "represents an authoritative view of democracy in the Thai context" (Connors, 2007: 143). In reviewing this publication, I found that the contents of this democracy manual were similar to those prescribed in the secondary civic education textbooks discussed in Chapter 2 including detailed knowledge of the democratic system with the king as head of state; the rights and duties of citizens under the constitution; the election system and processes as well as the authority and functioning of state representatives at different levels and the three branches of the government (NIB, 1984). The focus on knowledge relating to the governance system as such has remained an important feature of 'knowledge about democracy' officially promoted by the Thai state.

After the political crisis in 1992 that led to political reform, the NIB (through its administrative arm, the Office of National Identity Promotion) adopted a seemingly more liberal understanding of democracy by promoting a 'democratic way of life.' However, its projects which identified and gave awards to 'democratic families,' 'democratic schools' and 'democratic communities'[9] continue to center on the idea of a democratic system with the king as head of state and the traditional notion of good citizens embedded in Thai culture and traditions, morality, social responsibility and discipline, with only a few liberal democratic ideas of equality and rights. The criteria for selecting model democratic families are quite instructive in this regard. They include:

i) Be a family [whose members] are disciplined and adhere to the democratic system with the king as head of state;

ii) Be a single family, with one or both parents who may or may not be alive, and with children who are still alive;

[9] These projects began in 1996, 2005 and 2007 respectively.

iii) Be a family [whose members] adhere to good moral and ethical conduct and preservation of Thai culture and traditions;

iv) Be a family [whose members] have gratitude toward parents, society and the nation;

v) Be a family [whose members] have responsibility toward oneself, one's own family, the community and the environment;

vi) Be a family with honesty and justice and engaged in lawful employment;

vii) Parents and children listen to one another's opinion with reason; and

viii) Members of the family are successful in life and in their careers and contribute toward society

(Office of National Identity Promotion, 2008: 5-6. Author's translation).

In this regard, it can be seen that the eight criteria above reflect desirable characteristics of good Thai citizens which have traditionally been prescribed. Furthermore, the criteria for selecting democratic communities are similar to those for democratic families while the guidelines for democratic schools prescribe the idea of social responsibility and the participation of students in various school activities that promote democracy and equality (NIP, 2008: 15-16; 22). Through its links with state agencies nationwide, NIB/NIP's projects on democratic families, schools and communities have a broad outreach. Each year, the projects recognize nearly 200 families, schools and communities from different parts of the country. The democratic school identified under this study is one among the many schools recognized by the NIB project since 2005. As will be seen in Chapter 5, the democratic practices in this school follow a more traditional notion of democracy and a conventional conception of democratic citizenship as promoted by the state including the adoption of a student council as a formal representative student body.

In this connection, another key feature of the democratic project in contemporary Thailand has been its emphasis on representative/parliamentary democracy. While the NIB played an important role in propagating representative democracy and a limited view of people's participation from the 1980s to the early 1990s, the agency that has taken up the role of propagating the idea of representative

democracy more recently and more widely is the Election Commission of Thailand (ECT). Established as an independent body under the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions, the ECT's mandate initially focused on managing the electoral process, deciding the legitimacy of candidates and enforcing electoral law. From early on, the ECT identified the practice of vote-buying as a major obstacle to democratic development in Thailand and has campaigned to encourage voters to vote for 'good persons'. A publication entitled *Khon di nai withi prachatipatai* or "Good persons in a democratic way of life" was produced in 2007 to educate the public about the personal qualities/characteristics of candidates that people should consider before voting. The notion of good persons was taken from three sources including i) the speeches of HM King Bhumibol and of HRH the late Princess Mother about good persons; ii) perspectives of religious leaders on the qualities of good persons and iii) views from some leaders within the ECT itself and from those representing respectable societal figures and members of various occupations (ECT, 2007). Essentially, the three sources reflect the three pillars of the country: the monarchy, religion and nation.

When the Constitution of 2007 extended the mandate of the ECT to include the promotion and education of the public on democratic governance, the Commission has since played an active role in developing teachers' handbooks for democratic education for primary and secondary school levels as well as implementing other projects. The handbooks, however, reflect the conservative model of civic education in that they focus on providing information and knowledge on the governance and electoral system, the constitution and human rights similar to what is provided in school textbooks as discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, the handbook for the lower secondary level prescribes a notion of good citizens who are self-disciplined and possess different personal qualities including moral courage, responsibility, rationality and honesty (ECT and OBEC, 2009a), while the handbook for the upper secondary level contains a section on societal crises and a discussion on topics such as consumerism, teenage pregnancy, drugs and HIV/AIDS, and crime (ECT and OBEC, 2009b). This version of democracy therefore suggests a notion of personally-responsible citizens with good character who do not engage in any delinquent behavior and are free of vices. At the same time, this vision of democracy

can be seen as a part of the state's moral/cultural project of citizen construction and the general concerns over increasing youth delinquency.

Having been given less emphasis during the economic boom years, this moral and cultural project of citizen construction has gained strength in the aftermath of the financial crisis of 1997. The idea of 'Thai-ness' has been used to support a cultural project that sees the adoption of a Western lifestyle, especially among the younger generation, as part of the threat of globalization to the national culture. The creation of the Ministry of Culture in 2002 under the Thaksin government can be seen as a reaction to the growing pressure for greater control of the social and cultural practices of Thai people. Although the master plan drawn up by the Ministry included recognition of the idea of cultural diversity, Pasuk and Baker pointed out that:

> "the plan as a whole was framed as a campaign to counter the spread of consumerism and individualism by promoting supposedly Thai values including belief in society, kinship, respect for elders, deference, empathy. The plan also proposes to nurture the Thai language, Thai manners, Thai food and Thai dress" (Pasuk and Baker, 2009: 169).

As pointed out earlier, the emphasis on Thai values and culture has been reinforced through school textbooks which prescribe the idea of good citizens who contribute to the preservation of national arts and culture. In addition, different elements of Thai culture and traditions are also promoted through extra-curricular activities and daily school practices including the teaching of Thai arts and crafts as well as the adoption of Thai-style uniforms in some schools, although these latter practices can be also be considered as reflecting the localism ideology discussed earlier. Nevertheless, there continue to be efforts by different agencies to build on the communitarian thoughts and the idea of participatory democracy that flourished in the 1990s. Furthermore, in light of the political crisis that emerged since 2005 there has been a renewed interest in developing the consciousness of people as "democratic citizens," an idea which will be briefly examined below.

3.2.3 Inculcating citizens in a changing context

One of the renewed projects to promote the notion of participatory democracy has focused on developing the consciousness of citizens to take an interest in public matters, take action to solve problems and make changes. This project has been initiated by public- and privately-funded think-tank institutions. King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI), for example, has initiated projects to strengthen civic engagement along with its original mandate to promote an understanding of the democratic parliamentary system with the king as head of state. Recently the Institute carried out research in ten localities in different regions of Thailand in order to understand the factors contributing to the development of citizen/civic consciousness. The report suggested that the concept of 'citizenship' or *khwampen phonlamueang* ความเป็นพลเมือง includes not only the legal status and entitlement of a person, but also implies that the person is to "carry out appropriate actions so as to continually and meaningfully support the well-being of the community, religion, clubs or associations, using partly one's own funds" (KPI, 2011: 15. Author's translation). Similarly, the Institute of Public Policy Studies (IPPS) has been working on a civic education project since 1996 during the 1997 Constitution drafting process. It has recently published a booklet entitled "Civic Education for Thai Society" which puts forward the aim of civic education as "enabling citizens to take social responsibility at the local and state level, on matters which concern general life as well as public and political life…" (Tippaporn, 2012: 54. Author's translation). At the same time, in light of the political conflict that emerged since 2005 which has led to loss of the lives of individual citizens and to economic disruption, and in the context of the second decade of education reform, IPPS also expects that civic education would bring about a more peaceful society.

It can be seen that the notion of democratic citizenship promoted by these think-tank agencies is moving toward the participatory conception of citizenship as discussed in Chapter 1. In this respect, both KPI and IPPS have been implementing their projects to inculcate this extended concept of democracy and citizenship in different contexts and with various groups of people. The IPPS in particular has been carrying out training and seminars with school teachers and students in different parts

of the country to promote the knowledge and understanding of citizenship and to help develop the skills deemed necessary for the active participation of students in a democracy.[10] While the effectiveness of such training needs to be ascertained, these initiatives can be considered a step forward from the emphasis on traditional aspects of civic/citizenship education that continues to dominate Thai education.

Aside from the projects carried out by the two institutions, the Ministry of Education has also taken a renewed interest in civic education. In addition to adjusting its formal curriculum so that school textbooks prepared under the 2008 revised curriculum promote greater participation of citizens in civic and political life within a defined framework, the same curriculum also prescribes a certain number of hours during which students at the basic educational level have to carry out voluntary activities.[11] As findings from this study reveal, such activities can range from helping to clean up temple grounds or reading to the blind, to volunteering and organizing to help with flood relief. In this regard, this initiative can be seen as promoting both notions of personally responsible citizenship and participatory citizenship. Furthermore, a Strategy for the Development of Civic Education (2010-2018) was prepared at the end of 2010 by the Subcommittee of the Education Reform Policy on Civic Education under the Committee on the Second Decade of Education Reform.[12] The stated targets/outcomes of the strategy include:

> (1) "to successfully implement a democratic form of governance by inculcating citizens capable of governing themselves in a democracy, which means that members of society exercise their rights and freedoms with responsibility toward themselves, others and society",

[10] See http://www.fpps.or.th/index.php?topic=activitieseng for various activities and projects implemented by IPPS

[11] At the primary level, students are required to carry out 60 hours of voluntary activities altogether during the six years of their education. For the three years of lower secondary level, 45 hours are required. Finally, students must engage in 60 hours of voluntary activities during the last three years of their secondary education (Ministry of Education, 2008)

[12] The Committee of the Education Reform Policy on Civic Education was initially appointed by the Minister of Education in February, 2010, under the government of Abhisit Vejjajiva. It later became a Subcommittee under the Committee on the Second Decade of Education Reform in June, 2010.

> …
> (3) "for Thailand to become a "civil society", which means a country whose members realize their own power/ability and to build "a strong society" in political, social, economic and environmental dimensions; to enable Thailand to have security/stability and for people with different ideas and beliefs to live together peacefully and without violence, under the democratic system with the king as head of state" (Subcommittee of the Education Reform Policy on Civic Education, Nov 2010: 4. Author's translation).

The document outlines six characteristics of citizens in a democracy: i) able to exercise liberty and independence; ii) respectful of the rights of others; iii) respectful of differences; iv) respectful of the principle of equality; v) respectful of the rule of law; and vi) socially responsible. It also prescribes four strategic areas for the implementation of civic education which cover civic education for children and youth; civic education for adults, families and communities; awareness raising by the mass media; and networking between governmental and private agencies. According to the strategy, measures for the implementation of civic education at the basic education level must focus on: i) building the school's organizational culture that will enable teaching citizenship by example; ii) reviewing and revising the aspect of "knowledge" of civic education that concerns the description of the constitution and system of government so as to retain only necessary content, and in ways that are appropriate to learners at different levels; and iii) devising teaching-learning activities which will enable learners to develop values of respect, critical thinking and responsibilities toward oneself, others and society (Subcommittee, 2010).

The characteristics of citizens and the approaches to developing them as put forward in this new civic education strategy are a positive indication of what might be possible for the construction of democratic citizens in Thai schools. However, it is important to point out that the qualities of citizens prescribed in this strategy are not entirely new. Five out of the six characteristics identified in the strategy have been presented in school textbooks prepared under the 2001 curriculum and the 2008 revision as reviewed in Chapter 2. Furthermore, while this strategy has been adopted

since 2010, it is unclear how the various measures contained in the document have actually been implemented. It is clear however, that the concept of citizenship based on the idea of personally responsible citizens is still very much in focus.[13] In this respect, it remains to be seen how the various concepts of democracy and the different characteristics of citizenship are actually being inculcated in schools.

Before examining the various aspects of the school curriculum and practice in the next chapters, it must be remembered that when social movements and people at the grassroots mobilized to demand their rights to livelihood, access to natural resources, fair wages, decent housing and better health care in the 1990s, they contributed not only toward the political reform process but also to a greater recognition of the concepts of human rights, equality and respect for human dignity. Thus, the 1997 and 2007 Constitutions recognized existing inequality and guaranteed a wide range of rights and participation of the people. Furthermore, when conflict and violence between the anti- and pro-Thaksin groups became more divisive and destructive,[14] the problem of persistent inequality and injustice in Thai society has been identified as one of the important root causes (see for example discussions by Chairat, 2012; Hewison, 2012). Nevertheless, despite a greater recognition of the problems of inequality and injustice in Thai society, education about and for social justice has not been a priority in Thai schools. On the one hand, this is due to the emphasis of education on the development of traditional notions of good citizens, although the concept of citizenship has been expanded to include aspects of socially responsible/participatory citizenship in recent years. On the other hand, the Thai value system and social structure founded on Buddhist ethics and hierarchical social relationships remain influential in shaping the Thai worldview that includes an

[13] For example, a presentation on "Strategy for Civic and Global Citizenship Education in the 21st Century" by a well-known figure in education included three concluding questions asking the audience to assess their quality of citizenship including: i) Do you abide by the law and adhere to moral and ethical conduct?; ii) Do you pay tax to the proper amount?; and iii) Are you doing you best in your work and employment? http://www.kpi.ac.th/kpith/images/stories/2012/13ยุทธศาสตร์การจัดการศึกษา(ดร.สมหวัง กลุ่ม5).pdf ; accessed 7.04.14

[14] When Thaksin Shinawatra became prime minister in 2001, the populist policies implemented by him were seen to respond to some of the concerns about poverty and inequality and helped to empower a more marginalized section of the population. Thus, when his government was toppled by a military coup in 2006, conflict emerged which has divided Thai society like never before.

understanding of equality and justice. Thai social relations and value systems are further explored below.

3.3 Thai social structure and value system

3.3.1 Buddhism, social relations and the idea of justice

The Thai value system is embedded in Theravada Buddhism that came to Thailand from Sri Lanka in the 13th century and quickly became infused with local beliefs in spirits. The Buddhist view of the universe sees all beings as evolving in an unending cycle of birth and rebirth. For many centuries, Thais adhered to the law of *karma* which has been used to explain the different life conditions of humans and other beings in this world. A person's life in the present world is believed to be the effect of his/her own acts in the past or previous incarnations (Girling, 1981; Keyes, 1989). It is still common in Thai society to hear people talk about their bad fortune of e.g., having been in an accident, being poor or disabled or other sufferings, as being a result of some bad karma they have committed in the past or in a previous life. At the same time, people also regard those with power and wealth in their current existence as having had accumulated a lot of merit in the past. To be free from this cycle of birth and rebirth, one needs to be able to detach oneself from worldly desires and emotions of greed, anger and illusion, and hence attain *nivarna*. However, since this ideal condition is difficult to achieve for most lay people, merit making through alms giving and other forms of generosity has been an important means for individuals to accumulate good deeds so that their future path will be more prosperous. Adherence to this belief in karma and rebirth is argued to provide the basis for the acceptance of social inequality in Thai society (Wit, 2001; Kullapa, 2012). Furthermore, the belief in karmic rule has also shaped an understanding of justice that is based on individual's moral and ethical conduct.

Writing on this subject, Suwanna (1998) noted that the stories of the Law of *Karma*[15] popularized in Thailand from the late 1950s to the 1980s projected a notion of moral/ethical justice that is considered to be complete and serious since all individuals will ultimately receive the consequences of their own actions. She also pointed out that while adherence to karmic law and the notion of moral/ethical justice may help to restrain some people from committing sinful acts, it has limited the understanding and analysis of situations from a more structural perspective. Thus, rather than seeing negative life conditions or social inequality between individuals as the outcome of unjust or oppressive social structures at the present time, mishaps in one's life are perceived to be the results of the individual's own unethical and immoral actions which may be remedied through the accumulation of greater merit (p. 89-90). In this respect, the Buddhist belief in *karma* and rebirth suggests a concept of social justice that is not based on the idea of social, economic or political equality but on moral/ethical equality, that is, all will receive the results of their own actions justly. Furthermore, not only is the Buddhist law of *karma* influential in explaining different life conditions of people, but it is important in sustaining the hierarchical Thai social structure and the unequal social relationships embedded within it.

Girling (1981) argued that traditional Thai society is characterized by a hierarchical social relationship. Thais regard social ranking according to the birth, status, power and wealth of individuals and their corresponding behavior appropriate to their place in the hierarchy as important. Thus, there is the "senior" or *phu yai* and the "junior" or *phu noi* in Thai social relations. By possessing greater power and status, those in the higher social space or *phu yai* are expected to provide support and protection to *phu noi* who are inferior, thus assuring themselves of loyal followers. Social harmony in stratified Thai society has arguably been sustained through adherence to different complimentary values and cultural codes including avoidance of conflict or disagreement as well as a balance between keeping social order and allowing a level of autonomy for those in inferior positions to pursue their own

[15]The Law of *Karma* (กฎแห่งกรรม) consists of a series of stories written by Mr. Thongyok (Tho) Liangphibun (ท เลียงพิบูลย์). The stories have been published by different groups and for different occasions. The publishing house of the Ministry of Education has also published these stories several times (Suwanna, 1998).

personal interests. This social structure, which divides people into hierarchical classes and which was important in maintaining a centralized political power structure during the absolute monarchy, continues to be observed in contemporary Thailand even after the country adopted a democratic political regime in 1932. One of the most important ideological constructions that has been central in supporting this hierarchical social structure is the notion of "Thainess."

In her article on "The Construction of Mainstream Thought on 'Thainess' and the 'Truth' Constructed by 'Thainess,'" Saichol Sattayanurak (2005)[16] discussed the idea of Thainess as defined by M.R. Kukrit Pramoj[17] whose work was considered the most influential in shaping the Thai way of thinking during the second half of the last century especially with regard to the understanding of the Thai social structure and social relationships. According to Saichol, M.R. Kukrit's construction of Thainess was based on his own belief that "the traditional social structure that divides people finely and complicatedly into different social classes in a detailed and complex manner was correct and appropriate" (Saichol, 2005: 17). By adhering to this hierarchical social structure and by having everyone performing their duties according to their social class, M.R. Kukrit believed that there would be order, stability, peace and prosperity for society. He popularized this idea of Thainess through several means including through his own publishing house and most notably in his renowned novel *Four Reigns*[18] in which he credited the royal institution for a peaceful, stable and prosperous Thai nation. In this regard, the notion of Thainess also carried important political meanings.

In a similar way, Buddhism constituted a significant aspect of the Thai social structure and the idea of Thainess defined by M.R. Kukrit. According to him, despite its hierarchical social structure, the Thai social class structure is non-rigid due

[16] I used the English version of this article which was translated by Sarinee Achavanuntakul, http://www.fringer.org/wp-content/writings/thainess-eng.pdf; accessed 1.08.2012

[17] Born in 1911, M.R. Kukrit Pramoj was a great-grandson of King Rama II. He was educated at Oxford and formed the Progressive Party in 1945 which was merged into the Democrat Party in 1946. He also founded *Siam Rath* newspaper in 1950. A novelist and enthusiast of traditional arts, especially *khon* masked drama, M.R. Kukrit became prime minister from 1975-1976 (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 297-8).

[18] The four periods in the novel start from the reign of King Rama V (Chulalongkorn) and continue to King Rama VIII (Ananda), the elder brother of the current King Bhumibol.

partly to the Buddhist law of *karma*. In his view, mobility within the Thai class structure was possible not only because of the ability of a person but also due to his or her own *karma*: the law of *karma* would help promote individuals with good ethics while those with evil characters would be demoted. Furthermore, despite its hierarchical structure Thai society was projected as one that is peaceful as its members adhere to Buddhist ethics of kindness and thus they are "full of compassion and do not harshly exploit each other" (Saichol, 2005: 22). In this respect, it can be seen that the Buddhist concept of ethics has also been used to support the hierarchical social structure and acceptance of social inequality that is conditioned upon individuals' unequal moral standards. Thus, Saichol argued that the problem of inequality, for example, in resource distribution would not be an issue that Thai people in general would be concerned for. At the same time, behavior that does not fit with the dominant Thai social relations such as "when children or those in the lower social space disobey those in higher social space or when Thais became more individualistic and demand more individual rights and freedom" is considered as inappropriate (Saichol, 2005: 33).

In this regard, the hierarchical social structure and the way that Buddhism has been presented as endorsing it can be seen as hindering the development of the ideas of rights, freedoms and equality that are integral to liberal political thought. At the same time, the emphasis on an individual-centered approach to ethics has meant that moral education – the cultivation of individual moral character based on Buddhist teaching – remains an integral part of citizen construction in contemporary Thai society. As will be illustrated in Chapter 6, in the context of Thai schools, instilling Buddhist ethics is an important aspect of the formal and informal school curricula and practices. There is renewed interest by the state in strengthening moral teaching to fight against declining virtues, consumerism and increasing youth delinquency including through the promotion of the "Buddhist Way Schools" or *rongrian withi phut* โรงเรียนวิถีพุทธ initiative by the Ministry of Education in 2003. However, while Buddhist moral virtues have continued to be used to support the construction of traditional notions of good citizens, there have been attempts to reform Buddhism so that it can become more relevant to progressive social needs. The core ideas and values of re-articulated Buddhism and its connection to education are discussed below.

3.3.2 Reconstructive Buddhism and social development

Attempts to reform and rearticulate Buddhism were led by a reformer monk, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, whose analysis of Buddhist doctrine challenged the conservative and state-centric interpretation and use of Thai Buddhism. Important doctrinal reinterpretations by Buddhadasa Bhikkhu since the early 1930s have included those relating to individual salvation, rebirth and the karmic rules. His reinterpretations have shifted the emphasis of salvation from being the one of a transcendent condition to ending suffering here and now through liberative insight; from the understanding of birth and rebirth in a literal sense to one emerging in the cycle of dependent origination arising from the sense of self; and from the unchangeable nature of moral retribution of past misdeeds to the one which regards the agency of individuals to alter their karmic conditions as plausible (Jackson, 1988). With regard to ending suffering here and now, Buddadasa offered four Dharma tools, one of which is *sati* or the practice of reflective awareness or mindfulness.[19] In this respect, Buddhadasa's reconstruction of Buddhist doctrine has created the potential for Buddhism to be used not only for individuals to be free from internal or mental suffering, but for Buddhist teaching and practice to also contribute to alleviating social ills and injustices in the world. According to Jackson (1988), Buddhadasa "has attempted to subsume the polar opposites of "this world" and the "next world" into a unity which, he hopes, will retain all the truth and saving power of the Buddha's spiritual message while also affirming the material saving power afforded humanity through scientific knowledge and technological skill" (p. 296).

The late Buddhadasa's attempts to rationalize Buddhist teaching and his concern with the social and political role of Buddhism in modern Thailand have drawn him some followers. In light of the changing social and political context of modernizing Thailand since the 1960s, his ideas and work have provided an important source of inspiration for a section of the educated Thai elite who sought new ways to

[19] The end of suffering here and now can be understood as freedom from defilements of the mind broadly categorized into greed, hatred and delusion, altogether known as *kilesa*. In Buddhadasa's explanation, such freedom may occur momentarily through the practice of reflective awareness of mindfulness or *sati*. Absolute and complete extinction of every kind of defilement and misery is known as *nibbana* (*nirvana*). (Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, 2007)

make more meaning out of the ritualistic conservatism and state-centric Buddhist doctrine and order. For many Thai intellectuals, reconstructed Buddhism was to become not only the source of renewed spiritual values of "this world" but also of a new ideological foundation for a moral approach to the socioeconomic development of the country (Jackson, 1988). Despite his popularity among intellectuals however, the spiritual message and work of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu has remained less accessible for most lay Buddhists while his direct influence in mainstream education has also been limited.

This is unlike the case of another scholar monk, the Venerable P.A. Payutto, who has also spoken and written extensively on the social and economic role of Buddhism.[20] An important aspect of P.A. Payutto's work is concerned with promoting Buddhism as a response to overconsumption, corruption and unsustainable development that have resulted from rapid modernization and capitalist economic development. In his lecture given at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993, he argued that all destruction in the world including that of humankind and the environment result from the forces identified in Buddhism as *lobha* or greed and *dosa* or hatred. In order to prevent or overcome the crisis, one needs to control these forces by developing right view, right belief and right social values especially concerning a harmonious relationship between mankind and nature and the perception that happiness does not depend on material possessions (P.A. Payutto, 1993: 5-7). Not only has the work of P.A. Payutto appealed to intellectuals who would later popularize the discourse of localism which regards the concept of moderation in Buddhism as one of its important bases, but his articulation of Buddhism and social and economic development has been recognized in the field of education especially concerning the purpose and process of education and learning.

The Venerable P.A. Payutto's articulation of the application of Buddhist teaching to education follows from his analysis of the stage of economic development of the world and the options for Thailand's development path. The venerable monk identified the problems of environmental and social destruction in today's world as

[20] His work on this subject includes *Buddhist Solution for the Twenty-First Century*, a transcript of his lecture prepared for the 1993 Parliament of the World's Religions, in Chicago, USA; *Buddhist Economics*; and *Sustainable Development*.

arising from wrong perceptions and wrong way of living which do not see the connectedness between human beings, society and the environment. In his book, "The Dawn of Education: Toward Sustainable Development" which is a transcript of his lecture given to a group of university students in 1991, he considered education as having an important role in "helping one to train and develop oneself to conduct a correct living…" (P.A. Payutto, 2003b: 70). While he regards the cultivation of wisdom, which is the ability to understand the cause and effect of any occurrences in accordance with the natural laws, as the ultimate goal of education and learning, the venerable monk considers the ability to think holistically as central to the conduct of correct living in the global age of information. This type of thinking reflects a Buddhist way of systematic and holistic understanding known as *yonisomanasikara* *โยนิโสมณสิการ* which, according to the scholar monk, can be developed with assistance from individuals – the *kalyanamitra* กัลยาณมิตร – who possess the quality and the kindness to lend right support (P.A. Payutto, 2003b: 90). In the context of education, *kalyanamitra* include teachers, parents and administrators who provide the source of learning for children. The children can also be *kalyanamitra* for themselves by identifying appropriate role models and sources of learning in the society. In this respect, the development of holistic thinking should enable one to conduct a correct living which should also be in harmony with the environment and larger society. As such, the Buddhist approach to education as articulated by the Venerable P.A. Payutto arguably reflects both self- and social development goals of education through the cultivation of one's wisdom, development of holistic thinking and the promotion of harmonious living.

As will be illustrated later in this thesis, this Buddhist concept has informed a group of Thai middle- class who would later found a school which embraces this re-articulated Buddhist educational philosophy. The teaching and learning approach and daily school routine draw on the principles of holistic thinking, benevolent support and harmonious living which have enabled the students to develop a level of ecological and social awareness. At the same time, Buddhist concepts of holistic thinking and benevolent support as popularized by the Venerable P.A. Payutto have become an important basis for a renewed state-sponsored Buddhist education project in Thai schools. The "Buddhist Way School" initiative of the Ministry of

Education also draws on the two concepts above as well as on the Buddhist principle of *sikkhattaya* ไตรสิขา or threefold training/education including moral discipline or *sila* ศีล, mental concentration or *samadhi* สมาธิ, and wisdom or *panya* ปัญญา (Ministry of Education, 2003).

In this respect, both progressive and mainstream education in Thailand share a common interest in drawing on Buddhism to instill appropriate ways of thinking and behaviors among learners. However, while Buddhist principles and ethics are an integral part of Thai education, they have been used to serve different purposes in schools embedded in different socio-economic contexts. As will be illustrated in Chapter 6, in the mainstream Thai school with students from a lower socio-economic background, Buddhist principles and ethics serve conservative political and cultural goals. The teaching of Buddhist virtues is a means to construct morally good citizens who are disciplined, responsible and free from vice. This is different from the progressive school that caters for students from middle- and upper-class families whose adoption of reconstructed Buddhism is intended to serve self- and social development goals through the promotion of students' personal and environmental awareness. In this respect, the varying practices of schools can be seen not only as a reflection of the different socio-economic contexts in which they are embedded, but also the diverse demands that Thai education is attempting to respond to. The final part of this chapter considers the competing aims of Thai education as projected in the National Education Act of 1999, which forms the basis of the ongoing education reform.

3.4 Education responses to the shifting context and ideologies

The current National Education Act (adopted in 1999 with amendments in 2002) is a product of the constitutional reform movement of the 1990s. It has been pointed out that the Act aims at a wide-ranging reform in the education sector, an attempt which also reflects compromises between different interests (Tan, 2007). The private sector wanted education to be more responsive to business and economic needs while education activists/critics of mainstream education called for a more holistic,

human-centered education that also responds to local needs. At the same time, academic and elite reformers wanted structural reform as a prerequisite to learning reform while permanent bureaucrats were of the view that learning reform could be carried out through the existing apparatus (ibid). As a result, from a structural and operational perspective the education reform promises education for all, the participation of all sectors of society in the provision of education; quality learning based on child-centered learning reform, revitalization of local wisdom and a more locally relevant curriculum, improved quality of teachers; decentralization of education administration as well as a system of educational standards, quality assurance and authentic assessment (Jungck, 2003). In this respect, Jungck (2003) noted that education reform brings together two diverging themes. On the one hand, the National Education Act envisions a democratizing structure and mode of operation with devolved power, local participation and curricula and student-centered learning. On the other hand however, the Act demands a more tightly controlled system through standardization and quality assurance. However, Jungck (ibid) suggested that such seemingly contradictory policies are not uncommon given the fact that some forms of centralized control are needed to ensure quality of an otherwise diversified system (p. 32). Nevertheless, she acknowledged the dilemma of a reform with divergent directions: the democratizing potential of a decentralized system requires innovation and nurturing which would be difficult to realize under a system of standardization and performance-based management.

Similarly, the aim of education as stipulated in the National Education Act is also vast, reflecting competing demands on the education system and compromises made.

> "Education shall aim at the full development of the Thai people in all aspects: physical and mental health; intellect; knowledge; morality; integrity; and desirable way of life so as to be able to live in harmony with other people."
>
> "The learning process shall aim at inculcating sound awareness of politics; democratic system of government under a constitutional monarchy; ability to protect and promote their rights, responsibilities, freedom, respect of the

> rule of law, equality, and human dignity; pride in Thai identity; ability to protect public and national interests; promotion of religion, art, national culture, sports, local wisdom, Thai wisdom and universal knowledge; inculcating ability to preserve natural resources and the environment; ability to earn a living; self-reliance; creativity; and acquiring thirst for knowledge and capability of self-learning on a continuous basis."
>
> (Sections 6 and 7, National Education Act, 1999)[21]

The above policy document suggests that while the aim of education and learning reflects the spirit of political reform and the emergence/greater awareness of the rights discourse and environmental problems, the concerns of policy makers over the preservation of national identity and Thai culture and tradition remains prominent. Furthermore, the Act also responds to the economic needs and the changing nature of global production which requires more independent workers who can adapt to new knowledge and technology through life-long learning. In short, the stated purpose of education reflects compromises between localist and liberal political stances: that the country could preserve its national identity and traditions while remaining economically competitive, the tension which has been articulated since the early 1990s (Witte, 2000; Annop and Mounier, 2010).

The tension between the opposing demands is to be reconciled through progressive pedagogical and curricular reform that boasts child-centered, experiential learning and a locally relevant curriculum. Hence, education reform policy is premised on what Annop and Mounier (2010) called "perennial objectives and post-modern means" (p. 83). Two scenarios are projected to result from the implementation of the education policy with such compromised aims and means. In the first short-term scenario, the pedagogical revolution will not take place and teaching and learning will continue to foster "moral and ethical values, social norms corresponding to the Thai understanding of individual good behavior, respect for elders and authorities, aesthetics and arts as a route to happiness, submission to existing norms and relationships as well as prevailing knowledge, and crafts and skills

[21] This English translation of the Act is published by the Office of the National Education Commission (undated). http://www.onesqa.or.th/en/publication/nation_edbook.pdf

that are useful for the community" (ibid: 85). Under this scenario, teachers fail to cope with the contradictory objectives and means of education. They cannot embrace and deliver the new pedagogical approach having been professionally and culturally embedded in hierarchical social relations. At the same time, students – particularly those from poor social backgrounds – continue their passive way of learning which has been encouraged by their own environment. As for the second scenario which is expected to happen in medium and long term, Annop and Mounier see that private interests will drive the direction of education. If education reform fails to deliver the promised outcome of quality education, the elite and the middle-class will seek to build their own education system that can respond to their needs – a trend that is already taking place. The result will be a partitioned education system serving different social groups and weakened power of the state to forge national identity and cohesion. This is the scenario which Annop and Mounier see most likely to take place (Annop and Mounier, 2010: 87-88).

The projections above provide a fertile ground on which questions of the possibility of democratic and social justice education can be raised, that is, what kinds of citizens are being constructed in the context of shifting/conflicting ideologies? Will the traditional or perennial objectives of education necessarily be challenged with the adoption of progressive and post-modern means of education? And to what extent can a progressive pedagogy and curriculum foster learning for democracy and social justice? The answers to these questions will be explored in the next chapters by investigating the working of two Thai schools.

CHAPTER IV
LEARNING FOR DEMOCRACY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN AN UNEQUAL SOCIETY: THE POSSIBILITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY

The previous chapter discussed the larger context in which Thai schools operate, pointing to the fact that there are diverging economic, political and cultural ideologies in Thai society. This chapter and the next will examine the ways the two schools under study, which are embedded in different socio-economic contexts and educational philosophies, function within this dynamic and the implications this has on education for democratic citizenship and social justice. It is argued that despite following the same national education curriculum, the two schools have adopted rather different curricula and pedagogical practices as well as school cultures which have contributed to a differentiated citizenship construction.

As will be illustrated in this and the following chapter, while the alternative private school has adopted an innovative formal school curriculum and progressive pedagogical approach, the democratic public school follows a more conventional curriculum and pedagogical practice. It will be evident that educational practices in the private alternative school are the product of a mix of a localist development vision, reconstructive Buddhism, a child-centered educational philosophy and a focus on teaching skills which are deemed desirable for the 21st century global economy and society. While such a mixture reflects the school's own educational philosophy, it also responds tothe goals and aspirations of Thai education reform, as reflected in the National Education Act of 1999, to preserve national identity, Thai culture and traditions while also producing creative and independent entrepreneurs who can compete in the global economy. By contrast, the curricular program and pedagogical approach followed by the public school, despite being recognized as a democratic school, reflects a more conventional goal of Thai education drawn on conservative religious and political ideologies aiming to develop

morally good persons and disciplined citizens while producing an efficient and reliable workforce for the local economy. Such differences, to a large extent, reflect the unequal socio-economic contexts in which each school is embedded, which in turn influence the ways the schools respond to or negotiate the varying ideologies and demands that inform the goals of the ongoing education reform. The ways in which citizenship construction or citizenship learning take place will be explored through the formal school curricula and teaching as well as through school routines, systems and structures.

This chapter focuses on formal curricular and pedagogical approaches adopted by the two schools. Drawing on the principles of democratic and social justice education including equity, activism and social literacy, this chapter argues that thethematic and inquiry-based curriculum and pedagogical approach grounded on localism ideology adopted by the private alternative school, while serving to develop 21st century skills, can foster social literacy, critical thinking skills and a sense of activism which are important ingredients for social justice learning and democratic citizenship (Ayers, et al., 2009). This is in contrast with the public school that subscribes to a traditional curricular and pedagogical approach that is subject-based and teacher-centered. Although activity-based learning has also been promoted in this school, it tends to emphasize conformity and the recreational aspect of activities at the expense of developing critical inquiry among learners. Such a curricular and pedagogical approach reflects a deficit-based teaching and learning which undermines the principles of social justice and democratic education. At the same time, localism ideology has become a tool for preparing students for the local economy and a sufficient livelihood.

Before turning to the case study schools, it is pertinent to briefly survey the diverse contexts of Thai schools and to understand where the two schools under this study are located within this continuum.

4.1 The diverse contexts of Thai education and schools

The last few decades have seen education and schools in Thailand becoming more diverse than ever before. The National Education Act (1999) and its

Amendment (2002) recognize formal, non-formal and informal education. In the formal education system, in which the majority of students are enrolled, there are different types of schools which can be categorized according to the schools' formal affiliation. These include the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC), the Bangkok Metropolitan Authority, the Border Patrol Police, Local Administrative Offices and the Private Education Association. All these schools follow the National Education Curriculum but have also incorporated a school-based curriculum which allows them some flexibility in adopting different education objectives/focuses and teaching-learning approaches.

Among the private schools, there has been a growing number of so-called alternative schools which have adopted both Eastern and Western learning approaches and principles. According to Pokpong and Sunthorn (2012), alternative schools differ from mainstream schools in four important areas including i) a focus on the values/philosophy of education beyond academic studies, ii) integrated teaching-learning innovation, iii) greater requirement of educational resources, and iv) visionary leadership (p.7-8). Yet, within the mainstream schools a number of special and differentiated educational programs have also been initiated in both public and private Thai schools since the 2000s. Encouraged by the Ministry of Education, these programs, which include Gifted Programs in Science and Mathematics, English/Mini-English Programs, World Class Schools and other initiatives, are intended to enhance the education standards of Thai schools, and to meet growing demands for a higher quality of education by parents and students. At the same time, there have been a growing number of international schools in Thailand since the early 1990s.[1] An increasing number of Thai students have been enrolled in different types of international schools whose numbers have jumped from 5 schools between the 1950s and 1990 to more than 160 by 2006/7 (Persaud, 2007: 5). Nevertheless, among these various types of local and international schools in Thailand, small and medium-sized public Thai schools are largest in number.[2] In general, larger public schools can offer

[1] See Persaud, 2007 for a detailed discussion of international education in Thailand.

[2]According to figures provided by the Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC), there were 31,021 schools in 2013. About 49.6% of them were considered very small schools with less than 120 students. Schools with between 121-200 students accounted for 22% while those with between 201-499

special education programs and are known to provide better quality education as they can attract more resources.

On the one hand, the diversity in education establishments reflects the changing context as well as the varying interests and demands of individual learners, their families and their communities. Yet, on the other hand the differences in education provision can be seen as a reflection of not only the growing socio-economic inequalities but also widening civic inequality in Thai society. Although this study considers only schools in the formal education system, the two case study schools are illustrative of these disparities. Before discussing citizenship construction in both schools in the next chapters, the contexts of these schools are examined below.

Chaisri Secondary is a secondary public school located about 40 km from Bangkok. Founded in 1942 by a locally respected Buddhist monk, the school was a popular private school during its early years. According to the current school principal, some high-ranking police officials and politicians are graduates of the school and they still occasionally provide the school with financial and other support. Chaisri Secondary came under the administration of the Ministry of Education in 1979 and was relocated to its current location where it occupies a large space of about 20 rai. The school has apparently become less popular over the years as more secondary schools have been established in the same vicinity and the location of Chaisri Secondary is considered to be less convenient as it is not on a main road. These factors, according to the school principal, have contributed to a decline in student enrollment. There were almost 300 students and 25 teachers in the 2011-2012 Academic Year when this study took place.

According to the teachers, the students enrolled at the school nowadays come largely from families with lower socio-economic backgrounds. Their parents work in factories nearby or engage in petty trading. Many students apparently do not live with both of their parents. Some teachers at the school were of the view that students from poor families do not have good academic ability. They are also seen as lacking interest and enthusiasm in learning and engaging in school activities.

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students constituted another 20%. About 6.4% of schools were medium-sized schools with between 500-1499 students; and less than 3 % had more than 1500 students (www.bopp-obec.info/home/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/stat56/7-9.pdf)

However, as the school is considered a small-size school by the Ministry of Education's standard,[3] the teachers acknowledge that "the school does not have the choice of refusing admission to unwanted students" (Interview, Teacher J, 9.05.11). Indeed, some students enrolling at the school may face different challenges. According to the school records of 2008, about 83% of students leaving Mathayom 3 continued to the next education level (42% enrolled in the academic track of Mathayom 4 and 41% entered a vocational program). About 4% of the students opted for non-formal education and 13% quit studying and entered the labor force. Although students at Chaisri Secondary fare better than the national standard in terms of education opportunity,[4] the number of students leaving the education system at the end of compulsory education (Mathayom 3) is not small, reflecting the socioeconomic difficulties faced by their families.

The context of Chaisri Secondary is in contrast to that of the Rainbow School. The idea of starting the Rainbow School stemmed from the desire of a group of educated, middle-class parents who sought a new kind of education that would be more suitable for the physical and mental development of children and young persons. These parents were dissatisfied with mainstream education that emphasized rote learning and the disconnection between the teaching content and the real life experience of students. However, it took the determination of one woman who stood up to all the challenges of starting a new school that the Rainbow School was finally brought into existence. As a mother, the founder of the Rainbow School had developed an interest in learning and education through interaction with her children, including the efforts to help her autistic son to learn. She came to realize that each child has a unique way of learning and thus schools need to consider the differentiated character/natures of their students. As a result, the pedagogical approach of the Rainbow School draws on different models and theories of learning which have been and continue to be trialed and tested. Since the beginning of the school's operations

[3] The Ministry classifies secondary schools with fewer than 500 students as small. The number of students enrolled in the school has implications for budget al.location and the assignment of administrative positions for the school.

[4]According to national statistics, the retention rate of students in Mathayom 4 and vocational education was 68.4% in academic year 2007 (based on 100% enrollment in Primary 1 in cohort year 1998) (OEC, 2010).

however, experiential and hands-on learning has been an integral part of the educational process at the Rainbow School.

The birth of the Rainbow School also coincided with the growth of the alternative education movement which played an important role in the adoption of the 1997 Constitution and the subsequent National Education Act of 1999 which marked the beginning of the current era of education reform. Thus, when the school was opened in 1997 the small group of students who enrolled were largely children of educated middle-class parentsand those with a supposedly progressive vision who have supported education reform. Since then, the school has continued to attract students from middle and upper socio-economic backgrounds. At the time of this research, there were about 375 students and 50 teachers in the secondary school section. Like other private schools, the Rainbow School has its own process of admitting new students. Generally, students enroll at the kindergarten level and stay on until they complete secondary education although there are those who have left the school in between or have enrolled at the primary or secondary levels. Unlike at Chaisri Secondary, all of the students who completed Mathayom 3 and Mathayom 6 from the Rainbow School have continued their education at the next level, at home or abroad.

Despite the different school contexts, both schools follow the National Curriculum and offer small class sizes.[5] Yet, the visions and missions of the two schools are rather distinct. Chaisri Secondary's motto is "Excelling in sports, focusing on discipline, promoting learning and adhering to moral values." This also reflects the perceptions of the teachers who see the students' working class family background as a cause of their weak learning capacity as well as their lack of responsibility and discipline. Thus, teachers at Chaisri Secondary have generally developed lower expectations of the student's academic achievement and tend to place a greater emphasis on instilling responsibility and discipline. Students are expected to be good persons and to become good citizens who will be responsible and law-abiding. This is somewhat different from the vision of the Rainbow School where the founder of the school and her teachers expect their students to become citizens who will possess not

[5] At the Rainbow School, there are about 25 students per class; and at Chaisri Secondary the average class size is about 30 students (with exception of M3/1 with 38 students, and M4 with 46 students).

only self-awareness but also awareness about others. They are also expected to become leaders in society (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). The next section discusses in detail the way in which this alternative private schoolgoes about designing its formal curricular and pedagogical approach that carries a transformative possibility.

4.2 Curriculum design and pedagogical approach: a transformative possibility

> "Ultimately, the aim of education at the Rainbow School is to prepare young people to be able to rely on themselves and to tackle problems that they will face. This is done through cultivation of self-awareness and social awareness" (School publication. Author's translation).

The philosophical and educational aim of the Rainbow School stated here has been supported by the particular design of the school's curriculum and pedagogical approach which is distinct from that in most regular Thai schools in at least three important ways. First, while following the National Education Curriculum, the school has its own consideration for knowledge selection which recognizes and values knowledge beyond what Apple (2004) called 'high status' knowledge and that which is geared toward high-stake testing. Unlike other well-known schools that emphasize academic excellence in mathematics and science– the two subject areas which are considered to be macro-economically more beneficial and hence have received greater attention in the ongoing education reform, at the Rainbow School, social studies – a subject area where citizenship education is formally situated – is recognized as having an important status. Knowledge which the school deems as important includes what is drawn from Thai traditions and culture as well as the one embedded in localism ideology. Thus, the school's curriculum content has focused on several localism themes. Furthermore, along with an emphasis on local knowledge, the school considers teaching skills for 21st century global citizens as a crucial aspect of its education. The development of such knowledge and skills is carried out through the second distinctive feature of the school's curriculum and pedagogy, and its child-centered and inquiry-based approach While this pedagogical approach can be seen as

responding to the development of skills deemed desirable for the idea-based economy, the school's curriculum, which is organized around local and other thematic areas that are relevant to the student's real life and the larger societal context, can also be positive for democratic and social justice learning (Beane and Apple, 2007). As will be illustrated in this chapter, the thematic and inquiry-based curricular and learning approach has allowed both teachers and students to engage in a learning process that involves the practices of problem posing, critical reflection and social action – a pedagogy which also underpins social justice education (Cerecer et al., 2010).

Finally, unlike in most regular schools, teachers at the Rainbow School play an active role in developing their curriculum and assessment methods. The teachers create their own teaching plans or class "road map,"[6] invoking their own curiosity and interest in the subject matter. This curriculum and pedagogical approach has been adopted by the Rainbow School in order to enable the students to become "wholesome human beings," reflecting what the Thai education reform also wishes to accomplish. The details of how the different aspects of this approach are implemented and how they can facilitate the development of democratic and social justice-oriented citizenship are discussed below.

4.2.1 Laying out 'important' knowledge: knowing oneself and society

As pointed out earlier, the Rainbow School considers important knowledge to be beyond subjects which are believed to contribute more directly to national economic development and which are counted as priorities in national and international curricula and standardized testing. Instead of a focus on mathematics, science and English language, the school promotes social studies, Thai language, and science as its core subjects. According to senior teachers, social studies, scienceand Thai language were given special consideration because they can be linked into specific issues/themes while subjects such as mathematics and English are perceived to be skill-based subjects (Interview, Teacher B, 3.05.12). Following this concept, the school runs three instead of two terms per year as practiced in regular Thai schools in order to allow students to focus on one of the three core subjects in each term and to

[6] This is the term used at the school. The class road map includes detailed teaching-learning content and process as well as assessment methods during each step of the learning.

develop an in-depth understanding and knowledge of particular issues or topics. However, the details of the system have been adjusted over the years since studying one core subject each term did not seem to be suitable to prepare students in Mathayom 3 who wanted to take examinations to enter Mathayom 4 at another school (Interview, Teacher E, 10.08.11). Nonetheless, the school has maintained its focus on the three core subjects and the three-term arrangement until today.

Teaching and learning in the three main subjects have involved various themes relating to Thailand and have included numerous field visits by students and teachers to different communities and areas in the country. While exposing students to different places and communities in Thailand is logical for the school's hands-on learning approach, learning about local communities also reflects an important value held by the school's founder that is embedded in the localism development ideology which sees communities and local knowledge as well as a heightened sense of Thai nationalism as a means to cope with the forces of globalization. According to a senior teacher, "[the school's founder] wanted students to appreciate the fact that they are lucky to be Thai and to be born in this land of abundance…" (Interview, Teacher B, 3.05.12). Thus, learning content in key subject areas has evolved around the theme of traditional knowledge as well as changes in Thai society which have accompanied growth-centered economic development policies. In the early years of the school, such themes focused on local wisdom relating to basic necessities in life including food, shelter/housing, clothing and medicines. Although these themes have changed at different times, the focus on knowledge about Thailand and its resources has been more or less maintained throughout the years. In this respect, the teaching plans or road maps discussed below are instructive of what the school and teachers consider as 'official' or 'important knowledge' to be included in the school's curriculum. However, since citizenship learning is formally located within the 'Social Studies Learning Strand' of the National Education Curriculum, the road maps highlighted here are drawn from this strand.[7]

In Academic Year 2011 when this research took place, the theme for social studies for Mathayom 1 was "Bangkok… our home". The sub-themes for each of the

[7] Subjects belonging to the Social Studies strand are1) civic duties and culture, 2) economics, 3) geography, 4) history and 5) religion.

three terms included "wellness for Bangkokians in the 21st century", "travel through and learning about Bangkok" and "Bangkok…a historical city". In the first term, students were supposed to learn about the negative and positive factors which affect the wellbeing of people living in Bangkok and to be conscious of the impact of consumerism and the food industry. It is expected that as students become aware, they will be able to draw on positive examples to ensure wellness for themselves and their families. In the second term, students were expected to learn about different aspects of Bangkok such as its governance system, transportation/communications, arts and culture, tourism, economy and commercial system. They learned to travel through Bangkok on their own and learn about the infrastructural development of the city as well as the different places they visit. Finally, the teaching plan stated that "[students] will understand and become aware of the changes in city life and their impact so that they will not follow this trend but will be able to rely on themselves by learning from the royal projects initiated to solve Bangkok's problems…" (Class road map M1. Author's translation). In the third term, the teacher intended to have the students explore the historical development of Bangkok in order for them to appreciate the roots and civilization of the city so that they can also help take care of the place. In this respect, the focus on learning in-depth about the country's capital city corresponds with the aim of the school's curriculum to enable its students to become aware of their own immediate surroundings so that they will, as knowledgeable citizens, take ownership of and be able to determine the direction of the city's future development (ibid). The emphasis on Bangkok also reflects the background of the majority of students at the school.

From the focus on Bangkok, students in Mathayom 2 moved on to learn about the 'backbone of the nation'[8] in their social studies class. The sub-theme for the first term was entitled "Rice crisis and farmers' crisis". The students had to research into the history of rice culture in Thailand, live with farmers in rural villages, and discuss rice cultivation methods and the geography of rice cultivation. In the end, students explored the question posed by the teacher: "why do farmers remain poor despite the increasing price of rice?" They were to research into and discuss the

[8] This term refers to farmers.

economy of rice cultivation and production including different agricultural policies and practices affecting rice farmers. By encouraging students to be exposed to rural communities and to recognize the importance of rice cultivation as a traditional mainstay of the country, the curriculum reflects the localism development ideology adopted by the school. At the same time, the teacher also helped students to develop research and critical thinking skills by asking them to think more critically about the situation of Thai farmers and the relationship with the larger economic context. Apparently, the thematic focus on rice and farmers has been so popular among the students that some of them have continued to engage in this topic after the end of the school term. For the second term, the focus shifted to the historical theme of Ayutthaya – capital of the Thai kingdom from the 16th to 18th centuries. Aside from gaining factual knowledge on the political history of the kingdom, the teacher included in her road map the aim for the students to be able to analyze different sets of historical information and to understand factors causing political changes in different periods. With regard to learning about the historical conflict with Myanmar/Burma, a point which has been made sensational and can provoke a nationalist feeling among Thais until today,[9] the teacher wanted her students to become more aware of the myths and biases concerning this conflict and to be more open-minded when studying history. In the third term, the learning theme continued to be on Ayutthaya but the focus shifted toward economic and geographical aspects of the kingdom.

In Mathayom 3, the formal school curriculum content continued to draw on localism development discourse. However, the focus shifted from localism toward its opposing ideology by making the impacts of growth-centered development policy and the forces of globalization the core learning theme. In the first term, the thematic title indicated in the road map was “How to live in the world of consumerism”. The teaching plan stated that students would learn about overconsumption through investigating the use and production of plastic items. They would also learn about basic economic concepts and industrial production through a field visit to a plastic

[9] The Kingdom of Ayutthaya and Myanmar waged many wars over the 400 years that Ayutthaya flourished. The Burman King defeated Ayutthaya in major battles twice, and the second defeat brought an end to the Kingdom. Many older generation Thais have learnt from legends, school history books, movies and other sources about the brutality of the Burmese during the many battles.

factory. In addition, they would discuss the country's economic development policy and make a visit to an industrial estate on the east coast of Thailand to learn about the impacts of industry and the geography of the east coast. Although the road maps for the second and the third terms were not available, I learnt from the social studies teacher in charge that in the second term she wanted her students to learn about the Industrial Revolution and its impact on the world. The aim was for them to understand about the forces of globalization and to realize that they are living in a neo-colonial period. In the third term, although there was going to be some continuity in the same thematic direction, this had to change as the social study teacher had resigned. The thematic focus shifted to history of Southeast Asia since this is an area of expertise of the new social studies teacher who has taken over teaching responsibility. In any case, the new focus was not completely inappropriate because the history of Southeast Asia is a learning area in the standard social studies curriculum at the national level.

The contents of the school curriculum as discussed above clearly indicate that at the Rainbow School, important knowledge is centered on traditional ways of Thai life and the changes that have accompanied modernization and economic development. As mentioned earlier, while the specific thematic topics may have changed from year to year depending on the interest of the teachers and societal context of the time, the school curriculum continues to emphasize knowledge about Thailand. Recently, there has been even greater attention and more formal recognition given to learning about Thailand and developing the students'competence as Thai citizens. Beginning in 2012 academic year, students in all the lower secondary level classes will be learning more systematically about the country in their social studies and Thai language classes, starting from the focus on Bangkok in Mathayom 1, on the Central Plains in Mathayom 2 and finally on the other three regions – the Northeast, the North and the South in Mathayom 3. The school's founder envisions that learning about Thailand will enable the students to better understand their own country from the past to the present. This focus is made in light of ASEAN economic integration that is fast approaching and the view that "we need to know about ourselves before knowing about others" (Fieldnotes, 19.04.12).

Along with the emphasis on knowledge about Thailand and its history, the school also attaches great importance to preparing students for life in the 21st century. According to the vice principal of the secondary school section, the curriculum design for the lower secondary school as described above was intended to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to live in the world loaded with information. The aim of the curricular and pedagogical approach of the school, as stated in a school's document, is toward developing "world citizens who have strength, endurance, the ability to think, awareness and creativity" (Internal school document. Author's translation). Part of the teaching-learning took place through a "project-based learning" concept which intends to allow students to investigate real 21st century issues and develop a set of skills including critical thinking, presentation and communication, negotiation and conflict resolution as well as problem solving (ibid). The section below illustrates how a combination of the focus on localism themes and the use of an inquiry/project-based and self-directed pedagogical approach founded on a child-centered philosophy at the Rainbow School has enabled the development of these skills while also inculcating social literacy and a sense of activism among the learners.

4.2.2 Inquiry-based learning: developing 21st century skills and cultivating social literacy and activism

The inquiry- and project-based learning approach adopted by the Rainbow School involves four basic steps of i) generating some interest in an issue or a problem among the students, ii) allowing them to investigate that issue/problem, iii) students organize and synthesize the information collected and iv) creating a platform to present their learning to their peers and other members of the school community. This last step usually takes place through series of school-wide term-end presentations. In most cases, the students are encouraged to come up with recommendations to address the problems or the issues they have studied. An example of how this learning approach is carried out can be seen through a project by a Mathayom 3 class which I observed.[10]

[10] The observation of this project took place during the first school term of 2011, i.e. from the end of June to August.

As part of their social studies project, the students were asked to think about a problem in their immediate surroundings, that is, in the school. They started looking into the traffic problem in the school by making observations and interviewing people. They discussed among themselves and identified different factors causing traffic jams in the vicinity of the school and in the school itself. After organizing and synthesizing their data, students put their findings on a school display board at the end of the school term. They also organized a small forum to present their findings and invited concerned actors to speak at the event. In coming up with recommendations, the students invited suggestions from parents and other members of the school community and shared these on the display board (Fieldnotes, 21.07.11). Through this kind of inquiry-and project-based learning approach, aside from developing basic skills in research, organizing and presenting information, students in the lower secondary level also learnt to collaborate while practicing problem solving and critical thinking skills by working together and being exposed to an issue of real concern. Such skills are not only desirable for the idea-based economy, but they are also important for democratic and citizenship learning (Kahne and Westheimer, 2003). Furthermore, this learning approach is also closely linked to the kind practice in critical education that revolves around problem-posing, critical reflection and social action (Cerecer et al., 2010: 149). Concerning the latter, although this group of students may not have developed a strong sense of activism after their learning process, there are cases where the students became so involved in the issue they became exposed to or with the people they met during the course of their project or field study that their engagement was taken beyond the limit of their class requirements and school time.

Such is the case with another group of Mathayom 3 students who were taken on a field study to meet an organic rice farmer in the province of Yasothon as part of their social studies class during the previous school year.[11] According to the teacher responsible for this class, the students were very impressed with the farmer's philosophical approach toward organic farming that reflects the ideals of the

[11]Yasothon Province is located in the Northeastern part of Thailand, approximately 550 kilometers from Bangkok. The school organized the trip for this group of students during academic year 2010 when they were in Mathayom 2.

sufficiency economy and sustainable living. After they returned from the field trip, the students set up an organic rice club at the school with the help of some teachers. They arranged to get some organic rice from this farmer to sell to parents and other members at the school. The students also collected some money and made another trip to visit the farmer during the following school break. Although there was a time when the rice club faced the possibility of being closed down due to low student enrollment, with some stimulation from the teacher the core club members were able to re-energize their peers' spirits and have kept the club active (Interview, Teacher C, 13.07.11). Furthermore, the students have been encouraged and provided with the opportunity to take social action. During the period of this research, the rice club was organizing a fundraising event at the school, raising about 30,000 baht to support a local rice genetic conservation project initiated by the farmer. The core club members also invited the farmer to give a talk on organic rice farming and his rice genetic conservation project at the school during the fundraising event. This event generated a renewed interest in the topic among other club members while also raising a greater awareness about organic farming among the larger school community (Fieldnotes, 27.06.11).

It is important to note that developing social literacy and activism through experiential and community-based learning as in the case above was not the main initial purpose of education at the Rainbow School. Such aims have grown organically as a result of the school's pedagogical innovation and the students' engagement with local communities. According to a senior Social Studies teacher who has been at the school for 11 years, the initial purpose of community-based learning was to allow students to see things with their own eyes rather than learning from textbooks. However, as both students and teachers became more connected to the communities and issues they were exposed to, there emerged a new consciousness. This teacher explained that "in the beginning, the school wanted students to have awareness about things (the environment) around them, meaning that they can see and understand changes in society from both positive and negative sides. They should see what is to be valued. Later we felt that it was not enough for students just to have awareness about the changes, but we want them to realize that the way they live their lives in the city is having an impact on the lives of those in rural areas. Then, they

should also be able to depend on themselves and also do something for the society" (Interview, Teacher B, 1.07.11).

As the school's education goal of doing service to society became clearer over the years, developing environmental and social literacy and a sense of activism has also intensified, especially as students move onto the upper secondary level. Development of social and environmental awareness for students in Mathtayom 4 and 5 at the Rainbow School takes place through their exploration of the country by way of what the school calls "self-directed learning." Students who choose to focus their studies in the Social Studies track[12] have the opportunity to engage quite intensively in learning about communities and exploring issues under the broad thematic unit entitled "Knowing every patch of grass in Thailand" or *ruuchakmueangthai thukyomya.* The self-directed learning approach practiced at the Rainbow School contains elements similar to programs of education for democratic citizenship as observed by Kahne and Westheimer (2003). According to these scholars, important pedagogical and curricular strategies for supporting democratic citizenship require creating civic commitment among students while helping them to develop civic capacity and connection in the learning process. To build a civic commitment, students need first to be exposed to social issues or problems that are controversial or require attention before being given the opportunity to have a positive experience in engaging with the community on the issues. At the same time, they should be supported to develop skills in research, designing surveys, facilitating meetings and public speaking as well as connecting with other groups who are doing similar work and with those who can be their role models (Kahne and Westheimer, 2003: 61-64).

During the time of this research, Mathayom 5 students in the Social Studies track took up a project looking at the impacts of development projects on local communities – an important social justice issue in Thailand that often involves opposing viewpoints between various stakeholders. The students came to learn about

[12] In the Thai education system, students in the upper secondary level are required to choose the area of focus for their studies. In general, there are three tracks including Sciences, Mathematics, and Arts & Languages.

the "Thailand National Spatial Development Plan 2600"[13] – a country land use plan designating different parts of Thailand into different land use zones over the next 50 years while doing background studies on each of the geographical regions of the country to learn about its resource base, local livelihoods and culture. With their teacher's guidance, the students studied relevant documents to better understand the context and details of the Plan and used this information to also analyze the country's development direction. They noticed that certain areas of the country have been designated as "major industrial development zones" and this has prompted them to start asking questions about the impact of this Plan on local communities. At the same time, the students were keen to know whether or not local people are aware of this National Spatial Development Plan.

In order to gain further information, the teacher helped them organize a field visits to a community in an eastern province on the bank of the Bang Pakong River, one of the areas designated as a major industrial development zone. The students carried out field research on an industrial estate already established in this province and identified a number of issues of concern including the environmental impact created by the industry. They also found out through a survey which they conducted that 95% of the country's general population is not aware of this National Spatial Development Plan. Equipped with this information, the students organized a forum at the end of the first term to present the findings from their field research and from the survey. The forum was attended by students from other classes, parents, teachers and people from the concerned communities. They also invited some key actors and stakeholders including representatives from the Department of Public Works and Town & Country Planning, community representatives and academics to join the discussion. The students made their presentations on the importance of the Bang Pakong River Basin and the impacts caused by industrial development in the area. At the same time, they also presented the perspective from the business side about the prospect of economic growth derived from industrial development. After the presentations, two students facilitated a panel discussion on the topic which became rather heated as the speakers from the state agency may have felt they were

[13] The year 2600 represents the Buddhist Era (B.E.) which is equivalent to the year 2057 A.D. This self-directed learning project took place in the year 2554 B.E. or 2011 A.D.

being attacked. However, all ended well and the students were encouraged to take on this project a step further which they did during the second term.

The project in the second and third terms took student's citizenship learning through their civic engagement onto the next level. The teacher linked up the students with a few academic and policy people involving in spatial planning who suggested that they look into the country's southern development project known as Southern Seaboard. The students learned about the actual and potential impact of this project on local communities and started to ask two important questions: "Can spatial planning help to protect the communities?" and, "How can students and young people take part in determining the country's development direction?" To help them gain perspective, the students attended a seminar on spatial planning. They also went on field studies to a southern community to find out from local people about the impact of a steel plant on the local community and the environment as well as to learn how local people can take an active role in the process of developing a spatial plan. During this process, the students documented what they have learned while also trying to analyze the information gained. Through their connection with the academic and policy activists, the students took up the challenge of developing a Health Impact Assessment report (HIA) which is a constitutional requirement prior to implementation of any development project. The students were also able to get funding support from the Office of the National Health Committee to prepare this report which they completed at the end of their school year in the third term. To conclude the project, the students organized a forum entitled "Participation of civil society, especially youth" to share their findings from the field studies and to present the HIA report containing facts, figures and information relating to local livelihoods (agriculture and fishery) and the development of the steel industry in the area. The report also highlights voices and actions by local people to engage in the area planning process and exposes how the official spatial planning process lacks effective and meaningful participation by local communities.

It is evident that through the inquiry-based and self-directed learning approach, students at the Rainbow School are provided with the opportunity to develop many important skills which will put them ahead of others in their future study and work. Asking questions about the impact of a development plan,

researching, assessing and analyzing information requires the ability to think critically. Moreover, throughout the entire school year that they worked on the project, the students learned to collaborate, network, overcome conflicts and solve different kinds of problems that arose. Critical thinking, teamwork, network building, problem solving and conflict resolution are important skills for the new economy that prizes creativity, innovation and collaboration (Kenney, 2008a). At the same time, these skills are necessary for the development of democratic citizens (Kahne and Westheimer, 2003). Furthermore, the students developed a greater sense of social and environmental justice through their learning about the country's development plan and their exposure to local communities. The heightened awareness of the problem and the critical outlook toward the causes of the problem is reflected in a conversation I had with three students who were part of this learning process.

> R: So, what did you learn from this project?
> S1: Both areas that we studied are the country's important food hubs. If they disappear we will have to find food from other sources which may not be available. If the tuna fish are gone from here [Bang Pakong River], the ones at Mae Klong [River] will be gone too because they are connected.
> S2: We found out that there are a number of foreign companies involved in the business. If they come to take over our food hub and there is a food or energy crisis in the future where would we get our food? Other countries probably won't sell us their food. Why should we risk having foreigners taking our land to make money? I guess we don't want to be the world's toilet but rather [we want to be] the world's kitchen!

While the comments above pointed at some external factors creating the problems for Thailand, the students also had interesting responses to my question on how they may be part of the problem or of the solution:

> S1: We are probably both. We consume a lot from the industrial sector. But I think there should be some consideration for what the country has

lost. Perhaps we need to have a balance by having only a moderate level of industrial development.

S2: The industry expands because of people's overconsumption. If we can limit our consumption, then [the industry] probably won't need to expand more than necessary.

S3: We have to begin with ourselves by changing the way we consume.

R: How about at the structural level? How would you address the problem?

S3: Perhaps we can spread information… as we did with the National Spatial Development Plan. We can also do the same about this problem.

The views expressed by the students above clearly reflect the localism development knowledge and values which the school has tried to promote, i.e. that the problem of resource depletion and unsustainable development practices in Thailand is caused by the country's development direction as well as global economic forces that lead to overconsumption. As individuals, students see that it is also their responsibility to alter their consumption patterns to be more moderate. At the same time, being exposed to and becoming engaged in development issues like this has influenced some students to want to focus their university education and their future career for a social cause. A Mathayom 5 student talked about how being exposed to social, economic and human rights issues through projects like the one described above has made him change his mind from studying in the Science track to focus on the Social Studies track. He also mentioned that he wanted to go on studying environmental economics after completing his final year at the school. Similarly, a student in Mathayom 6 told me that she wanted to become a journalist instead of going into theater study as she had initially planned. This was because as she learnt about different problems in Thailand, she started to realize the power of the media in pressurizing the government or in exposing issues to the public. This student recalled that "when I did a project on elephants I never knew that they [the forest rangers] work in a very risky situation. They work from their heart because they might not be getting their salary for 3-4 months and it's so little anyway, but they keep doing it. When there was news about elephants being hunted and that local forest officers may be

complicit, then I thought… OK maybe they are not very good people, but the conditions that they live and work in are very rough. No one talks about that. I think their voices should be heard more." (Interview, M6 student, 10.02.12)

In this respect, the thematic-based curriculum design and pedagogical approach grounded on real issues and problems has enabled students at the Rainbow School to develop a new awareness and consciousness as well as a body of knowledge that may not be found in mainstream education which relies on textbook-based learning. By focusing on different localism themes, students at the Rainbow School spend their time with farmers and villagers in small communities far away from the capital city exploring issues of rice farming, coastal ecosystems and the impacts of development projects instead of focusing on the latest information technology that has been on the agenda of much current education practice in Thailand. Not only has such a learning approach enabled the students to develop knowledge and skills for the 21st century, but it has also engaged the students to become agents of social change. As such, although learning for social justice and democratic citizenship was not the intended purpose of education at the Rainbow School, through the learning approach which exposes students to real issues and problems and thus helping them to develop social literacy and a sense of activism, participatory and justice-oriented citizenship can take root (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004, Ayers, et al., 2009). The experience at the Rainbow School also suggests that exploring and engaging in development issues and their uneven effects can be a crucial dimension of education for democracy and social justice in the context of Thailand.

The curriculum and pedagogical approach discussed above is in direct contrast with the one followed by Chaisri Secondary. Before discussing the latter, the role of teachers in facilitating an inquiry-based learning at the Rainbow School will be briefly examined.

4.2.3 Teachers as co-constructors of democratic citizens

At the Rainbow School, teachers are considered the core of the school. They are expected to be the "*kalyananamitra*" or "true friend" to their students. The teachers are to play an important role in helping the students to acquire knowledge,

values and skills that are relevant not only for academic purposes, but also for the student's real life. In order to do this, the teachers themselves are required to have not only the knowledge and skills necessary to do this job, but also certain beliefs and outlook that are in line with that of the school's unconventional approach and practices. As such, it is found that the majority of teachers in the secondary school section of the Rainbow School did not have formal training in the field of education except those teaching science and mathematics. The section's vice principal noted that she found those without formal training to be more adaptable to the school's approach as they do not have a fixed idea about teaching-learning methods. Since the school's pedagogical approach is based on discovery and self-directed learning, teachers are not expected to know everything and, as noted by the vice principal "they can learn together with the students" (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). However, it is clear that teachers at the Rainbow School would need to pay attention to different needs and particularities of their students while guiding them through their learning and discoveries.

Experienced teachers seem to be able to do this quite naturally as with the case of Teacher B who has been with the school for 11 years and now teaches social studies in Mathayom 5. From the beginning of the first semester when I began observing her class and talking to her informally, she would explain to me the different characteristics and qualities of each student, something she said is very important for the teacher to know in order to help them learn and grow according to their ability and potential. For Teacher B, self-directed learning does not mean letting the students learn and do everything by themselves. Students do need guidance, tools and perspectives which the teacher provides (Interview, 21.07.11). Thus, she guides the students, equips them with some knowledge and tools and lets them work. From time to time, she checks in with the students to monitor their progress and to ensure that they are working on track. The professional way in which Teacher B works with her students was evident when a group of students came to discuss the progress of their assignment with her in a session which I was able to join. During this session which lasted over one hour, the students gave her updates on what they have done and what they think they need to do further. She probed them to help them think through important issues. Toward the end, Teacher B showed her students an example of a

planning sheet and encouraged them to carry out their plan and to come toher if they faced any problems (Fieldnotes, 21.07.11).

As teachers at the Rainbow School are expected to be competent in facilitating students' learning in a way that would enable the them to construct their own knowledge, the teachers themselves are also given a level of autonomy and control over curriculum development, planning and teaching. This process can be seen as reflecting a democratic practice which, as Beane and Apple (2007) contended, should enable the teachers "to extenda democratic way of life to young people" (p.21). According to the vice principal of the secondary school section, "[the school's founder] wants everyone to have a sense of ownership. So, we will sit down and share ideas on every issue. The teachers will come up with their own lesson plans. They feel a sense of ownership… they will not be absent (from teaching/work) because if someone is absent then nobody can replace them" (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). Indeed, teachers who have spent a number of years at the school mentioned that they appreciate the space provided by the school for them to explore and experiment with ideas in developing the learning process. As one longtime teacher noted, "I enjoy doing this …devising teaching plans … it's always challenging. They (the administrators) let the teachers help solve the problems, to propose something and to try it out. This is how we can learn all the time" (Interview, Teacher C, 16.01.12). Similarly, another long-serving teacher talked about how she felt that she has been given a lot of space by the school's founder to experiment: "I'm stubborn… and Ajarn (the school's founder) knows that. So, I won't do what people tell me to do. But when I raised some ideas, she told me to try them out. She gave me a lot of room to try things. She gave me opportunities… something I also do with my students… to let them go out and do things…" (Interview, Teacher B, 10.02.12).

However, while some teachers feel empowered by the space and freedom to explore new themes and develop their own teaching plans, there are those who find it more difficult to enjoy the kind of autonomy that has been given to them. This and other paradoxes of progressive schools are the subject of exploration in the next two chapters. The remainder of this chapter examines the curriculum and pedagogical practices at Chaisri Secondary, which, despite being recognized as a democratic school, is essentially a public Thai school that serves children from less privileged

backgrounds. Hence, its teaching and learning approach differ from the one practiced at the Rainbow School, with important implications for social justice and citizenship learning.

4.3 Deficit-based perspective and pedagogy of poverty: education for working class kids

As pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, there is a diversity of schools in Thailand which reflect not only the different needs and interests of individual learners and their families but also increasing disparity in the Thai education scene. As will be evident in the ensuing discussion, despite the efforts of the ongoing education reform in promoting child-centered and inquiry-based learning, schools like Chaisri Secondary, which serve students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, continue to follow conventional practices of a teacher-centered and memorization-based teaching and learning approach. Although extra-curricular activities have been promoted as part of the formal school curriculum, they tend to serve recreational purposes and the development of livelihood skills rather than fostering skills that are useful for the development of democratic citizenship. These different aspects of teaching and learning are discussed below.

4.3.1 School curriculum and classroom practices

According to the teachers, the school curriculum at Chaisri Secondary follows closely the National Education Curriculum. Teaching and learning in different subject areas follow conventional subject-based arrangements rather than being organized in an integrated way or involving issues in the larger societal context (see Appendix C for a sample class schedule). Furthermore, as the teachers consider the majority of the students not to be academically very capable, the school curriculum does not present the students with a challenging academic program or high quality learning. Some students who have experienced studying in other schools mentioned that the curriculum and teaching at Chaisri Secondary is easier than in some other schools. Others felt that the textbooks and classroom equipment are of poorer quality at Chaisri Secondary. One student remarked that “I feel like our curriculum is not

equal to other schools. I met someone from another school who looked at our textbooks and asked why we are so far behind" (FGD, M3/2, 26.09.11).

The classroom teaching and learning approach at Chaisri Secondary can be characterized as traditional, with a focus on teacher-centered and rote-based learning. During the many social studies classes which I observed, there was rarely group work or classroom discussion. Most of the time, it was the teacher speaking in front of the class, giving information on the subject matter to be learnt, with or without reference to school textbooks. The following classroom sessions for Mathayom 2's Buddhist studies and Mathayom 3's Geography illustrate the typical classroom atmosphere and the teaching approach used by the teachers.

At 9:30 a.m., students in Mathayom 2/1 began to enter the classroom and take their seats which were arranged in four rows with three to six desks per row. Two students can sit together at each desk, with all desks facing the blackboard in front of the classroom. A female teacher stood in front of the classroom waiting for all the students to get into the room. After making some remarks about students being late,[14] she began the roster call. Apparently, two out of twenty-seven students were absent. As the teacher began her lesson, she asked for a volunteer to stand up. There were some shouts of names and the teacher called the name of a female student. She then asked that student a question: "Where does morality come from?" The student paused and answered: "Buddha." The teacher commended her: "very good – you get one point." And she jotted something down on her roster sheet.

Afterward, the teacher asked the students to take out their notebooks while she herself turned the pages of a textbook and began to tell a story of the Buddha. This went on for about 10 minutes. I noticed that some students began to lose interest: some put their heads down on the table while others started chatting. Suddenly, the teacher started calling on some students to answer her questions which they could not do. Then she asked the class to nominate someone. A student shouted a name but the teacher immediately told the class that they should nominate someone who would be able to answer the questions and not to tease their friends. The teacher made some remarks about how teasing and making fun of others is bad behavior. Then she carried

[14]The official class time was from 9:20-10:10 hrs. However, students were late for class because the earlier class ended at 9:20 and they have to move to a different classroom.

on with her lecture on the life of the Buddha. However, over the next 15 minutes the teacher had to interrupt her lecture several times to address students who were disrupting the class by moving around or not paying attention to her talk. At 10:10 as the school bell rang signaling the end of class time, the teacher asked the students to do homework by answering the question "how can they use examples from the life of the Buddha to lead their own life?" (Classroom observation, 2.06.11)

A similar classroom atmosphere and teacher-centered approach was observed in the social studies class of Mathayom 3.

It was a Tuesday after lunch and students in Mathayom 3/2 were scheduled to have a social studies lesson. The learning topic for the day was apparently the voyages of different world explorers. The students walked into the classroom and sat down on the floor.[15]The teacher beganher class by giving a lecture on four well-known explorers namely Kublai Khan, Marco Polo, Vasco da Gama and Magellan. For about 30 minutes, the teacher described the routes taken by these explorers and the important places they discovered. At the start of her lecture, a few students were chatting. Then the teacher called their names and told them that they would have to write a report of what they learned today. In my opinion, this particular teacher was a good story-teller who can capture the attention of her audience by making the stories sound exciting and interesting with details that might not be in the textbook. For example, she told a story of how the Spaniard Magellan discovered an island that is known today as the Philippines and how the natives fought with the intruders who wanted to get hold of the spices available on the island.

Despite her ability to keep the students' attention, this teacher did not invite her students to raise questions or discuss any points. Moreover, toward the end of the lesson the teacher made some comments on the students' level of intelligence when one student tried to answer her question "What dessert did the Portuguese bring to Thailand?" When the student answered "khanompia,"[16] the teacher remarked: "if

[15]This classroom is designated as a "Buddhist Center" and "Democracy Learning Center." It has a different seating arrangement from other classrooms: there are 6-7 low tables in the room with no chairs and students are supposed to sit on the floor. The social studies teacher who is also responsible for the Democratic School project has her office in this room. Thus, she uses the space as a classroom to teach social studies classes.

[16] This is a kind of baked Chinese snack made of flour dough usually with different fillings.

(you) didn't say anything no one would know that you are stupid; now that you said it, everyone knows" (Classroom observation, 14.06.11). It was difficult to tell if the teacher made this comment jokingly. Regardless, while reflecting a certain attitude of the teacher, such a statement can also be detrimental to the positive self-development of the student.

Nieto (2004: 107) pointed out that the teaching approach which is termed the "pedagogy of poverty", centering around teachers giving factual information and directions and asking questions as illustrated above can be seen as a reflection of the teachers' assumption that the learning capacity of the students is low. For teachers at Chaisri Secondary, this assumption is associated with the students' unfavorable family background, reflecting deficit-based perspectives toward marginalized youth that are common in many educational settings (Gardner and Crockwell, 2006). Such perspectives, as noted by Gardner and Crockwell (2006: 11) "fail to incite or empower forms of democratic and social justice educational innovation." It is evident through classroom teaching that the teachers at Chaisri Secondary do not engage their students in collaborative learning, problem-solving and discussing socially-relevant issues which can enable the development of skills deemed important for democratic citizenship. Instead, the deficit-based perspectives adopted by the teachers have led them to place a greater emphasis on instilling responsibility and discipline – the subject which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Furthermore, despite the general perception that students are not academically strong, the school still makes some distinctions between better (smarter) and weaker students – the practice of academic tracking that, it has been argued, reflects inequitable and undemocratic educational practice (Nito, 2004).

At the lower secondary level, each grade is divided into two classrooms: Number One and Number Two. When students enter the first year of secondary school, those with better test scores will be put in Class Number One. One teacher noted that, "teaching and learning will not be so rigorous in Class Number Two. Teachers will just make sure that the students can read and write without going in depth into the subject. We have to focus on the good students since they are our face" (Interview, Teacher J, 2.06.11). It is important to point out here that while at the Rainbow School students in the same grade level are divided into three different

classes: One, Two and Three, this grouping was done randomly rather than based on academic criteria. At Chaisri Secondary, students in the upper secondary level are divided into the 'Science' and 'Arts' tracks. As there is a smaller number of students at the upper secondary level, students in the same grade level from both tracks learn together in common subjects such as Thai language and social studies, and they take separate lessons in their respective fields. It is generally recognized that students in the 'Science track' are the ones with higher academic ability.[17] A teacher at Chaisri Secondary also confirmed this by saying that students in the 'Science track' will go on to college while many of those in the 'Arts track' will be going to work in factories after graduation (Interview, Teacher J, 20.06.11).

Nieto (2004: 93) argues that tracking and labeling of students is "one of the most inequitable and, until recently, relatively undisputed practices in schools." She pointed to the effect of tracking on students' self-esteem, especially for those who are put in the "less capable" groups, or in some cases for those have "chosen" to be in study tracks which are perceived to lead to careers of lower value. In addition, contrary to the belief by many educators about the benefits of differentiated instruction, tracking and labeling as have generally been practiced in schools have not been shown to help weaker students to have greater access to academic support and other opportunities (Nieto, 2004: 95). In this respect, a study by Usanee and Srichai (2010) also found that schools in Thailand allocate more resources and attention to students who are identified as smarter, while those in the less capable groups are not given much support. As a result, although the students in the latter groups feel less pressurized academically, their learning outcomes tend to degenerate – a problem which tends to be more acute in schools with a large number of students.

At Chaisri Secondary however, although some level of academic tracking is practiced, the teachers are of the view that the majority of students are not academically very capable. An old time teacher remarked that "our students don't like academic stuff – meaning that their brain won't be happy when they have to study. But when they do some activities they are happy" (Interview, Teacher K, 14.07.11). As such, the teachers prefer to give more emphasis to activity-based learning

[17] In order to study in the 'Science track,' students are required to have a certain (higher) level of GPA (Grade Point Average) at the lower secondary level.

especially through so-called extra-curricular activities. This aspect of school curriculum and learning is examined below.

4.3.2 Extra-curricular activities and citizenship learning

The shift in learning approach from classroom-based toward a more active learning experience is considered part of the learning reform efforts integral to the ongoing education reform initiative in Thailand. Under the Education Act of 1999 (2001), schools nationwide have been encouraged to adopt more hands-on and activities-based learning in order to enable the development of problem solving and critical thinking skills on the part of learners. However, while learning at Chaisri Secondary has included a number of activities-based programs, the ways in which these programs have been implemented can raise some questions about their purposes as well as the effect on the development of desirable skills. For the activities which I was able to observe, there was a common emphasis on conformity, collectivity and following orders with little focus on developing individuality or critical thinking skills. The example of a one-day activity with the Department of Industrial Works that took place early in the first school term illustrates this point.

Officials from the Department of Industrial Works along with a facilitator team from a consulting company contracted by the Department came to the school to organize a workshop as part of the Department's project to raise environmental awareness of schools and communities along the Tha Chin River. About 65 students from Mathayom 3 classes of Chaisri Secondary and another nearby school representing communities along the river attended this workshop. The two schools were chosen to participate in this activity based on their proximity to factories and the river as well as on the schools' own interest. A teacher told me that many government agencies prefer to implement their projects at Chaisri Secondary because the school has a small number of students, which then allows the agencies to report near 100% participation. The space and facilities at the school also make it convenient for organizing activities.

The workshop with the Department of Industrial Works started off with a series of ice-breaking and group formation activities. The facilitator tried to capture the attention of his teenage audience. He ordered the students to clap their hands in

unison, starting from one clap to more than 10 claps. It took a few rounds to get the group to clap to the satisfaction of the facilitator. Then the facilitator tried to organizethe students into small groups. This process of group formation took quite some time and when the students were divided into six groups the facilitator asked each group to choose a group leader and secretary and to come up with a group name, a flag and a motto for the group and to prepare name tags for all group members. Throughout this whole process, the facilitator used fake banknotes as a reward for students who correctly followed his instructions and for those whose responses or actions pleased him. He also distributed fake banknotes to each group and when any groups failed to follow his instructions, they had to return the banknotes as he demanded. I noticed that conditions for the rewards were based on the actions in unison of group members, the promptness of the actions and the appropriateness of the physical expressions of students according to the facilitator's orders. The opposites of these acts were considered failures.

The saga went on for almost two hours before the students had their snack break. Afterward, students watched a short presentation on environmental conditions along the Tha Chin River. In the afternoon, staff from the Department of Industrial Works set up different 'activity stations'. The six student groups rotated through these stations to learn how to conserve energy and water and how to identify polluters. While many students appeared to be enjoying learning through these activities, there were also students who sat or stood around and did not pay much interest to what was going on. At the end of the day, the staff made a short presentation to summarize the learning points and distributed some information sheets to the students (Fieldnotes, 15.06.11).

About a month later, I had a chance to ask the science teacher at Chaisri Secondary who was responsible for this project about the outcome of the activity. She replied that the students were happy as "they could learn something in a non-stressful way. The 'recreation' part was good as it helped students to be alert. The only drawback was that we didn't go out to field (the river) to see the problem firsthand" (Interview, Teacher P, 12.07.11).

The remark made by this science teacher is a reminder that an important aspect of the school's extra-curricular activities is a recreational one. Aside from the

activity facilitated by external agencies as the one illustrated above, other extra-curricular activities which I either observed or became aware of that tended to emphasize the recreational aspect of learning included a day trip to an amusement/water park as well as activities organized on the occasion of Christmas, New Year, and Children's Day. Other extra-curricular activities that the school organized had a combination of recreational and practical purposes. This is particularly evident in the organization of student clubs by the teachers as part of the mandatory 'student development' activities in the Core National Educational Curriculum. In the first school term, students clubs had titles ranging from 'Fun with Science' and 'Computers' to 'Flower Making', 'Healthy Cooking', and 'Thai Massage' to 'Karaoke Singing', 'Dancing', and 'Fun with Games'.[18] Students are required to sign up to join a club which normally meets for one class period per week over each school term.[19] However, when this research took place the student clubs were organized for one day a week over a period of three weeks during the first term. In the second school term, the teachers also offered similar club activities.[20]

It is noticeable that aside from a few 'academic' clubs and several entertainment clubs, a number of clubs organized by the teachers revolve around teaching practical and income-generating skills such as crafts, cooking and agriculture. These activities supposedly draw on 'local knowledge' in accordance with the concept of the local curriculum promoted in the education reform. At the same time, they respond to the need for the education system to produce economically productive but self-sufficient citizens (National Education Act, 1999). According to the school principal, the school needs to prepare its students for both academic and livelihood skills as about half of the students completing compulsory education in Mathayom 3

[18] Other clubs titles included 'Creative Thinking', 'Beautiful in a Thai Way', 'Excursions', 'Basket Making', 'Calligraphy', 'Sports', 'Painting' and 'Recreation'.

[19] The Core Educational Curriculum requires students to participate in certain number of hours of 'student development' activities per one school term. The arrangement for student clubs which meet for one class period per week is a common practice in most Thai schools. However, each school may arrange their schedule as appropriate providing that the required numbers of hours of learning are met.

[20] The club activities included: a study trip to a mushroom farm, karaoke singing, sand crafts, sports, flower making, Thai language study, scarf making, arts, kite making, computers, social networking, paper folding and movies.

will either start working or continue studying on a vocational track[21] (Interview, Administrator R, 28.12.11). The school therefore uses student development activities, which are considered an important part of the school curriculum, to prepare students for their economic role at the local level. While students at Chaisri Secondary do not question the kind of practical knowledge and livelihood skills that the school offers, there have been some questions raised about the idea of the local curriculum as being one that promotes social reproduction rather than social mobility especially in the case of schools serving children at the margin (Jungck and Kajornsin, 2003). In the same vein, the ways in which these student development activities are run can prompt questions over their quality and learning outcome.

From my observation of some of the club activities during the first school term, I noticed that while there were teachers supervising and giving instructions in some of the clubs, in other clubs students were left on their own. In the karaoke singing club for instance, some female students were hanging out in the social studies classroom putting on make-up and watching video clips on YouTube.[22] At the same time, some teachers, including the one in charge of the karaoke club, were singing on the stage in the school hall located on the first floor of the main building. Apparently, this was the last session of the club and the teacher in charge wanted the activity to be open to all. Regardless of the logic behind it, it is evident that although some of students at Chaisri Secondary may have been able to gain some practical skills such as cooking and craft making by joining student clubs, many of the activities offered did not engage students in a meaningful way. This situation is in contrast with the one at the Rainbow School discussed earlier where students took the initiative to form their own rice club and mobilize the school community to support organic agriculture, aprocess that allowed the students to learn leadership, organizing and activism skills.

In this respect, while some teachers at Chaisri Secondary considered extra-curricular activities as a means to compensate for or accommodate the students' weak academic ability, the way these activities were organized tended to emphasize the

[21] In general, students complete this level of compulsory education at around the age of 15.

[22] The teacher in charge of the karaoke singing club is the head of Social Studies Unit, and thus she ran the club in the social studies classroom which is the same room as the Democracy Learning Center.

recreational aspect of learning at the expense of developing leadership and teaching critical thinking skills. Moreover, as deficit-based perspectives are applied to children of disadvantaged backgrounds, students at Chaisri Secondary are not provided with "the most challenging and nourishing education experience" that would redress embedded injustices while bringing about a greater equity in education (Ayers, et al., 2009: xiv). Instead, such perspectives serve to reinforce existing social and economic inequality by keeping the less privileged where they are. Similarly, although the emphasis on teaching craft and other livelihood skills which can be used for income generation may have a practical purpose, it has been pointed out that when schools for marginalized youth focus on skill-based and job-readiness programs, learning often becomes more narrow and the goal of democracy and social justice is often compromised (Gardner and Crockwell, 2006; Mounier and Phasina, 2010).

To conclude, as this chapter has illustrated, curricular and pedagogical practices exert an important influence over education for democracy and social justice. Under the Core National Education Curriculum, schools have a level of autonomy to devise their own school-based curriculum and to adopt appropriate pedagogical approaches. At the Rainbow School, the thematic, child-centered and inquiry-based curricular and learning approach embraced by the school has enabled the students to develop important skills deemed desirable for the idea-based economy including researching, teamwork and problem-solving. At the same time, this curricular and pedagogical approach, which is embedded in localism ideology, has also allowed the students to engage in a learning process that involves the practice of problem posing, critical reflection and social action – the pedagogy which also underpins social justice education. The impact of this on students at the Rainbow School can be gauged from their level of environmental and social awareness as well as their concerns to take action around the problems identified. The level of social literacy and activism expressed by the students is also an indication of the possibility of education for democratic citizenship and social justice in the Thai context. On the contrary, at Chaisri Secondary, which represents a regular Thai school, the curricular and pedagogical approach practiced at the school continues to follow conventional models of teaching and learning. The deficit perspectives normally applied to children of disadvantaged backgrounds are also evident at Chaisri Secondary. In this respect, not

only has the learning process at the school failed to adequately engage students in developing the social literacy and activism skills necessary for the exercise of democratic citizenship, but the deficit perspectives adopted by the teachers has also undermined another principle of social justice education that is based on equality of learning opportunity and outcome. The next chapter investigates the possibilities and challenges in the construction of democratic citizens through the working of school's systems and processes.

CHAPTER V
SCHOOL SYSTEM AND CULTURE: THE PARADOX OF DEMOCRATIC LEARNING

The school curriculum and pedagogical approaches discussed in the previous chapter offer both possibilities and challenges for education for democracy and social justice. The idea that schools can be a site for practicing democratic citizenship and learning for social justice, however, extends beyond the remit of the formal school curriculum. It has been pointed out that school systems and cultures including school routines and disciplinary systems as well as school structures and the relationships between different school actors play an important part in citizenship and democratic learning in schools (Giroux, 2001; Harber, 2004; Thornberg, 2009).

This chapter investigates the different manifestations of school systems and ethos and their implication for education for social justice and democratic citizenship in Thai schools. It argues that in both schools political and cultural ideologies which are seen as necessary for the construction of good citizens in Thai society including loyalty to the three institutions, respect for authority and hierarchy as well as discipline and order remain an important part of school routines and practices. However, at the Rainbow School the teachers try to exercise what may be seen as 'democratic control' instead of 'authoritarian control' as practiced in most Thai schools, including Chaisri Secondary, despite some tensions. Furthermore, as will be illustrated in this chapter, there are some differences in the ways in which the idea of democracy is understood and practiced in both schools. These differences reflect the influence of political and cultural ideologies and the extent to which each school responds to and negotiates them. They also provide some indications of possibilities and challenges for education for democracy and social justice in the Thai context.

5.1 Affirming national identity and patriotism: morning assembly and citizenship learning

As pointed out in Chapter 2, schools as a basic social institution have an important function in reproducing the values and belief of that particular society. The school curriculum, including daily school practices, are often used as a tool to shape the political values and ideology of young citizens. A routine practice which is mandatory in Thai schools is the daily morning assembly. The section below investigates how different elements in this practice which have become normalized as part of school life contribute to or hinder the development of democratic citizenship in the two case study schools.

The most important element of the school morning assembly routine is arguably the ceremony of saluting the flag and singing the national anthem which marks the official start of the school day. A national law requiring that the national flag be saluted daily at 8:00 and 18:00 hours was enacted in 1935 after the change in regime from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy. However, this law started to be widely observed only after General Phibunsongkhram, who headed the government from 1938 to 1944, made this practice one of the national edicts integral to his drive for Thai nationalism. Citizens were encouraged to pay respect to the flag and the national anthem which are regarded as important symbols of Thai national identity (Chanida, 2000). The National Culture Act of 1942 formalized this practice which continues to be observed until today in Thai schools. Arguably, the morning flag ceremony in schools is one of the occasions when Thai national identity and patriotism get emphasized on a daily basis. This practice has also become part of the moral and ethical training promoted as part of the current education goals. There are also official guidelines for carrying out this ritual which are closely observed in both Chaisri Secondary and the Rainbow School.

In both schools, school rules require that students arrive before the flag and national anthem ceremony which begins at 8:00 a.m. According to the *Handbook for Activities to Promote Knowledge and Morality* prepared by the Ministry of Education, teachers are told to ensure that "every student sings the national anthem so as to be proud of Thainess" (OEC, 2005: 10). Schools are encouraged to assign music teachers to teach individual students to sing the national anthem and to provide

incentives for the students if need be. Thus, at Chaisri Secondary, the school initiated a special project to promote a more proper practice of this ritual. Aside from observing the daily morning flag and anthem ceremony which students are expected to do in unison, the project proposed that students receive extra practice in writing the lyrics of the Thai national anthem during their Thai language class while learning to sing the anthem correctly in art and music class (Report of Activities, 2010). As with the Rainbow School, although there is no special project to promote this practice, the school was also concerned about affirming the value of this tradition. According to a staff member who has been with the school since its inception, the school wanted the students to feel that they really want to sing the national anthem. Thus, there was a proposal for students to sing the anthem just once a week instead of doing it every day as a ritual. However, since this idea was seen as deviating too much from the dominant practice, the school opted for a routine of daily anthem singing similar to the practice in other Thai schools (Interview, Staff I, 21.07.11). According to one teacher, at the beginning of this daily ritual "students would be reminded about the meaning of the nation, that is, how [we should feel] gratitude to our forebears who have sacrificed to build this nation, … and [for students] to sing the national anthem loudly is to discipline themselves … to be aware that they are Thais" (Interview, Teacher C, 16.01.12).

Along with promoting patriotism and Thainess, the morning assembly routines are intended to serve the purpose of instilling the values and practices of discipline, endurance, honesty, punctuality and concentration among the students (OEC, 2005: 10). According to the above-mentioned *Handbook*, training for discipline involves ensuring that students control their manners while standing in line and by having them "endure the heat from the sun and stiffness" (ibid). Similarly, students are expected to develop concentration through Buddhist chanting and meditation, a practice observed by both Chaisri Secondary and the Rainbow School. Furthermore, teachers are urged to engage students in presenting news and making announcements as part of the morning assembly process to enable them "to show their ability" (ibid). Although this is an occasion where more meaningful participation and citizenship learning of students can be promoted, Chaisri Secondary does not seem to be spending the time effectively toward this purpose as students generally listen

passively to announcements made by the teachers which usually concern various school matters: upcoming events, visitors to the school, problems with student discipline, and what teachers expect the students to do to keep the school in order. This situation is somewhat different at the Rainbow School where teachers assign students from the upper secondary school level – mostly those in Mathayom 4 – to "share some good stories" which normally includes current news and reflections about students' learning experiences. Students from other classes can also make announcements about their activities and invite their peers to participate in upcoming events.

Although the various practices of the daily morning assembly activity are intended to promote patriotism, discipline, endurance, concentration and leadership skills, there can be questions about how effective these values are or what values are actually being instilled through these school routines. Some students at Chaisri Secondary mentioned that they intentionally avoid coming in time for the flag ceremony and the morning assembly. One student's remark is echoed by his friends: "it's boring – singing the national anthem, chanting and listening to the teachers" (FGD, M3/2 (a), 22.09.11). Although some students at the Rainbow School mentioned that they enjoyed sharing the stories during the morning assembly, others remarked that "sometimes it's too long … and it's hot … the teachers get to stand in the shade" (FGD, M3/2, 5.01.12). Similarly, although there were students who talked about the values of the routine in helping them develop discipline, they seem to be repeating the teachers' words. In general, students in both schools commented that they do not feel anything in particular about the morning assembly ceremony as they have become used to it.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the practice of saluting the flag and singing the national anthem is regarded as a crucial part of socialization into loyal citizenship. Students are exposed early to such rituals which, as Hess and Torney (cited in Scimecca, 1980: 103) pointed out, "establish an emotional orientation toward country and flag […] and reinforce feeling of loyalty and patriotism." However, when practiced uncritically these rituals tend to foster compliance and obedience at the expense of teaching reflective thinking skills because, as Apple (2004: 165) observed: "rote memorization was not the best approach if one wanted to provide the condition

for growth and thoughtful citizenship." In connection to this, there have been some recent critiques of the mandatory flag ceremony and Buddhist recitation in Thai schools as indoctrinating nationalism and meaningless religious values, and that these practices should be abolished.[1] However, raising questions about these rituals has invoked angry reactions from the Thai public and particularly from teachers. Through social media postings, the student who made the comments was labeled as "dumb" and the idea of abolishing the ceremony as "dangerous" which can lead to the "end" and "disintegration" of the Thai nation.[2] A number of posts berated the student to "quit school" or "go and live somewhere else" if he cannot "respect the flag which symbolizes the key institutions" or observe the "age-old" practices which are meant to instill discipline and patriotism. Others criticized the student as not wanting to show respect to teachers and only "demanding rights without understanding the duties of good citizens." Although there were comments expressing understanding toward the student and remarks against the strong reactions by some net-users as being unreasonable, such postings seem to represent a minority view.[3] Criticism of those who questioned what are seen as 'traditional' national practices speaks to the kind of blind patriotism that has been promoted – as one of the few posts supporting the student argued: "[the fact] that you are blaming the kid [shows that you are] the product of indoctrination. Just because the kid thinks differently from you, you are chasing him away while in fact we can discuss it" (Homer Simpson, http://drama-addict.com/2013/06/26/ไทยคงสิ้นชาติ). Indeed, when differences of opinions are not tolerated, the idea of democratic citizenship is undermined (Gutmann, 1999). To what extent being subjected to an unquestioned ritual as part of the school routine contributes to this kind of blind patriotism and intolerance requires some openness in society to discuss such issues.

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[1] A student representative of the Thailand Educational Revolution Alliance (TERA) was interviewed in a TV program on 25 June, 2013, when he criticized the mandatory daily flag ritual and recitation of Buddhist prayers observed in Thai schools and proposed that these practices be abolished. See: http://shows.voicetv.co.th/the-daily-dose/73589.html

[2] See: www.kruthai.info/view.php?article_id=5372 and http://drama-addict.com/2013/06/26/ไทยคงสิ้นชาติ

[3] For example, on the drama-addict website, there were about 25 postings with 105 likes for comments supporting the practice and criticizing the student and 7 postings with 34 likes with opposing views.

Another important aspect of school life and its implications for citizenship learning concern school rules and disciplinary measures which are considered to be the fabric of authority of institutionalized schooling.

5.2 School rules and discipline: exercising authoritarian vs. democratic control

From reproduction theory, one of the ways in which schools function to control and socialize young people into social and moral norms is by regulating students' conduct and behavior through formal and informal rules (Apple, 2004; Harber, 2004; Thornberg, 2009). According to Tattum (cited in Thornberg, 2009: 251), "rules of conduct, performance and appearance are probably the most pervasive aspect of what has come to be called the hidden curriculum." For Thai schools, important school rules also revolve around similar areas of control including i) student conduct and behavior; ii) dress codes/uniforms including proper hairstyles for male and female students; and iii) entering and leaving school premises. While it is understandable that certain rules and some forms of authority may be required for the orderly functioning of a complex social institution like a school, the ways in which regulation, discipline and control are exercised can have important implications for citizenship learning.

Schimmel (cited in Thornberg, 2009: 253) noted that, "[a] vital part of education for citizenship is an enlightened process for developing school rules and teaching students about them." However, it has been observed that practices in schools across different societies including Thailand reflect authoritarian values in the way that they serve to control students who generally lack real power in decision-making while being directly and indirectly forced to follow externally imposed rules (Kanpol, 1999: 49; Harber, 2004: 66 Usanee and Srichai, 2010). Furthermore, it is important to point out that in the case of Thailand, important rules observed in Thai schools today are the products of the military regimes of the 1970s or earlier, which continue to be enforced in spite of changes in the societal context which have taken place in the decades since. This reality also speaks to the opposite of the idea of democratic citizenship that schools are supposed to promote. The section below

investigates the ways in which Chaisri Secondary and the Rainbow School go about developing and enforcing school rules and disciplinary systems that reflect authoritarian and what might be considered as democratic control.

5.2.1 Enforcing school rules and discipline: contradictions in a democratic school

At Chaisri Secondary, ensuring that students adhere to school rules concerning arrival time at school, students' appearance and students' behavior constitutes an important aspect of school life. With regard to arrival time, as mentioned earlier, students at Chaisri Secondary are expected to arrive in time for the morning flag ceremony and latecomers face certain disciplinary actions. Concerning school rules about the dress code, Thai schools are required to follow regulations set by the Ministry of Education which prescribe a basic uniform code and options.[4] At Chaisri Secondary, there are four different sets of student uniforms to be worn on different days of the week. Students are expected to wear each uniform properly with appropriate black/brown school shoes and white socks. With regard to hairstyle, female students at the lower secondary level must keep bobbed hair with a length of no more than two centimeters below the ear lobe. Female students at the upper secondary level are allowed to have long hair but it must be properly tied up with a blue, black or white ribbon. For all female students, the hair cannot be layer cut, curled or colored, and make-up is not allowed. Male students are required to keep their hair short in accordance with the 'standard student hairstyle' which resembles that of a soldier. This practice follows the military government's order in 1972 and a ministerial regulation prohibiting inappropriate dress, hair and conduct for school students which has been translated into what is considered as a standard. Despite an amendment to this rule in 1975 allowing flexibility on hair length, most public Thai

[4] The first "Students' Uniform Act" which formally required school students to wear uniforms was adopted in 1939. Most recently, a new Students' Uniform Act and a Ministry of Education Regulation on Students' Uniforms were adopted in 2008, regulating uniform options for students at the basic education level. Although both public and private schools are subject to the same uniform code and options according to the Regulation, schools are allowed to prescribe their own uniform for which they are required to get permission from relevant authority. The Regulation also permits schools to prescribe other types of uniform such as boy/girl scouts or other sets of uniform as appropriate.

schools continue to prescribe the short haircut for male students required by the 1972 regulation.[5] Similarly, with regard to school rules concerning student behavior, guidelines are set at the ministerial level and are applicable to all Thai schools. The current 'Ministerial Regulation on Student Behavior' which became effective in 2005 takes many elements from the regulation enacted in 1972 under a military junta (see Appendix D for the Ministerial Regulation).[6]

It is intriguing that despite significant changes in the social, economic and political context in Thailand over the past decades, Thai schools continue to promote rigid conformity and control through historically conceived and externally imposed rules. One of the reasons for this could be that such rules serve, as Tattum (cited in Thornberg, 2009: 141) pointed out, to "educate for docility and obedience, subservience to hierarchical authority…", which in the Thai case is related to the power and authority of the state and the teachers. Furthermore, school rules are about discipline and orders which are needed to control students' conduct and to promote a positive image of the schools. This is particularly the case at Chaisri Secondary where monitoring students' appearance and behavior has been one of the teachers' main priorities. Teachers at the school are of the view that uniforms and students' overall appearance represent and reflect the image of the school because, as pointed out by an old-time teacher, "when students wear the uniform properly it shows a positive image of the students and the school in terms of keeping good order and discipline" (Interview, Teacher M, 22.09.11). This aspect of school rules and this particular remark by the teacher reflect observations made by a number of scholars of Thai culture that Thai society is a presentational society where formality and conformity of appearance are "taken to be the heart of things" (Mulder, cited in Jackson, 2004: 189). At the same time, "[T]hai essentialization of appearance is […] capable of producing social order…" (Jackson, 2004: 190). Challenging these rules can, thus, be seen as

[5] The regulation prohibits: (1) male students wearing hair on the crown and front of the head longer than 5 centimeters and hair on the sides of the head must be cut close to the skin, or (2) wearing a moustache or beard (Ministerial Regulations, B.E. 2515 (1972 A.D)).

[6] The first legal document on the Control of Children and Students was enacted in 1938 which was repealed by Military Order (132) on Control of Students and the Ministerial Regulation in 1972 (the same ones prohibiting in appropriate student dress and hair) (Military Order 132, Sutpaisal publishing, 1988).

disrupting an image of "smooth calm" or *khwam sa-ngop riaproi* that is integral to an orderly Thai social life.

To maintain such order, the school has put in place different measures to monitor the various school rules and to implement disciplinary actions.[7] First, teacher advisors for each class have the primary responsibility to ensure that their students properly follow school regulations. They are expected to give verbal warnings to students who arrive late at school or do not wear the correct uniform or hairstyle, or engage in inappropriate behavior. Second, the teacher in charge of the disciplinary section is tasked to monitor overall disciplinary measures including cases of serious misconduct for which probation and a meeting with the student's parents are required. Third, the student council is seen as an important means to help the teachers in monitoring students' conduct as well as to enforce school rules and disciplinary policies. In this connection, a snapshot of the school's disciplinary system is provided by the chairperson of the student council. According to him, "the disciplinary system has four steps like in other schools i.e., warning, probation, score deduction and behavior modification through service. Warnings also have three steps; after the first three times then you get your points deducted but they will also consider the seriousness of the case, like fighting or drug use" (Interview, 9.08.11). In this regard, while the school rules and disciplinary system at Chaisri Secondary appear comprehensive, they do not suggest that the majority of students have a role to play in developing and negotiating the various rules and disciplinary measures. Not only does this kind of practice undermine the possibility of inculcating democratic citizenship values, but as Foucault (cited in Harber, 2004: 65) argued, the way schools control through routinized authoritarianism also makes "control become accepted by the majority as normal and natural." Furthermore, although it appears that in most cases students get warnings (verbal reprimands) from teachers if they violate school rules, during my time at the school I witnessed several occasions when a more stringent form of punishment was used.

[7] The Ministry of Education Regulation on Student Punishment, 2548 B.E. (2005) prescribes four levels of disciplinary action: warning, probation, points-deduction and behavior modification. It prohibits violent forms of punishment and authorizes only school administrators or designated persons carry out any disciplinary actions on students.

Despite a ban on corporal punishment in Thai schools,[8] a survey of 1,300 teachers in schools across the country revealed that about 75% of them still believe in the Thai saying "if you love your cows then tie them up and if you love your children then hit them" when it comes to disciplining students (Sombat, 2007). By adhering to this belief that condones a harsher form of punishment as a way of instilling discipline in youngsters, teachers at Chaisri Secondary also resort to hitting students for various acts of misconduct. The teacher in charge of the disciplinary section admitted, "I still use the stick. It might not be a good thing to do but this is the best method to stop (undesirable behavior). I was like these kids before and I still believe that I've become good because of the stick" (Interview, Teacher L, 26.09.11). This teacher also talked about how he attended a workshop[9] on how to solve conflicts in peaceful way but he felt that "when kids (students from different schools) fight and you get the teachers (from the concerned schools) to talk … that's not going to end the problem. They will continue (the fight) outside (the school)" (ibid). However, before using a stick to punish students, the teacher said that he asked permission from the parents in a meeting and that all of the parents agreed to this. Although this explanation by the teacher was confirmed by another teacher as well as members of the student council who also support this approach, there apparently have been cases of parents who were not happy with their children being beaten by the teachers. The disciplinary teacher remarked that "there is no problem when we hit the students and explain to the parents what wrongdoing their children have committed … except for some parents who think that they must win … that they have power" (ibid).

There is a wide range of misbehavior and misconduct which can result in students being subject to caning or some other form of physical punishment. During the first month of my research at the school, I witnessed a group of students being hit

[8] According to Article 6 of the Ministerial Regulation on the Punishment of School and University Students (B.E 2548), violent forms of punishment are prohibited. The Committee on the Rights of the Child defines 'corporal' or 'physical' punishment as any punishment in which physical force is used and intended to cause some degree of pain or discomfort, however light (CRC General Comments No. 8).

[9] Although the teacher did not clearly mention which workshop he attended, he was possibly referring to a workshop on Conflict Resolution Education organized by the Project to Promote a Culture of Peace in School and Capacity Building for Educational Personnel of King Prajadhipok's Institute.

with a long stick for not wearing the correct uniform on the school's designated Buddhist day. Instead of wearing a white outfit as required by the school, some students had their regular student uniform on, or some of them were missing their socks or other items of the dress code (Fieldnotes, 2.06.11). Apparently, the teacher had warned the students earlier that she would take action against those who do not follow the rules. It became clear that being hit with a stick as a punishment for late arrival and inappropriate dress and haircuts is not something uncommon in the school. Furthermore, students have been caned for engaging in fighting and "inappropriate sexual behavior" or what is termed "*chu sao*"[10] that involves students of the opposite sex engaging in what is considered 'intimate' behavior such as holding hands or being found sitting together in hidden corners in the school or elsewhere if they are in school uniform.

When I tried to talk to students about their perceptions and experiences concerning school rules and disciplinary action, some of them would respond discreetly while others tried to show that they took it lightly. One female student talked about how she was hit with a stick and then tied by the hand to another female student with whom she had a row over another male student – a case which was identified as inappropriate sexual behavior. When asked if she thought the punishment was appropriate, the student said "a little bit" but did not appear to want to talk about it. However, when asked if she would prefer a different way for the teacher to deal with the issue, the student said "(the teacher) could warn us and ask us to talk to each other to clear the matter" (FGD, M3/2, 22.09.11). This is different from a male student who was hit quite hard on his buttocks after having a small fight – which was more like a prank – with his friend when I was talking to other students in the room where the punishment took place. When I asked how he felt, the student laughed and said "this is normal" (Fieldnotes; 22.09.11).

Although students at Chaisri Secondary seem to have come to accept the kind of punishment they receive as normal, some students exhibited anger and humiliation. In this connection, research has shown that corporal punishment fails to nurture self-discipline in children while provoking aggression and feelings of revenge

[10] A more literal translation of this term is 'adulterous'.

and leads to anti-social behavior (Harber 2004: 80). Moreover, the way the school rules and disciplinary system have been imposed on students with little or no consultation with the students themselves reflects not only the attitude of the teachers toward exercising authority and enforcing obedience that prevails in the Thai education system but also the authoritarian nature of schools as an institution for social and political control (Harber, 2004). Such a system and approach to instilling discipline do not seem to allow for the development of creativity, independent judgment and respect for the rights of young citizens which are important ingredients for democratic learning in the school context. Instead, in this kind of environment Thornberg (2009: 254) observed, "*the virtue of obedience to rules from authorities* is the underlying moral construction of the good pupil" who will also become the good citizen (italics in the original). Although the situation is expected to be different at the Rainbow School where the child-centered pedagogical approach and communal ideology embraced by the school should have some positive implications on the way the school and its teachers go about instilling discipline and exercising authority with the students, the actual practice is not without contradictions.

5.2.2 Exercising democratic control – a balancing act

At the Rainbow School, there are some basic school rules and disciplinary actions which are explained in the 'students' manual' that the school gives to new students when they enroll at the school. In addition, teachers at the secondary school section developed a list of 'Desirable Characteristics of Secondary School Students at the Rainbow School' which covers nine items including:

i) appropriate dress (with details of dos and don'ts),

ii) politeness/consideration towards others; no shouting or disturbing others

iii) keeping shoes neatly on shelves

iv) volunteer spirit in, for example, helping hospital patients and in communities

v) respect and humility; listening to parents and teachers

vi) efficient use of resources; no indulgence

vii) being mindful of others; ability to express one's feeling and say hello, sorry and thank you

viii) maturity

ix) no inappropriate behavior (with a sub-list of don'ts).

An issue which seems to have been and continues to be a source of tension in the secondary school section has to do with the rule concerning the school's dress code. The way that the school initiated and implemented this rule reflects a challenge for the school as a hierarchical institution in finding a balance between promoting democratic control with an emphasis on internal group and self-regulation (Harber, 2004: 66), versus naturally leaning toward authoritarian enforcement of school rules.

As a private school, the Rainbow School has subscribed to a more flexible option for student uniforms and hairstyles as permitted by the law. With its practices based on a philosophy of holistic education, the school did not prescribe student uniforms during the early years of its operation, allowing students to make their own decisions about the appropriate clothing to be worn, hence fostering a sense of independent judgment among its students (Interview, Staff I, 21.07.11). However, for practical reasons the school leadership felt that it would be better to introduce uniforms for students, especially at the secondary level. Apparently, the way the school introduced the idea of having a uniform was by making a formal communication that the decision had been taken, which caused some disquiet among parents who did not agree with the idea. They wrote a letter to the school administrators who responded by setting up a series of meetings to discuss the issue and to find an acceptable way forward. After much discussion, the decision was reached that there would be no uniform for students in kindergarten while students in the primary school would have to wear a uniform for two days a week. For secondary school students however, it was agreed that they would wear uniforms every day.

In this respect, there have been different views with regard to the decision-making process and the decision. Some parents felt that the school has been quite democratic in its decision-making process by listening to the opinions of the parents instead of insisting on its previous decision to have students in primary school wear uniforms every day (Interview, Parent, 27.09.11). Similarly, some teachers felt that the students were able to have an input into this change process through their

participation in a uniform design contest (Interviews, Teacher C, 16.01.12; Teacher B, 10.02.12). However, other teachers were of the view that the value behind the initial idea of giving students the freedom to choose their clothing has not been fully reconciled with the changes that have been made. Moreover, since the new uniform rule has been in place, monitoring the student dress code has become a source of tension between teachers and students at the Rainbow School.

A group of male students in Mathayom 3 expressed resentment about being monitored by teachers for wearing uniforms improperly. They also felt that the rules are becoming more excessive, which has caused further resistance. The students talked about school rules below:

> Q: Who make decisions on school rules?
>
> S1: Teachers! There are more rules every year. Sometime the class advisor just came up with more rules.
>
> S2: Like you have to put your shirt inside the trousers. If you don't, you will get all kinds of blame.
>
> Q: What about when you were in primary school?
>
> S2: We could wear anything. And when we were young we listened to teachers. Now we don't want to, especially when the rules are too much … then we don't want to do it.
>
> S3: Sometime they make (the rules) harder because we resisted. We have to put up with it.
>
> Q: Why don't you like the rules?
>
> S1: I felt like the teacher was picking on me – checking on me about black trousers that were supposed not to be OK. I saw that sometimes other students also wear the same kind of trousers but the teacher didn't say anything.
>
> S3: We don't mind if the rules are tough but we feel that we are not being treated fairly.
>
> S1: The problem is that teachers have more power and credit. If they tell other teachers that we are wrong, then those people will also have a bad impression of us. The teachers would listen to each other more than listening to us (FGD, M3/1, 17.10.11).

This group of students has developed a negative attitude about wearing uniforms because they feel that the school rules are used as a tool for intimidation and control. At the same time, other students are uncomfortable about the way the school rules are enforced without proper explanation and without their participation. In this connection, students in Mathayom 4 remarked:

> "Teachers cannot explain to us why we have to do certain things … like wearing a uniform. Or they cannot tell us what the benefits are of dressing properly"

The students explained that they need be given reasons because the school has taught them to form their own opinions. The students mentioned that if the explanations are reasonable they would be happy to follow the rules. However, a student recalled "it's always ended up with the word 'rules'. When teachers were not clear about why things are supposed to be the way they are, they would say it's the 'rules'. So, we felt we could not have any say" (FGD, M4/1, 16.01.12).

It can be seen that despite the attempt by the Rainbow School to exercise what might be considered as democratic control in the process of creating and enforcing school rules, there are tensions which have not been reconciled. While the school leadership and teachers may consider the process of developing the school rules to be participative, students perceive that the rules are being imposed on them without the opportunity to negotiate. School rules, therefore, become a tool for authoritative control in the eyes of some students. This dynamic which constitutes a crucial aspect of hidden citizenship learning in school poses important challenges to the idea of progressive pedagogy which considers that an over-emphasis on rules undermines the goal of fostering self-discipline and critical thinking in children (Thornberg , 2009: 254). At the same time, such tensions raise questions about the feasibility of practicing democratic control in some certain cultural contexts. In this regard, Davies (2008) pointed out that tensions in practicing democracy in school may be related to the different understandings of the idea of democracy and participation by various actors based on old and new assumptions, especially in a traditionally hierarchical society (p. 150-151). In the context of Thai schools, the question of authority and control in schools is also closely related to the issue of school structure which will be discussed in the next section.

Before turning to the next topic, it is important to point out that despite some negative perceptions on the students' part regarding school rules and the disciplinary system, teachers at the Rainbow School tend to exercise more discrete forms of discipline and control than their counterparts at Chaisri Secondary. At the Rainbow School, teachers usually give verbal warnings when students do something inappropriate. During class time, I noticed that when some students started to read recreational books or put their legs up on the chairs, the teachers would look at them and signal that they should not be doing this. Or when students showed that they were more interested in sleeping than studying, the teachers would tell them in a normal voice that they should go out to wash their face (Classroom observation, M3 and M5, 1.07.11). In more serious cases when students show disrespect toward the teachers such as by shouting at them, the students would be asked to write a note about the inappropriate behavior or wrong-doing that they have committed. Furthermore, the vice principal of the secondary school section mentioned that students may be hit with a stick for other serious misconduct such as fighting. However, I was told that such cases are rare and that the school would first inform the parents before taking this action (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). In also rare instances, students would be asked to take a temporary suspension from school. During this time, the suspended student would have to write a reflection about what they have done and how they would change or make improvements. According to an old-time staff member, there are rarely serious disciplinary cases in the school because the teachers and the student's families do monitor the students closely. Apparently, there has not been serious misconduct involving drug use or inappropriate sexual behavior (Interview, Staff I, 21.07.11).

It is also interesting to note that at the Rainbow School, unlike at Chaisri Secondary, there is neither a disciplinary section nor a student council to assist the teachers with monitoring student's behavior and enforcing school rules. While the class advisors have the primary responsibility for this, the school leadership expects this task be a collective responsibility of all teachers. This expectation is also a reflection of how the school attempts to practice what it considers to be an ideal of communal living, an important aspect of the school culture that will be explored in the section below.

5.3 School structure: conceiving democratic space and practicing democracy in different contexts

An important aspect of learning for democratic citizenship in the school context lies in how democratic ideas and practices are conceived through formal and informal school structures (Kanpol, 1999; Beane and Apple, 2007; Davies, 2008). Studies have shown that in schools in developing societies, school structures are characterized by bureaucratic administration and hierarchical control. Shared decision-making and an egalitarian ethos which are indicators for school democracy are uncommon features in most traditional schools around the world, including Thailand (Harber and Mncube, 2012; Usanee and Srichai, 2010). At the Rainbow School where a progressive pedagogy is adopted, the school has tried to create an egalitarian school structure and to enable a more horizontal relationship between different school actors through the practice of communal living. However, while this idea has the potential to promote greater equality and participation by different school actors, in practice it runs into conflict with the traditional Thai cultural norm of deference and obedience toward authority and seniority. This challenge is somewhat different from the ones that emerge at Chaisri Secondary where democratic practice takes on a more conventional form of representative democracy and a narrow conception of participation. In this state-sponsored form of democracy, the students' representative body seems to function more in the interests of the existing school hierarchy and authorities rather than of the students.

First, the practices and challenges of democracy as communal living at the Rainbow School will be examined.

5.3.1 Democracy as communal living

> "I don't see democracy as a form. Democracy takes place in classrooms, in all subjects. It should also be in the relationship between teachers and students in communal living. It shouldn't be a power system, or not as a powered structure. In democracy, there should be equality. [Students] should have the rights to express their opinions, to make suggestions at any time without having to wait for a formal meeting"
>
> (Teacher C, 16.01.12)

At the Rainbow School, democracy is not a buzz word. It is neither to be found in the school's goal/philosophy statements nor it is something teachers and students refer to when describing various school processes and practices. However, when asked how they understand democracy or how the school promotes democracy, teachers and administrators link democracy with the idea and practice of communal living, that is, as a quality of egalitarian and non-bureaucratized interactions between different members of the school community. Indeed, the type of relationship between different school actors, which can be considered as another form of hidden curriculum, is an important aspect of democratic and citizenship learning that takes place in schools. Below I discuss how different school actors perceive, experience and internalize relationships among themselves and how this aspect of incidental learning contributes to or hinders democratic practices and learning at the Rainbow School.

5.3.1.1 Relationships among the school's founder, administrators and teachers

Unlike in traditional Thai schools where there is normally a clear line of authority under the formal school structure and where school principals have been seen as having the sole decision-making power in schools (Kennedy and Lee, 2010: 125). At the Rainbow School this aspect of formal school hierarchy seems to be rather discrete. Not only were official documents that provide information about the actual organizational structure of the school impossible to locate,[11] but also the answers I received from the school administrators and teachers about the day-to-day school management structure were also not very clear. In essence, the school administrators explained that it is to be understood that the school's top leadership does not attach much importance to institutional structures which tend to be hierarchical and bureaucratic. Instead, a kind of 'collective' leadership is to be encouraged. Nevertheless, in practice there are three school principals, each in charge of one of the three sections of the school.[12] They have the main responsibility to guide

[11] The school's website only provides information about the school's foundational and non-profit status where management of the school is under an administrative committee chaired by a respectable scholar in the field of education; and the school's founder is listed as a member and the secretary of the committee.

[12] These include the pre-primary (kindergarten), primary, and secondary school sections. The principal of the primary school section also acts as the Director of the Rainbow School.

and support the teachers to work together as a team. The school's founder herself is formally the principal of the secondary school section, with a vice-principal who assists her in the daily supervision of the teachers and other administrative matters. Although the vice-principal tried to explain below, the horizontal structure and decision-making process that the school's founder tries to promote, there exist some disparities between the autonomy and well-being (self-representation) of teachers on the one hand and the actual running of the school on the other.

One of the school's practices that is seen by the administrator as reflecting a horizontal relationship between the school's leadership and the teachers concerns the autonomy of teachers in curriculum planning[13] and the role of teachers in shaping certain school practices – both are considered important aspects of school democracy (Kanpol, 1999; Beane and Apple, 2007). For a school like the Rainbow School that was set up by a visionary leader, it is not unusual to expect that the school's founder continues to exert influence over the school's direction and practices. As the principal of the secondary school section, the school's founder also has the responsibility to ensure that good quality teaching plans are prepared. However, the vice-principal explained that the school's founder does not impose her own ideas but wants teachers "to take ownership of their work." According to this administrator, "Ajarn (the school' founder) may give some suggestions (about the themes), but she wants everyone to help brainstorm. It's a horizontal process because she does not just tell us what to do" (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). The same administrator further explained that school rules and regulations also come from discussion among the teachers themselves who see problems with a lack of discipline among the students. She said that the school's founder only comes to meet the teachers on Fridays "as a way of letting us do things on our own" (ibid). As such, this administrator was of the view that the school culture and decision-making process as well as the relationship between the school's leadership, the school administrators and the teachers and staff at the Rainbow School is more horizontal than vertical. Some teachers do echo this view saying that the school's founder provides space for them to

[13] Every teacher is expected to develop their own teaching plan or "roadmap" for each school term. This includes a description of themes and topics they will teach as well as the process of teaching and learning.

try out new ideas for their teaching. At the same time, when there are problems concerning students or different school practices, the school administrators encourage collective discussion among teachers and administrators in 'meeting circles' to address the issues.

In this respect, teachers at the Rainbow School appear to enjoy a level of autonomy and control over their professional life and in making decisions on certain aspects of school practices. However, it is evident that the school's founder continues to be very influential in making decisions concerning different dimensions of school life. According to a longtime teacher, "if Ajarn comes to know about any problems she can immediately deal with them. There is no need wait for any particular time. You can think (and propose the ideas to her) and just do it. Ajarn is very quick" (Interview, Teacher C, 16.01.12). With regard to curriculum planning, I was told that in some cases the school's founder did not approve the plans prepared by teachers and asked for them to be revised. In this regard, there seems to be a more limited exercise of autonomy and control on the part of teachers than what has been projected. Furthermore, despite the non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian structure and culture that the school tries to promote, teachers feel a mix of intimidation and respect towards the school's founder. Some teachers expressed the view that there are difficulties in talking about the problems they face. According to a teacher, "although we are told to be direct about any concerns or problems, no one dares to talk to her frankly. Everyone seems to say what Ajarn wants to hear. … It's like there is some power which everyone is afraid of" (Interview, Teacher A, 10.10.11). Whether such a 'culture of fear' reflects a real or perceived authority, or both, that has been exercised by the leadership, this situation poses an important challenge to the ideas and practices of democracy and social justice in the school. I realize from talking to the teachers that despite the expectation that they help empower the students, much of their own personal welfare or rights may have never been articulated or effectively addressed.

One of the problems faced by a number of teachers especially those teaching in the lower secondary level has been that of work overload. Due to the innovative teaching-learning approach adopted by the school, teachers have to spend much of their time preparing for class as well as in making assessments. Moreover, teachers are required to participate in the school's organized 'teacher development

training' sessions which normally take place on the weekends. An old-time teacher mentioned that she has raised this concern in the teachers' meetings but that the point became invalid because teachers in the upper secondary level did not have the same problem. Putting the blame on herself, this teacher remarked that "perhaps we have not been good enough to make it clear that this is a real issue which needs to be addressed." At the same time, she was also reluctant to talk about this problem with the school's founder because "if we were to tell her our concerns … she might ask us what we want. So, we have to think about it first …whether this problem is a real issue or is it because we don't manage our work well enough. […] But it's also difficult for us to talk about cutting down on teaching time as we see Ajarn works all the time. She has set a very high standard" (Interview, Teacher C, 16.01.12).

Similarly, teachers feel reluctant to bring up issues concerning their own welfare and long term security. A young teacher noted that "we felt that the school should give more support to teacher in terms of health care … like arranging for group health insurance. Teachers here work very hard. OK, we knew that it's going be hard work but we would like some health insurance because there are no substitute teachers. If you don't feel well, you can go to lie down in the school's nurse room. But most people just put up with it" (Interview, Teacher A, 5.01.12). Echoing this, a long-serving teacher commented that while teachers receive basic benefits from the school like accident insurance and subsidies for meals, "most other things are teachers' own business … like we have to create our own savings plan as there are no teachers' savings scheme or health insurance" (Interview, Teacher E, 25.01.12). At the same time, this same teacher was of the view that teachers at the school are not treated the same way: more senior teachers usually have better bargaining power and they can gain more support from the school and staff. In his words, "I mean, this system is not all that fair. It depends on how we negotiate" (ibid).

In this respect, despite attempts by the school to promote an egalitarian school culture there exist hierarchical and unequal relationships between the school leadership and the teachers as well as among the teachers themselves. This situation is arguably related to the aspect of Thai social relations embedded in both of what Mulder (2000) defined as the 'hierarchy of unequal moral relationships' and the 'powerful hierarchy' between individuals. The former refers to unequal moral relationships between those

in intimate circles such as parents-children or teachers- students based on the recognition of wisdom, leadership, benevolence and relative age while the latter concerns powerful hierarchies of more distant, yet still personal relationships, characterized by suspicion and uncertainty (p. 60-63). At the Rainbow School, the teachers feel a mix of fear and deference toward the benevolence and wisdom of the school leadership while also exhibiting a sense of uncertainty and inadequacy on their part. As such, unlike experiences in Western societies, the Thai cultural concepts of hierarchy and inequality constitute an important consideration and challenge for practicing democracy and promoting social justice in the Thai context. Furthermore, although the informal and non-bureaucratized school structure allows for a more collective decision-making process that rests on non-adversarial and communal ideals of democracy, such a practice does not automatically translate into an equitable outcome. In this regard, it needs to be recognized that unequal power relations exist in the seemingly non-hierarchical space of 'meeting circles.' The contradictions that emerge in this kind of context are also evident in the relationship between teachers and students at the Rainbow School as discussed below.

5.3.1.2 Students-teachers relationships

The relationship pattern between teachers and students at the school also seems to reflect that between administrators and teachers. On the one hand there is a level of openness and participation between teachers and students. On the other hand, students show that they do feel inadequate and have some fear of their teachers. Students have mixed perceptions on the democratic outlook of the school and the teachers.

On the positive side, the administrators and teachers generally perceive that there is a positive relationship between teachers and students. According to the vice- principal of the secondary school section, "students and teachers are close to each other and they listen to each other. Students feel like the teachers are their friends" (Interview, Administrator G, 10. 10.11). The students confirmed this by saying "we have been close to the teachers since we were young … we can talk to them and consult them. They don't have to be our subject teachers but they can teach us about life from their own experience" (FGD, M4/1, 16.01.12). In this connection,

the teachers are of the view that the relationship between them and the students is not the one of hierarchy but equality in such a way that "they (the students) can express their opinions on any issues… but they must be reasonable" (Interview, Teacher C, 16.01.12).

From my own observations, I can also say that interactions between teachers and students are cordial. I neither saw teachers shout at students nor did I witness any physical punishment carried out on them. Generally, teachers at the Rainbow School do not overtly exercise power over the students. In fact, I have been told that the school's founder wants the teachers to refrain from exercising any power of authority over the students. Nonetheless, the students expressed different views about the level of participation they can have in making decisions relating to their own learning and on various aspects school life. Some students mentioned that teachers do ask students or make agreements about classroom rules or other learning-related arrangements. Other students also explained that the teachers listen to their explanations if they have problems such as not being able to finish an assignment on time. Yet, there are quite a few students who did not think that the school is democratic because the teachers make decisions in which the students do not really have a say.

The way these students understand democracy is that everyone is able to have a say, and that they have equal rights. However, according to these students, their voices are not heard. The students pointed out that the school leadership and the teachers do not usually ask for students' opinions about important policies and practices, but that the students will just be informed, for example regarding changes in the curriculum or school rules. The students expressed rather negative views below.

> "On the surface the school seems to be democratic because they let students express their opinions such as on setting up rules. But on bigger issues students don't have the right to give opinions" (FGD, M3/2, 5.01. 12).

Some students expressed strong resentment over the perceived lack of space to voice their concerns:

> "Students have little voice … (our voice) doesn't make any difference" (FGD, M3/1, 17.10.11).

> "I want to have a school website where we can put our comments. I've googled other schools and saw that students can make comments about their schools but we can't do that here … so there are no opinions" (FGD, M3/2, 5.01.12).

Others talked about how negative reactions by some teachers have made them feel rejected:

> "When we complain to the teachers, they would sometimes respond in a way which just turns us down. They would say "so what". Then we don't know what to say. Well, we took time to explain … does the teacher not understand something? It felt like we have been rejected. There are teachers who listen to you, but there are also those who are not so open" (FGD, M4/1, 16.01.12).

It is striking to observe that this kind of interaction between the students and teachers mirrors how some of the teachers talked about their relationship with the administrators, especially with the school's top leadership. Evidently, the pattern of relationships between the students and some teachers has developed over the years and the students have responded to this situation through self-censorship and by becoming indifferent toward what the teachers say and do. In this connection, Mulder (2000) suggested that Thais cultivate the attitude of indifference to cope with the pressure of a hierarchical or obligation-inducing society (p. 66-67). Although such an attitude serves to maintain the smooth surface of Thai social life as pointed out by Mulder (2000: 89), this practice can hinder democratic values by creating a culture of non-participation and avoidance. Hence, according to the students:

> "We've learned that if the teachers are not OK with what we were trying to say, then we can't do anything. When we were in M1 we had some disagreements with the teacher but were not successful (in getting the teachers to accept our ideas), then the same thing happened in M2 and M3. So now we stop having any arguments and disagreements. We let the teachers do their own thing and we do our own thing. If the teachers complain, we listen … but we might not do what they ask us to do … so it becomes a problem" (FGD, M4/1, 16.01.12).

The comments by the students above also reveal that there are some contradictions in the ideas and practice of equality and horizontal relationships between students and teachers especially with regard to the exercise of the teachers' authority through their approval or disapproval of students' ideas and concerns. Furthermore, there seems to be some challenges in finding a balance between the development of autonomous individuals and the exercise of freedom of expression by the students on the one hand, and their adherence to the Thai cultural norm of showing respect and obedience toward those who are more senior, on the other. It can be seen that while teachers at the Rainbow School encourage students to express their views and to be critical in a classroom context or as part of the school's formal learning, they at the same time feel uncomfortable about the way their students express themselves or raise questions in other contexts, especially when it concerns various school rules and practices. The teachers are of the view that some students do not understand that there are limits to their freedom of expression. One teacher remarked that, "when they are upset (with the teachers) they would say or do anything without considering the consequences or thinking about how others may feel" (Interview, Teacher A, 10.10.11).

Similarly, a senior teacher pointed out that "the students cannot use their freedom to scold a teacher if the teacher has said something that they do not like and made them feel bad because knowing what's appropriate and giving respect to seniority is the strength of our culture. But they don't have to be afraid of seniority. They can tell the teachers that they are really upset but they have to do it politely" (Interview, Teacher B, 10.02 12).

In this respect, it becomes apparent that while the Rainbow School promotes a progressive curriculum and pedagogy, which can have positive implications for democratic learning, traditional values and norms concerning respect for and obedience toward authority and seniority continue to be enforced. Despite the adoption of a horizontal school structure, both teachers and students learn how to relate to people of different status through their everyday interactions which are embedded in Thai cultural norms. The importance of these norms as a guiding principle for the school's concept of democracy as communal living is reflected in a comment made by the vice-principal of the secondary school section. According to her "when we didn't have the term democracy, we lived together by adhering to culture and tradition … culture is our law … so we live by (the value of) *kala-thesa*" (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). The Thai cultural observation of *kala-thesa*, which refers to what is appropriate in terms of manner, behavior and expression according to the time and occasion, reflects an important value in Thai way of life. According to Van Esterik (cited in Jackson, 2004: 191) "this [Thai] contextual sensitivity to the right time and place for actions and statements is essential to the maintenance of the internally differentiated patterns of power over social life and cultural expressions…" However, as this norm comes into conflict with the value of autonomous individuals that the school also tries to promote, tensions are not easy to reconcile. This situation represents one aspect of the challenges to democratic learning and practices in a Thai school that has adopted an innovative and child-centered curriculum and pedagogy while at the same time embracing a communitarian ideology and Thai cultural norms to guide relationships and interactions between different school actors.

The way in which tensions and contradictions in democratic learning are manifested in an alternative school like the Rainbow School is somewhat different from what can be seen in a so-called democratic school like Chaisri Secondary which promotes a state-sponsored form of democracy and leadership building for marginalized students.

5.3.2 Engaging representational democracy: student council and the paradox of democratic learning

One of the most widely recognized forms of school democracy has been the involvement of students in the governance of school through the establishment of student councils. According to Inman and Burke (cited in Trafford, 2008: 415), school or student councils provide an important space for students to be consulted and given opportunities to experience responsibility; and as such, the councils can "send powerful messages to all pupils about the possibilities of the participation and about their values and worth within the institution and beyond." However, scholars have also cautioned that in a number of cases student councils as a space for participation and decision-making may be only symbolic (Beane and Apple, 2007; Tammi, 2013). In Thailand, the existence of student councils in Thai schools can be traced back to the late 1940s (Chob, 1959). In more contemporary times and under the current education reform, the Ministry of Education has been promoting student councils as a student activity by providing guidelines for strengthening the role of the councils as a platform for developing democracy and participation in education (OBEC, 2010: 3). However, the roles and responsibilities of student councils in the context of Thai schools as prescribed by the Ministry reflect a 'thin' conception of democracy which emphasizes leadership responsibilities within existing school hierarchies.[14] Thus, despite being a platform for student engagement, there are a number of contradictions and challenges associated with the idea and practice of this form of representational democracy in Thai schools.

At Chaisri Secondary, the student council appears to be the driver of its Model Democratic School project. According to the teacher in charge of this project, the school first earned its title as a Model Democratic School from the National Identity Board (NIB)/Office of National Identity Promotion (NIP) in 2008 as a result of the work of the school's student council. After she joined the school at the end of

[14] According to an OBEC handbook, the roles of a student council : 1) to provide leadership in carrying out school activities under the principle of good governance; 2) to protect the rights and freedom of oneself and of other students by using democratic and non-violence processes and means; 3) to encourage students to participate in school development; 4) to further knowledge, local wisdom, culture and national identity; and 5) to provide leadership in participating in community activities (OBEC, 2010: 15).

2008 and helped strengthen the existing student council, the school was recognized as a "Prototype Democratic School" in 2010 as it has been able to maintain its Model Democratic School status for three consecutive years including 2010 (Interview, Teacher J, 15.06.11). Although the criteria drawn up by the NIP for recognizing a school as a Model Democratic School are multi-dimensional,[15] the functioning of the student council and the work of its members have contributed to the various projects and activities that have earned the school this title. According to the school report presented to the NIP in 2010, activities which were considered as contributing to democratic practice in the school included: i) voting for the 'child rights' hero as part of the project run by *The World Children's Prize for the Child*[16]; ii) the school's academic clubs to promote students' learning capacity, collaboration and hands-on learning; iii) a workshop facilitated by the local Election Commission for students to learn about the functioning of Local Administrative Organizations and electronic voting; and iv) a special project to reinforce the proper practice of the morning flag ceremony as discussed earlier in this chapter (Report of Activities, 2010). Seen in this light, the democratic understanding and practices promoted at Chaisri Secondary have revolved around the electoral process, knowledge of the governance system, formation of interest groups and the inculcation of the national ideology centered on the nation, religion and monarchy. As such, these practices also reflect the conservative notion of democracy and democratic citizenship endorsed by the NIB/NIP.

The student council at Chaisri Secondary is recognized as part of the formal school structure with clear functions and mandates. At the time of this research, there were fifteen members in the student council. These council members belong to three different parties that contested a school-wide election in January 2010. Most of the council's members are currently students in Mathayom 6 which means that they joined the council toward the end of their Mathayom 4 year since council

[15] These are: i) activities in academic subjects that enhance democratic knowledge, social responsibility, and a democratic consciousness; ii) activities that promote democracy in schools such as a student body and interest clubs; iii) activities that promote understanding of democratic knowledge in the community; and iv) any student initiatives based on democratic principles that can be implemented sustainably (NIP, 2008: 17-19).

[16] This is an organization which rewards individuals who are recognized internationally for their dedication to promoting child rights.

members have two-year terms. In addition to these fifteen core council members, two representatives from each class have been assigned to act as sub-committee members. Council members have been assigned to take on different functions including those related to student activities, support and services, public relations and student patrols. They are also expected to attend meetings of the student council which are supposed to take place every month.

Members of the student council see the role of this student body as important to democratic learning and practice. For them, democracy is about listening to the voices of the majority and the student council being able to understand the needs of students through the class representatives. The chairperson gave an example of how the members of the council proposed to the teachers an adjustment to the starting time for the morning assembly by delaying it for fifteen minutes because they had noticed the problem of students arriving late. They also made suggestions to improve school facilities, proposals which were taken up by the school's director[17] (Interview, 9.08.11). Council members also mentioned how they have been able to exercise democratic decision-making during the council's meetings including by voting to support or reject certain proposals. Although this process is mostly carried out without a great deal of deliberation, members of the council still feel that they have generally been able to share their opinions during meetings and that the process of making decisions has been democratic, as members of the council can show their agreement and disagreement through voting (Fieldnotes, 25.05.11; FGD, student council members, 28.12.11). Similarly, other students also feel that they are able to choose and express their views about different school activities either through the council process or directly, a practice which they consider to reflect school's democracy. Although this seems to present a positive picture, upon closer examination it may be found that democracy through student participation is exercised in a more limited way. Below are some students' positive comments about democratic practices in their school:

> "The teachers don't insist on their own ideas. They will have a meeting and class reps will talk to other students in the class. (Teachers) will go

[17] However, it was unclear whether the idea of improving school facilities came from the student council or the school director had a project in mind and asked the student council to suggest the details.

with what students say" (FGD, incoming student council members, 29.02.12).

"When they (teachers) want to organize some activities, they would first ask if we want to do it … or what we want to do" (FDG, M4 (b), 6.01.12)

"Everyone gets to express their view … like what kind of T-shirts we want for sports day" (FGD, M3/2 (b), 26.09.11).
"When we are going out (on a school trip), (teachers) will ask students to vote where we want to go" (FGD, M3/2 (a), 22.09.11).

"When we have student clubs, they let us choose which one we want to join. In some other schools they assign you into groups, or you have to make a (lottery) draw (to pick which group to be in) (FGD, M3/2 (a), 22.09.11).

While it is important that the students are consulted about which school trips, school activities or the kind of T-shirt they prefer, it becomes evident that democracy as "choice-making" and "having a say" may, on some occasions, be a superficial one. In this connection, an M4 student who has just won the school election for the chair of the student council for the next academic year[18] talked about how she has not been satisfied with the kind of democracy she has experienced in the school. According to her:

"Teachers don't always listen to the students. Students want it this way, but the teachers don't want to agree. (An example of this is) when we had sports day and students wanted to play volleyball but the teachers didn't agree to it. They told us to play something else[19] because we have been

[18] As the term of the current student council members was coming to an end, the election for the new Chair of the Students Council took place on January 24th 2012. The new student council team was in place in mid February 2012 just before the end of the second term.

[19] Apparently, teachers suggested that students play traditional Thai sports instead.

> playing volleyball for many years and we might get bored. But in fact, the students still want to play it. In the end, we didn't get to play (volleyball) because the teachers wanted us to play something else. I think that if students are the ones who have to play and compete, the teachers should listen to us since they are not the ones who play" (Interview, 29.02.12).[20]

Similarly, although students mentioned that they can choose club activities they wish to join, in practice I have noticed that certain groups of students have better opportunities to sign up for more popular activities while other students have to take up ones which are less popular since there are limits on the number of students who can join clubs based on a first-come-first-served basis.[21]

In this respect, although the school appears to be democratic by providing the space for students to have a say and make a choice, the students' opinions may not always be prioritized or the options may not be accessible to all students. Furthermore, the kind of issues for which students' views are solicited also seems to also be limited to those which are considered 'safe' as they do not challenge the authority of the teachers, while decisions on such matters have little significant implication for the long term well-being of students. Therefore, the understanding of democracy in a 'democratic' school like Chaisri Secondary seems to be confined to a narrow concept and practice of students' representation and participation revolving around the existence of a formal representative body and consultation and decision-making on limited aspects of school life.

Anderson (1998) suggested that in order to move toward a more 'authentic' or meaningful participation and a greater democracy, questions on the 'spheres' and purposes of participation must be asked. According to him, authentic participation should result in both "*the strengthening of habit of direct democratic participation and the achievement of greater learning outcomes and social justice for*

[20] Although the comment made by this student actually contradicted her earlier positive statement that "teachers don't insist on their own ideas", the fact that she was making this critique about the teacher and the democratic practice of the school is rather unusual. Throughout my research period at this school, I rarely heard negative comments from students about the school and the teachers.

[21] For example, popular club activities included those of sports and excursion trips which tended to be filled up quickly by students in the upper secondary level and especially those on the student council.

all participants" (p. 576, italics in original). Thus, aside from deciding on school trips and student activities, students should be able to take part in making decisions on issues surrounding school rules and discipline, the appointment of teachers and curriculum and assessment which have a significant impact on the students themselves (Beane and Apple, 2007; Davies, 2008: 147). However, as pointed out earlier, students at Chaisri Secondary do not appear to have much input into administration, the school curriculum or important matters relating to school rules and discipline. In fact, with regard to this last issue, instead of raising questions about school rules and practices that carry negative implications for students, members of the student council play an active role in assisting teachers in monitoring and reinforcing school rules and the disciplinary system. This function of the student council which can be considered as a contradiction in democratic learning is briefly examined below.

5.3.2.1 Student council and teachers' authority

An important role of student councils in the context of Thai schools has been to assist teachers in monitoring and reinforcing school rules and the disciplinary system (Usanee and Srichai, 2010: 270). Members of the student council at Chaisri Secondary have been assigned different monitoring responsibilities. First, every morning when students are arriving at the school, council members have to take turns to be "on duty" at different 'stations' to help the teachers check on their peers. These stations include the front gate where students entering the school will be screened for the appropriateness of their uniform and hairdo; at the garage for motorcycle parking to ensure that students have parked their vehicles in an orderly way; and at different designated "development" areas where students in each class have been assigned responsibilities to keep the school premises clean each morning. Second, members of the council are expected to be the 'ears and eyes' for the school throughout the school day by notifying the teachers if they come across students who break the school rules or do not behave appropriately. The role of members of the council in this regard was explained in one of the council's meetings at the beginning of the school year which I attended. At the request of the teacher in charge of the school's disciplinary section, the chairperson of the council asked class representatives who are members of the sub-committee to list the names of members of their classes who are considered be 'at risk' of drug use or other problems. According to the

chairperson, “if students who have already been identified are caught by the teachers, they will not be punished. However, the teachers will punish those who have not been identified but are caught doing something wrong (Fieldnotes, 25.05.11). One teacher further explained to the students that the class representatives can find out about the at-risk behavior of their peers by observing them. She also reassured the students that “this is not to find fault in your friends but this is the way we can help them” (Fieldnotes, 25.05.11)).

The chairperson of the student council also explained to me the roles of council members as the ‘ears and eyes’ of the teachers.

> “The thirty members of the student council help to be the ‘ears and eyes’ of the teachers. If we see students not behaving appropriately, we can give them warnings but we can’t punish them. We tell them that we will inform the teachers … some people listen, others don’t care” (Interview, 9.08.11).

It is clear that the chairperson and other members of the student council are supportive of the school rules and disciplinary system. Not only could the chairperson elaborate on the school rules and disciplinary policies quite systematically as pointed out earlier, council members are of the view that the school rules and disciplinary system are well-thought out and well controlled. One council member mentioned that “when problems arise – like smoking – the teacher can take charge immediately, so now there are only a small number of students who would smoke on the school premise” (Interview, 9.08.11).

The role of student council members in monitoring student behavior while enforcing school rules and regulations imposed on the students seems to run counter to the idea of democratic learning that the student council is supposed to serve. Furthermore, by working closely with the teachers, members of the student council are sometimes seen as aides for the teachers rather than representing the voices of the students. One old-time teacher remarked that “members of the student council are just representatives of the teachers. The teachers assign them to take care of younger students. The teachers have oversight to ensure that things go accordingly.

They (students) don't really know much … we have to tell them what to do" (Interview, Teacher N, 22.02.12). So instead of the student council being a platform for students to practice critical thinking and deliberating their ideas, the body can be seen as a group of reliable students who can take a burden off teachers' shoulders by helping them organize different school activities without having much of their own initiative. Confirming this, the teacher in charge of the democratic school project commented positively on this service role of the student council: "Instead of the teachers having to do things by themselves, now they don't have to do anything since these students can do it for them. The teachers are happy and they feel positive toward these students. Members of the current team also know their duties quite well" (Interview, Teacher J, 15.06.11). The council chairperson also admitted that council members have only been carrying out their duties as assigned by the teacher while trying to organize their work more efficiently. According to him, "for any changes or new projects, we leave it to the teachers" (Interview, 9.08.11).

In this respect, there are some paradoxes in the functioning of the student council itself as part of a traditional hierarchical school structure that serves the status quo in the exercise of authority and control at the expense of promoting the values of mutual respect and autonomy of students. Furthermore, there are challenges associated with idea and practice of student councils being a platform for leadership development and the opportunities it offers for students from marginalized backgrounds, as discussed briefly below.

5.3.2.2 Developing leadership opportunities for disadvantaged youth

An important platform that provides opportunities for students from not so well-off backgrounds like those at Chaisri Secondary to practice leadership and other skills is the student council. From my observation, I saw members of the council taking up different responsibilities at the school. Aside from representing and being the voice of students in council meetings, council members also have responsibilities to carry out and lead routine activities at the school including the daily morning assembly and the students' radio program. They were also in charge of preparing for various school activities to commemorate different important days in Thailand, including Teachers' Day, the King's and the Queen's Birthdays

(which are celebrated as Fathers' and Mothers' Days), important Buddhist days and special activity days of the school such as sports day. When there were visitors to the school, members of the council took the lead in welcoming and taking care of the guests. On some occasions, they also made presentations about the school and the work of the student council to the visitors.

When asked what they consider the most useful learning for them in this school, the outgoing members of the council mentioned that they have been able to develop leadership skills. One female member remarked "I was very shy before, now I can talk in front of a big group". Being on the student council also has given the opportunity for some members to be exposed to the world outside the school. Another female member mentioned that "when there are activities outside, we get to represent the school. So, we have a chance to travel and also meet new friends from other schools." In this respect, the students are conscious of the opportunities they have at school. The chairperson of the council remarked that "if I were in a big school, I probably wouldn't have a chance to run for the chair of the council or to represent the school in some projects. I'm not that good to be in the King class.[22] In big schools, students in the King class will get first chance. So, those in not so good classes will get their chances when something is left over" (Interview, 9.08.11).

Indeed, average students in a small school like Chaisri Secondary may have more opportunities to engage in special activities than their peers in bigger schools. However, it must be recognized that key members of the student council are considered more privileged in this small school serving largely students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Considering the responsibilities of and expectations on members of the council, it is no surprise to learn that some of them have been encouraged and groomed to take up leadership roles in the school. When asked why he won the election for the post of student council chairperson, the outgoing chairperson responded that it was because he knows many students and teachers. His friend also added that "he is good at work, and the teacher supports him" (Interview, 9.08.11). Similarly, the incoming chairperson is apparently a popular student as she has represented the school on different occasions and has won the

[22] King class refers to the classroom with top students as schools normally track the students according to their academic abilities.

school many awards. However, encouraging students to commit to working on the council was not easy. The teacher who has been in charge of the democratic school project also noted that some students did not want to be on the council saying that they have to work and get tired without getting anything. Thus, the teacher tried to point out the benefits of students becoming members of the council including the opportunity for them to gain more confidence. Furthermore, in order to recognize their efforts and give them further motivation, this year the school also plans to provide scholarships to members of the student council. According to the teacher, members at the lower secondary level will receive 1,500 baht per term while those at the upper level will be entitled to 2,000 baht per term.

It is no coincidence that the key members of the student council are also academically better students. An old-time teacher was of the view that students who are academically weak are often those with poor manners and better students are from more well-to-do families. They are also better behaved (Interview, Teacher M, 22.09.11). It may be seen that better-off students have more opportunity to develop leadership and other skills. Hence, knowledge and opportunity become yet another privilege for those who are already privileged. This situation seems to present challenges as to how the traditional school structure and system can bring about greater equality of opportunity for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In this respect, the challenges for democratic and social justice education in a 'democratic' school like Chaisri Secondary lie in the school's understanding and practice of a 'thin' concept of democracy that rests on instrumental and representative democracy as oppose to a deeper conception of democracy embedded in meaningful participation, equality, and justice. The functioning of the student council as representing representational democracy and the voices of students on the one hand and their role as the 'ears and eyes' of the teachers on the other can also be considered a paradox of democratic learning and practices in the school. Furthermore, the school follows dominant practices which are seen as reinforcing the national ideology, conformity and authoritarian control. While some of these latter aspects are also evident at the Rainbow School, the school negotiates these hegemonic ideas differently through the lens of progressivism to reinforce some of these values while trying to enhance students' self-development. However, the coexistence of the

school's adherence to certain traditional values and practices and its attempts to become more liberal and progressive in its learning approach have resulted in some contradictions and challenges for democratic learning.

The paradoxes of education for democracy and social justice as discussed in this chapter can be seen as a reflection of tensions between the competing goals of education (e.g., respecting authority and maintaining discipline/conformity vs. developing autonomous individuals, critical thinking and a democratic way of life). At the same time, they represent challenges in the promotion and practices of education for democracy and social justice in a stratified society. The next chapter considers the role of Buddhism in citizen construction and learning for democracy and social justice in Thai schools.

CHAPTER VI
BUDDHISM AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MORAL CITIZENS IN THAI SCHOOLS

Aside from economic and political ideologies, religion has a significant influence over education and learning in most societies. As pointed out in Chapter 2, Buddhism has been an integral part of citizen construction in Thailand since historical times. The religious aspect of education continues to play an important role in shaping the goals of Thai education including those under the current education reform. Although at the larger societal level, different schools of Buddhism continue to be practiced and promoted with varying popularity,[1] in the educational realm the state has largely consolidated a uniform teaching of Buddhism that draws on both traditional and reconstructed views and practices of the religion. In essence, a state-sponsored form of Buddhism with a traditional emphasis on inculcating good citizens has acquired content and characteristics (forms and practices) similar to the reconstructed Buddhism supported by a section of urban intellectuals and the middle class. Knowledge about Buddhism is uniformly transmitted through the subject of Buddhist studies in the formal school curriculum while daily school practices which are supposed to reflect Buddhist values and principles have also been promoted. Despite the uniform presentation of state-sponsored Buddhism in Thai education, this chapter argues that in practice the two schools under this study draw on Buddhist values and principles to serve different purposes of citizen construction.

As will be illustrated in this chapter, at Chaisri Secondary, Buddhist principles and ethics are drawn upon to serve a conservative cultural and political goal of education by constructing good persons and citizens who are obedient, responsible, respectful, well-behaved, disciplined, and free from vice. This process of citizenship construction is carried out through the adoption of particular school routines and the

[1] These include, for example, the Dhammakaya and Santi Asoke movements which have somewhat different focuses and practices from mainstream state-prescribed Buddhism.

annual moral/ethical training camp that is considered part of the formal school curriculum. This situation is somewhat different from that at the Rainbow School which caters for middle- and upper-class students. Here, the school subscribes to the reconstructed idea of Buddhism that is intended to serve the self- and social development goals of education through the promotion of moderate living and a communal way of life. However, this practice is not without tension. Furthermore, despite the social potential of Buddhism as adopted by the Rainbow School, the way that Buddhism emphasizes the cultivation of self and the individual's moral or right conduct carries important implications for an understanding and analysis of social justice from a more structural perspective. Before discussing how the two schools adopt or negotiate religious ideology and practice in detail, it is important to first revisit the link between Buddhism, education and citizen construction.

6.1 Cultural construction of citizens: Buddhism, moral values and citizen construction

As pointed out in Chapter 2, Thailand has a long history of monastic education where traditional teaching was centered on instilling Buddhist moral and ethical virtues while imparting basic skills in reading, writing and arithmetic (Somwung and Siridej, 2000: 82; Vichai, 2007: 78). However, the development of Buddhism as a state ideology and its influence on citizen construction in contemporary Thailand took shape along with the development and spread of the country's modern education system that began in the reign of King Chulalongkorn. Although religious teaching was not included as part of the formal curriculum at the beginning of his education project as it was seen as against modern ideas, toward the end of his reign in 1898, King Chulalongkorn instructed Prince Vachirayan, his half-brother, to develop primary education by building on the traditional monastic school system. From then on, Buddhist teaching and learning became an integral part of the modern national education curriculum (Vichai, 2007: 88). It is important to note that prior to this, the teaching of Buddhism had already been more secularized by Chulalongkorn's father, King Mongkut (1804-1868; reigned 1851-1868), who had exposure to Western

thought and took an interest in science.[2] King Mongkut emphasized the rationality and tangible worldly utility of Buddhism over beliefs in the sacred and transcendental aspects of the religion as had been previously practiced (Phra Paisal Visalo, 2003). This shift has arguably provided an important foundation for the appropriation of Buddhist teaching to serve nation building and citizen construction in the years that followed.

Prince Vachirayan became an important figure in the process of reinterpreting Buddhism as he trained monks and developed standard textbooks for primary education (Baker and Pasuk, 2009: 67). Important reinterpretations of Buddhist teaching that were made included those concerning the effect of individual conduct as well as conduct between individuals. On the former, it was noted that Prince Vachirayan reinterpreted the result of individual merit; rather than having an effect on the individual themselves as in previous Buddhist teaching, the result of merit was now connected to society – which was defined as the state. At the same time, the conduct of individuals became linked with their roles and status e.g., as parents-children; husbands-wives; teachers-students, and the effects of such conduct on the nation. For instance, parents can gain merit "by raising their children to be healthy so that the boys can serve in the army in due time and then become able citizens while girls can become good mothers and also capable citizens" (Prince Vachirayan, cited in Phra Paisal, 2003: 33. Author's translation).

In this respect, Suwanna (1989) noted that the use of Buddhist moral and ethical values in the construction of good persons by the state was inseparable from the construction of good citizens. In her study of moral education curricula from 1905 to 1981, she found that virtues that have been given particular emphasis included those of gratitude, discipline, honesty, loyalty and sacrifice (p.51). Students learn that they should feel gratitude not only toward their parents but also toward the nation, the king and national heroes. All can show gratitude toward the nation by paying taxes and taking care of national property (Suwanna, 1989: 49). Along the same line, Mulder (1997) also noted from his study of school textbooks of the 1990 revised curriculum that they continued to present the idea that "people who are religiously good will also

[2] King Mongkut, who ordained as Vachirayan Bhikhu, also institutionalized a new order of Buddhism known as the Thammayut sect.

be tractable subjects who, because of this, contribute to the country's prosperity, stability and peacefulness" (p. 37). Furthermore, Suwanna (1989) pointed out that the close connection between Buddhism and 'Thainess' is reinforced through the teaching of proper Thai manners, observation of Buddhist ceremonies and appropriate Buddhist conduct in the moral or Buddhist studies curriculum. As such, Buddhism as a state ideology with its focus on instilling individuals' moral and appropriate conduct has been an integral part of the construction of good persons and good citizens in Thai society throughout the last century.

A review of school textbooks in Buddhist studies of the 2001 and the 2008 revised curricula as well as those prepared under the earlier curriculum[3] indicates that the different aspects of Buddhist knowledge and practice to be learnt have not changed significantly over the past thirty years. The main learning topics which have been prescribed since the earlier curriculum include the history of Buddhism and the Buddha, different Buddhist principles and virtues; duties and appropriate practices of Buddhist monks and lay Buddhists; important Buddhist days and Buddhist ceremonies; meditation practice; and proper manners of Buddhists including how to show respect toward seniors and Buddhist monks. In addition, there is some new content in the textbooks prepared under the 2001 and 2008 revised curricula which reflect more current societal concerns as well as the shifting development ideology. These include topics such as Buddhism and societal problems and development issues; Buddhism and the sufficiency economy; and development of holistic thinking in a Buddhist way.[4]

In the context of the ongoing education reform and in light of growing concerns over declining moral virtues, increasing youth delinquency and the impact of globalization, the role of Buddhism in the inculcation of good persons and good citizens has gained further emphasis (Cranley, et al, 2001). Although the current

[3] *Baep rian phraphutthasatsana*, [Textbook of Buddhist Studies], Mathayom 3, 1978 Curriculum (revised in 1990), Ministry of Education

[4] *Nangsue rian phraphutthasatsana* [Textbook of Buddhist Studies] Mathayom 3, 2001 and 2008 Curriculum, Institute of Academic

curriculum[5] prescribes only one unit (50 minutes) of religions (Buddhist studies) per week, Buddhist practices such as chanting and the inculcation of Buddhist moral and ethical values have been integrated into the daily routines and practices of most Thai schools. Important Buddhist days are also observed and celebrated as part of the schools' extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the project entitled 'Buddhist Way Schools' was introduced by the Ministry of Education in 2003 during the administration of Thaksin Shinawatra as a way to integrate Buddhist values and principles into the schools' teaching and learning process (Ministry of Education, 2003). The core concept of this invention is said to draw on Buddhist principles as have been re-articulated by Venerable P.A. Payutto in his vision of education and sustainable development discussed in Chapter 3. These principles include those of the three-fold education or *sikkhattaya*,[6] the principle of systematic and holistic thinking or *yonisomanasikara* and the principle of 'kind or friendly support' or *kalyanamitra* to guide interactions/relationships between members of the school community. In practical terms, the Buddhist Way Schools project expects the integration of Buddhist principles mentioned above into six areas of school practice: i) school management; ii) pedagogical approach; iii) daily school routines; iv) physical arrangement of the school; v) development of school personnel; and vi) community engagement (ibid). The ways in which Chaisri Secondary and the Rainbow School go about responding to and negotiating the various principles and practices are somewhat different, with important implications for citizenship learning and construction, as will be discussed below.

[5] In the 2001 and 2008 revised curricula, Buddhist studies is a learning strand within the study area of Social Studies, Religion and Culture.

[6] This three-fold education includes moral discipline or *sila*, mental concentration or *samadhi*, and wisdom or *panya*. In the National Education Curriculum of 2001, the approach toward Buddhist studies is said to be consolidated on the core Buddhist principle of this three-fold training.

6.2 Inculcating good Buddhists, good persons and good citizens at Chaisri Secondary

6.2.1 School environment and routines

With the origin of Chaisri Secondary associated with a Buddhist abbot as patron, instilling religious values has always been an important part of school practice. By becoming part of the "Buddhist Way School" project in 2004 however, teachers have been sent for Buddhist training organized at different monasteries. The school has also adopted a number of new practices and new school physical arrangements in accordance with the project's guideline. Such practices have included the invention of a Buddhist greeting of "dharma sawasdee" in place of the regular Thai greeting of "sawasdee". The physical space of the school has also rearranged to create an atmosphere supposedly conducive for a Buddhist way of learning. At the school entrance, a large Buddha image is prominently located to remind students and teachers of the Buddhist trinity.[7] There is also a 'dharma patio' where there are benches for students to sit while absorbing Buddhist teaching and verses which are written on small pieces of wood or plastic cards attached to the trees in the surrounding area, resembling the atmosphere of many temples around the country.

Aside from the adoption of a new greeting and adjustments to the physical context, the school has also put in place new routines that are supposed to indicate a greater adherence to Buddhism. Initiated in 2005, these routines, which were framed under a project called "Five Good Deeds in the Buddhist Way," aimed to promote positive behavior among students by integrating Buddhist principles and practices into routine activities on different school days. At the same time, these activities are supposed to reflect democratic values and practices that are drawn on the Buddhist principles of *kharawatham* (respect), *samakkhitham* (unity) and *panyatham* (wisdom) which have been widely promoted by various agencies and through school textbooks as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Under this project, every student at Chaisri Secondary is required to follow a different routine on each day of the week from 8:10

[7] This includes the Buddha himself, his teaching or 'dharma', and the Buddhist monks who carry on the Buddhist teaching.

to 9:10 each morning after the morning assembly. Although the different routines were no longer being carried out in full during the time of this research, I was able to observe some activities that continue to be practiced.

From my observation of some of the activities and from information provided in the school's report, it is noticeable that the focus of the various routines is on reinforcing duty and responsibility, discipline and good manners and on addressing a general concern over the problem of youth delinquency. Every Wednesday morning for example, students in each class are assigned the responsibility to clean up different areas in the school. According to a report by the school, the aim of this weekly routine is to enable students to develop responsibility for their duties, to collaborate in carrying out their tasks and to sacrifice for the collective good (Student Council Report, 2010). The report also indicated that this activity reflects the Buddhist virtue of *samakkhitham* or unity, and as such, the activity is also considered part of the school's democratic practice. Similarly, on Thursday, which is designated as the school's Buddhist day, students are required to wear a white uniform and recite a longer version of a Buddhist prayer.[8] As part of the practice, the students are to show respect to each other with a *wai* when they pass prayer books on to the student sitting next to them. The *wai* gesture in this process is highlighted in the school's report as important, as it reflects the practice of good manners and the virtue of respect or *kharawatham*, which is also considered part of the democratic values promoted by the school. Other practices indicated in the school report as reflecting the virtue of respect include the annual Teachers' Day and Gratitude Day ceremonies for students to show gratitude to their teachers and the late abbot who founded the school. Furthermore, the school also drew on the Buddhist principle of *kalyanamitra* or 'friends who can provide the right support' to foster school discipline and the prevention of vice through its weekly routine on Tuesdays when class advisors check on the hygiene and proper uniforms of their students. Occasionally, local health officers came to provide information to the students on specific health concerns such as on HIV/AIDS, dengue fever, and sex education. Some Tuesdays were reportedly spent on anti-drug campaign activities, including testing students for substance abuse. The results of this

[8] During the time of this research, this activity has been retimed to take place during the last session of the school day.

activity, according to the school's report, were that students gained better physical and mental health; they were able to comply better with the school's dress code and were able to follow basic hygiene (Student Council Report, 2010: 44).

In this respect, it can be seen that the various school routines which are said to draw on Buddhist principles have been used to develop students to become good persons and good citizens who are responsible, disciplined, grateful, well-mannered and free of vice. These virtues and conduct reflect both the concept of good citizens as has been traditionally promoted and the increasing problem of youth delinquency in contemporary Thai society. While personal responsibility, good manners, gratitude and discipline are desirable traits, it has been argued that the ways in which these virtues are conventionally promoted through obligation and obedience may not contribute toward the kind of democratic citizenship that depends on critical reflection and action by the citizenry (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004: 224). In the same vein, the ways in which teachers at Chaisri Secondary have also tried to teach moral and ethical values to their students during class time to enable them to become good persons and good citizens can also raise concerns over the kind of citizens being constructed.

An old-time teacher of art mentioned how he has been trying to deter his students from committing any wrong-doing by teaching them about the law of "karma" and the consequences of doing good and bad deeds during his own class time. One example he gave was telling the students about the case of a prisoner who had been given the death sentence for committing a drug-related crime. According to the teacher who used a video clip to show the story to his students, "the students can see the reaction of a person knowing he is about to die after committing a crime. They (students) became quiet (after watching the clip). Some of the clips are quite shocking for them" (Interview, Teacher N, 22.02.12). When asked if he discussed different perspectives on the death penalty or if he thought it would contravene the Buddhist precept against killing, the teacher had a negative response saying that he neither thought about asking students' opinions nor considered the issue from the other perspective. As such, teaching moral virtues is based on a moral imperative rather than allowing discussion of contexts or different understandings of values. Furthermore, the teaching method focuses on drilling and repeating the same

messages. For example, an English teacher talked about how she would try to give moral lessons to the students in her class and during the morning assembly. According to her, "we have to repeat it many times ... talking about certain values. … Sometimes, I will tell them stories … to show that when they do something (not good) … what the consequences would be" (Interview, Teacher O, 13.01.12). In this connection, Mulder (1997) also pointed out that the method of teaching ethics in Thai society is such that it is "repetitious" and thus results in "the observable fact that Thais can classify the world into 'good' and 'not good' in a simply black and white model divorced from the experience of everyday life" (p. 38). This kind of learning can arguably have the effect of hindering the development of ethical judgment and understanding of values essential in a democratic society.

Usanee and Srichai (2010) observed that schools which cannot excel in academic areas find their source of recognition through enforcing discipline and instilling good morality to ensure students' proper behavior. While teachers at Chaisri Secondary have always considered moral education to be an important part of their teaching at the school, the way that teachers here have adopted deficit perspectives toward their students has also contributed to a greater emphasis on reinforcing students' proper moral conduct. Thus, the instilling of moral values, responsibility, good manners and discipline in students can also be seen as serving the interests of the school in maintaining order and gaining recognition for the school itself. In this connection, the Buddhist Way School project has offered another channel for the school to reinforce moral and ethical values among students while also gaining some recognition for its efforts.[9] However, the way that Buddhism has been used to instill morality and discipline and to curb youth delinquency is not necessarily unique to Chaisri Secondary or schools that have participated in the Buddhist Way School project.

As part of the efforts to instill Buddhist moral and ethical values and culture in young people, the Ministry of Education has initiated several projects in this direction. Aside from the Buddhist Way School initiative, the National Education

[9] Chaisri Secondary was recognized as a Model Buddhist Way School in 2008 before being recognized as a Leading Buddhist Way School in 2011. These awards were given by the Office of the Basic Education Commission, Ministry of Education.

Curriculum of 2001 and the revised 2008 curriculum require students from primary level 4 to secondary level 6 (Prathom 4 to Mathayom 6) to attend a kind of moral and ethical training camp as part of their Buddhist studies. Thus, many Buddhist temples around the country have been organizing this kind of training camp for students since 2003 when the 2001 Curriculum came into effect.[10] Chaisri Secondary also started to participate in this kind of training camp in academic year 2004/5. This activity has since become an important annual event for instilling moral and ethical values for the entire student body at the school. In this respect, another way in which Buddhism has been used in the project of citizen construction in the period of the current education reform can be discerned through the engagement of Buddhist monks in this moral and ethical training camp partly illustrated below.

6.2.2 "Moral and Ethical Training Camp": moral education and citizen construction

During the time of my research at Chaisri Secondary, the "Moral and Ethical Training Camp" took place in the second month of the first semester. The venue for this two day camp was at a large and well-known temple in Nakhon Pathom Province. The school rented several buses to take its 300 students to the temple and almost all of the teaching staff also accompanied the students there. All students stayed at the temple for this three-day and two-night training program. As I was not able to join the group on the first day, I learnt from some teachers that on Day One the monks spent some time introducing the program and giving students a tour of the temple. The monks also made some presentations about appropriate Buddhist manners and taught students to meditate. On the second day when I was able to observe the training, the morning session began with a brief meditation period. There were two monks who were giving instructions and monitoring students. After some other 'warm up' exercises, one of the two monks told the students that he will begin the main part of the training which was going to be about how to lead a proper life.

[10] Schools may also organize their own moral and ethical training camps at different venues. However, many schools, especially those offering secondary level education, prefer to send their students to attend training camps organized by Buddhist temples.

The monk first showed the students series of short video clips about different aspects of teenagers' problems including scenes about teenage pregnancy and juvenile crime. Then he showed some short cartoon clips which were supposed to teach students about the consequences of being too greedy and the value of co-operation. After a short break, the monk continued showing more cartoon clips supposedly with a message about 'doing good deeds and receiving good in return, committing bad deeds and receiving bad in return,' although how this message connected with the cartoon clips was not very clear to me. Then the monk showed a longer movie about the lives of a teenage brother and sister with the sister being projected as the hope of the mother while the brother was seen as a bad boy. But as the story turned out, the sister became pregnant by her boyfriend, causing a huge disappointment to her mother while the brother tried to become a better person and finally won the love and understanding of his mother. The monk also showed some video clips with scenes of young women getting illegal abortions. These scenes were rather unpleasant to watch and they were probably meant to scare young women. The monk concluded that while students may want to try new experiences they have to think about the consequences of their actions. He also reminded students to always ask themselves if they want to be students or if they want to become parents. The message from the monk was that one has to be patient and restrain oneself from engaging in inappropriate behavior.

Toward the end of the morning session, the monk showed more video clips about the health consequences of smoking and drinking including a scene in an operating theatre where doctors cut a dirty-looking lung out of a smoker. The monk then asked all students to close their eyes and asked those who have tried smoking or other misbehavior to raise their hands as no one would see. Some boys raised their hands. I could also see that some students were looking around. Then the monk asked for a show of hands for those who thought they could quit smoking. There were a few hands raised. The monk then asked for a volunteer who was willing to share his/her story with some lesson to be learnt from it (implying something negative). However, no one volunteered this time around despite attempts from the monk to both encourage them and threaten to pick on someone who was not sitting up straight. In the end, when the monk was about to choose one student at random, a male student stood up

and walked up to the stage. The monk asked this student if he intended to quit smoking. The student told the monk that he wanted to try to reduce the number of cigarettes because he had become afraid of dying. The monk thanked the student for coming forward before he released the whole group for the lunch break. (Fieldnotes, 30.06.11)

The activities described above reflect some important aspects of learning prescribed in what can be seen as the standard Buddhist moral and ethical training program promoted by the Office of the Education Council (OEC), Ministry of Education.[11] These aspects include learning about the danger of engaging in vice, the value of gratitude toward one's own parents, and learning to become good youth for the nation.[12] However, as can be seen from the training session above, the methods used by the monks for teaching moral virtues may not be the most constructive as they tended to emphasize feelings of fear and guilt in constructing good persons and good citizens. Such methods, which are similar to what the teachers use in school, do not invite critical reflection and meaningful participation on the part of the students. At the same time, it is evident that Buddhism continues to be used to construct good citizens who are loyal to the three institutions.

Aside from refraining from delinquent behavior, young people are told that to become good youth for the nation, they have the duty to "love the nation," "respect religion," and "revere the king" (OEC, 2003: 150). According to the training program

[11] In light of the 2001 Education Curriculum requirements, the Office of the Education Council, with its mandate to develop educational plans had supported *Wat Panyanantaram* to develop a Buddhist moral and ethical training program handbook to be disseminated to schools and temples nationwide. ชุดฝึกอบรม หลักสูตร การจัดการฝึกอบรมคุณธรรม ๒ คืน ๓ วัน ค่ายพุทธบุตร ค่ายพุทธธรรม วัดปัญญานันทาราม (OEC, 2003).

[12] Other aspects of learning as prescribed in the standard Buddhist moral and ethical training program which I did not directly observe include: i) learning about Buddhist culture and way of life; ii) learning appropriate Buddhist manners and appropriate Buddhist practices on important Buddhist holidays and on different merit-making occasions; iii) meditation practice; iv) learning about the Buddhist trinity and duties and qualities of Buddhists including the core Buddhist teachings; and v) learning to be good students of their teachers. According to the training handbook, there should also be a ritual section for students to express gratitude toward the Buddha, their teachers and their parents so as to enable them to make a commitment to improve themselves morally and ethically (OEC, 2003)

handbook, students would be asked to reflect on the royally composed lyric *rao su*[13]or "we fight" on the ways in which the ancestors of the Thai have sacrificed for the nation, and to ask themselves "what can we do for the nation?" (ibid: 151). Furthermore, becoming good youth for the nation involves maintaining right conduct including having good thoughts, good speech, and good actions; to choose good persons or *kalyanamitra* as friends, and to frequent good places[14] (ibid: 157-8). It is interesting to point out that the virtue of good speech is depicted through a Thai saying "*phut di pen si kae pak, phut mak pak mi si*" meaning 'good speech brings honor to the mouth, excessive speech brings a colored (bloody) mouth'. In this connection, the story of a young lad who, by flattering a bald old man, gained the latter's cows and his daughter is also given to illustrate the virtue of good speech. However, questions may be raised on what moral lessons should actually be drawn from both the saying and the story. The saying can be understood to mean that one should not say things that may be seen as inappropriate although they may be the right thing to say. From the story, one may conclude that good speech may involve saying things that are not genuine in order to gain. While there can be discussion over different possible interpretations and understandings of the values and virtues being inculcated, this rarely takes place. This may be related to the problem in moral and value education observed by Zajda (2009: xx) that such education "is based on a discourse of moral imperative …" [which] "denotes reification , rather than critical thinking."

Students at Chaisri Secondary seem to be very well aware of the values and behavior that the annual moral and ethical training camp intends to promote. A Mathayom 6 student who has had the opportunity to participate in different training camps over the last many years told me that the various camps he attended had a similar purpose of "teaching students to have good thoughts, good speech and good

[13] The song is about how the Thai ancestors fought to protect the land of the Thais so that the next generation can live on this land.

[14] Good places สถานที่ดี refer to those with people of good morals and ethics such as temples and educational institutions (OEC, 2003: 158).

actions."[15] According to him, "the monks try to use different methods of training so that students can enjoy doing something good … it's like there has to be some way to attract (students)" (Interview, M6, 26.09.11). While this particular student seemed to have enjoyed his experience from the moral and ethical camps, other students found this kind of moral preaching less interesting. One outspoken Mathayom 4 student remarked that "it's boring to watch videos and to listen to the preaching. I'd rather be doing something more active" (Interview, M4 (a), 28.12.11). Nevertheless, the teachers feel that this kind of moral inculcation can have some positive effect on the students. In the words of a teacher, "we organize this kind of activity for them and we tell them what they could learn from the activity. It might not work for everyone but if we do it repeatedly, something will get through, even though it might be just for a split second. Some students have tears in their eyes when the monks preach. Their hearts will soften and they will listen more" (Interview, Teacher J, 6.12.11).

The context of Chaisri Secondary above illuminates how Buddhism has continued to play an important role in the project of citizen construction in Thai society. The school curriculum and practices draw on Buddhist moral virtues to reinforce values and behavior which are considered appropriate, including discipline, duty/responsibility, gratitude and self-restraint to construct good persons and citizens. Mulder (2000: 102) argued that in this way Buddhist values and teaching are being recast "to fit into the mould of the Thai ethos," and as such, serve the purpose of Thai socialization and the requirements of the state rather than reflecting Buddhist wisdom. This situation is somewhat different from that at the Rainbow School where although Buddhist moral values are also used to develop students' moral conduct, the school has further embraced deeper and more holistic principles and practices of Buddhism to guide students' daily lives which can serve the goal of both self and social development. Nevertheless, there is also some tension between the values and practices that the school tries to inculcate and the middle-class background of the students, as will be discussed in the following section.

[15] This student mentioned that he has been participating in moral and ethical training camps since Mathayom 1. The school has arranged for camps at a different temple each year depending on the school's preference and the availability of the program.

6.3 Engaging in reconstructed Buddhism: moderation, mindfulness and sustainable development

> "The Rainbow School is a Buddhist School that incorporates the teachings of Buddhism into its curriculum and teaching methodology. The school environment and its daily routine from kindergarten to Mathayom provide supportive conditions for developing its pupils toward becoming persons with good thoughts, good speech and good actions …"
>
> (School's Poster)

At the Rainbow School, Buddhist principles and practices exert an important influence over the school's vision and learning approach. In several of the school's publications, references are made to the Buddhist learning principles articulated by the scholar monk P.A. Payutto. When talking to the school's administrators, they mentioned several times that the school has sought support and advice from "*khruba ajarn*" or teachers like Venerable P.A. Payutto and others on the direction of the school during its founding years. Thus, although the learning approach at the Rainbow School is said to draw on different models and theories, the school's core documents also describe the Buddhist concepts of the three-fold education or *sikkhattaya*, systematic and holistic thinking or *yonisomanasikara* and the principle of kind support and relationship or *kalyanamitra* as integral to the school's teaching and learning approach. Furthermore, the school also pays attention to creating a school atmosphere that is peaceful and conducive to a Buddhist way of learning similar to that of Chaisri Secondary. A Buddha image is located in the area where secondary school students gather for the morning assembly while verses from the Buddhist teachings are written on small pieces of wood attached to the trees surrounding the school area. However, when asked if the Rainbow School is a 'Buddhist Way School,' the vice-principal of the secondary school section said that it is, but not necessarily of the type introduced during the Thaksin administration. "We have adopted Buddhist principles and practices even before this project came out" (Interview, Administrator G, 10.10.11). In any case, the school is known quite widely

as an alternative school that has embraced Buddhist values and principles. It also became a site for studies on topics relating to Buddhist Way School.[16]

According to a school publication describing its educational approach, education in a Buddhist way as adopted and practiced by the Rainbow School aims at cultivating wisdom by emphasizing correct learning processes and daily practice. Thus, Buddhist values, principles and practices are integrated into various aspects of school life. Aside from observing a daily routine of Buddhist chanting and merit-making on important Buddhist holidays as are common in other Thai schools, the Rainbow School also draws on different Buddhist values and principles to guide learning processes at different stages.[17] At the secondary level, which is the focus of this study, the emphasis on the learning process is for the students to be their own *kalyanamitra* by applying holistic and systemic thinking or *yonisomanasikara* when faced with real issues and problems, including in their community-based learning projects such as the one on rice cultivation or the Thai National Spatial Development Plan 2600 B.E. as discussed in Chapter 4.

Aside from the integration of Buddhist principles and values into the school's formal learning approach, Buddhist values and practices also guide daily school routines, which are considered an important aspect of citizen construction. At the Rainbow School, school life is guided by the idea of communal life and the practice of moderate consumption and harmonious living linked to Buddhist values and principles as articulated by Venerable P.A. Payutto. In practical terms, these concepts have been translated into particular school arrangements and practices which teachers and students are expected to follow. These important practices are concerned with spatial arrangements for teachers and students as well as food preparation and consumption. First, with regard to spatial arrangements, teachers and students at the Rainbow School share the same floor space with no separate teacher's offices. This arrangement is supposed to allow both students and teachers to approach one another

[16] See for example, Phra Maha Nattan (2003)

[17] At the pre-primary level for example, the emphasis is placed on instilling values of gratitude and developing the moral discipline (*sila*) of children through their daily routines. At the primary level, there continues to be an emphasis on the value of gratitude and the development of moral discipline and self-awareness through exposure to a variety of hands-on and community-based learning experiences.

quite readily in a family and home-like atmosphere. Since the school has also adopted the value of moderate consumption and harmonious living, teachers are also expected to guide their students by personal example such as by wearing simple cotton or Thai-style outfits and not using expensive, modern gadgets. Students are at the same time expected to keep classrooms and the common living space clean, to use energy and resources efficiently[18] and to be moderate in their use of expensive and fancy equipment. Students and teachers routinely separate their trash and the school runs a recycling center project in which members of the school community, including parents, have been actively taking part.

The second important aspect of the school's daily practice concerns food preparation and meal times which take place in a collective manner. When students take their morning and afternoon breaks, members of each class take turns to be responsible for serving snacks to other students in the class. For lunch, students also have the responsibility to prepare their own meals which the school considers a part of the life-skill learning process. The level of responsibility for meal preparation varies from the younger students to older students. Students in the lower-secondary school are only responsible for serving lunch that has already been prepared by the school's kitchen staff while students in the upper-secondary school have to take turns to prepare lunch for the entire upper secondary school section comprising around 150 students.[19] The food which has been prepared both by the school's kitchen staff and by the students themselves is usually simple, but healthy Thai dishes. Students and class teachers take their meals together every day in their own classrooms. Before taking their meals, they recite a brief saying to remind themselves about the value of food and to appreciate those who have produced and prepared it so that they consume mindfully and moderately. Both students and teachers also have to clean their own dishes after meals.

[18] There are no air-conditioners in the classrooms.

[19] According to a teacher, it used to be that the students had to go and buy the ingredients for the meals themselves. But as this process seemed to take time, the students now only have to come up with a menu and calculate the ingredients needed and the kitchen staff would buy the ingredients for them (Interview, Teacher E).

Important school routines and practices at the Rainbow School as described above serve different purposes. According to the teachers, the school tries to instill the values of responsibility, self-discipline and simple living through its daily routines. Pedagogically, communal living enables students from middle- and upper-class backgrounds, who may never need to do any home chores, to learn to take such responsibilities at the school. At the same time, this arrangement allows teachers to observe and support students more closely and to guide them more appropriately. It is also clear that the emphasis on moderation and harmonious living as a concept and moral idea also reflects values of social and environmental concern that the school and, to a certain extent, the parents consider to be important. According to the teachers, the value of different school practices is explained to the students so that they can understand and appreciate the purposes of the various school routines. Below, students in Mathayom 4 and 5 talked about what they considered as some of the benefits of the school's routines guided by Buddhist values and the practice of mindfulness, moderation and sustainable development.

> "Chanting teaches us to be patient. No teenager would want to sit and pray. But it's to teach us to be patient with things we don't like. In the future we will surely have to be patient. If we face big problems and we don't have enough patience to deal with them then it might end up like walking away, I don't care, or committing suicide" (FGD, M4/2, 12.01.12).

> "I think what we have been doing in school has some impact on our lifestyle. There was a teacher who taught us to be environmentally conscious. She would get us into the habit of reducing waste and recycling. I didn't know how this has changed me but I realize that I don't use so many plastic bags now. When we go to the market we carry our own bags. Sometime when I see someone buying a single can of fish then I would get annoyed. I would be thinking – why can't you put it in your bag? Or I will automatically turn off the lights when I leave the room. This kind of habit is with me now" (FGD, M5, 6.02.12).

> "Whatever practices the school tries to make us do are to instill in us a sense of humanity – to do things for others. It's also about looking at things from different perspectives and being able to live and work with other people" (FGD, M4/1, 16.01.12).

In this respect, it appears that students at the upper-secondary level have developed a sense of acceptance and appreciation for school routines. However, this was not the case with students at lower levels especially those in Mathayom 3 who tended to question several practices and values that the school tries to instill.

When asked if there are things that they do not like about the school, students in Mathayom 3 started complaining about the food. They complained of school meals being poor in quality, not tasty and repetitious. Some students felt that they have no options to choose from and suggested that there be more choices (FGD, M3/1, 17.10.11). Others expressed concerns about the hygiene of the school's kitchen, it being an open kitchen. They also discreetly talked about the actual cost of school meals in comparison with the fees that their families have to pay, hinting that what they get does not match what they pay (FGD, M3/2, 5.01.12). Furthermore, some students felt that while the school may want to instill the values of simple living, moderation and preserving Thai ways of life, this goes against the reality of the students themselves who come from well-to-do families. A group of M3 students reflected on this point:

S1: They try to make us become thrifty and lo-so.[20] But look at who the people are at the Rainbow School. M2 students using i-phones … this cannot be lo-so.

S2: They are working with rich kids. We pay high tuition and field trip fees but they are telling us to preserve a Thai way of life. Who would want to use a black and white Nokia phone?

S3: Rich kids are kids who don't have to do anything.

Q: So, being thrifty doesn't go with the lifestyle of rich kids?

[20] Low society, as opposed to 'hi-so' or high society.

S3: Because what the school does is not instilling but ordering us to do things. OK, we may be thrifty at school but when we go home we can buy things.

S1: Instilling is to make kids believe in something. But this is not the case. It's like we have to follow the rules.

S4: It doesn't go into our heart.

Q: What about you, what do you think the school tries to instill?

S5: They want us to think by ourselves and to be able to help ourselves.

S3: The truth is when I'm at school I can help myself. But when I'm home I never thought of doing anything. There's a helper at home, so she can do it.

S4: But if we are alone, we can do it.

(FGD, M3/2, 5.01.12)

Not only do students feel that some values that the school tries to instill are difficult to reconcile with their real lives, some of them also felt that the message from the school has not always been consistent. One student remarked that "they want us to be lo-so, but they also think that we are rich. So when we went on a field trip they made us buy a water-suit for safety. We have to buy whatever because [they think] we are rich" (FGD, M3/2, 5.01.12).

As mentioned earlier, the communal spatial arrangements and practices of moderate consumption adopted by the Rainbow School reflect the influence of Buddhist educational philosophy articulated by Venerable P.A. Payutto who stresses the idea of self-cultivation through controlling one's own behavior and actions (in this case the behavior is related to the consumption of resources) in order to create a more harmonious and peaceful society. However, the diverging perceptions of students toward the school's routines and practices indicate that there are certain tensions and complexities in the project of citizen construction that draws on Buddhist virtues of moderation so as to resist the negative impact of globalization, including the culture of overconsumption, while serving children of middle- and upper-class backgrounds. Furthermore, although the values and practices of moderation and harmonious living are considered important to cultivate, focusing on instilling desirable values alone does not necessarily challenge the structure of social and economic inequality which is at the heart of education for democracy and social justice. By doing so, Zajda (2009:

xvi) pointed out that problems are instead being shifted "from social and political spheres to the individual and personal traits." In this way, citizenship learning also becomes centered on "individual acts of compassion and kindness, [and] not on collective social action and the pursuit of social justice" (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004: 244).

However, it is pertinent to recognize that the idea of social justice as perceived by the school and some senior teachers is related to the cultivation of self in order to remain righteous in one's conduct. An old-time teacher explained that "social justice takes place within a person. No matter what the system is like, if we don't try to find ways to abuse it for our own benefits … there can be justice. (Our) students should be able to know that thinking this way is right and thinking that way is considered as *micchaditthi"*[21] (Interview, Teacher B, 1.08.11). This understanding of ethics and social justice reflects the emphasis of Buddhist teaching on the development of the inner moral conscience of individuals to achieve a more peaceful and harmonious society rather than relying on external forms of enforcement (Wit, 2003). Thus, according to Wit (ibid), in the Buddhist way of thinking, justice, equality and liberty are not considered to be of real value when they are produced by external social coercion and regulations (p. 163). In this respect, despite the significance of Buddhist wisdom and the social vision of Buddhism that goes beyond the doctrinal postulates and national chauvinism,[22] there may be many challenges in how the vision can be realized in practice. The emphasis on an individual-centered approach to ethics also raises important questions about the kind of education for democracy and social justice that is possible in the context of Buddhist Thailand.

To conclude, this chapter has tried to demonstrate the ways in which Buddhism as a state ideology plays an important role in citizen construction in Thai schools through the formal school curriculum and the practices of different school routines. However, while both Chaisri Secondary and the Rainbow School draw on Buddhist values and principles to inculcate good persons and good citizens, the notion

[21] In Buddhist teaching, this term refers to wrong perception or belief.

[22] Saneh Chamarik (2002) has articulated this social vision of Buddhism in his writing on Buddhism and Human Rights.

of citizenship differs somewhat between the two schools. At Chaisri Secondary, Buddhist ideology serves to construct good citizens who are dutiful, respectful and loyal and who do not engage in any delinquent behavior. At the Rainbow School however, although the school also tries to instill responsibility and discipline through the practice of communal living, it draws on the Buddhist concepts and practices of moderation and harmonious living to construct middle-class citizens who are environmentally aware. However, while Buddhist practices of self-cultivation for moderate and harmonious living can have important ecological implications, Buddhism as a key moral guiding principle has been devoid of a political and structural analysis, which makes its implication for education for democracy and social justice in the Thai context remain limited.

CHAPTER VII
CONCLUSION

Reflecting on the diversity of research studies on citizenship and citizenship education, Davies (2001: 305) asked:

"Should a citizenship education programme primarily give the skills and dispositions for future participation in the polity, or should it also start to reveal how 'citizens' are constructed and differentiated within the school itself, i.e. should it begin the critical challenge to inequality?"

With mainstream academic interest in the subject of citizenship and democratic education in Thailand confined to identifying particular teaching methods and educational input that would enable the development of democratic values and behavior of students while education for social justice is an under-explored area of academic inquiry, this study has attempted to engage in a more critical examination of citizenship education in the Thai context. It has investigated citizen construction in Thai schools in order to understand the challenges and possibilities of education for democratic citizenship and social justice in contemporary Thailand. By drawing on theories and knowledge generated from various critical fields, this thesis has established that schools are sites of competing interests and functions. It has ventured into both the formal and hidden school curricula and pedagogical approaches including school systems and cultures to better understand the contradictory nature of school and its implications for citizen construction and education for democracy and social justice. Moreover, this study has examined the influence of political, economic and cultural ideologies in contemporary Thai society in shaping education curricula and practices in contemporary Thai schools. At the same time, it has also attempted to delineate the ways in which the two schools under study, which are embedded in unequal socioeconomic contexts, negotiate these various ideologies to the effect of sustaining existing inequalities and differentiated citizenship.

This concluding chapter revisits and synthesizes the different arguments and themes made in this thesis including: the competing purposes of education; ideology, class and citizenship learning; the role of formal and hidden school curricula in citizen construction; and Buddhism, democracy and social justice. It also raises questions about the understanding of progressive and democratic education in Thailand and the limits and possibilities of education for democracy and social justice.

7.1 Defining good citizens: the conservative political goal of Thai education

An important factor which influences education and citizen construction concerns the purposes of education. While education and schools around the world are required to respond to competing political/cultural, economic and personal goals of education, this study has shown that education for critical citizenry and an egalitarian society has not been in the forefront of Thai education history. Analysis of school textbooks revealed that mass education and schooling in Thailand has historically served conservative political and cultural goal through the construction of good citizens who are loyal to the three institutions, law-abiding and dutiful in their respective roles (Rangsima, 1995; Lakkana, 1999; Kupluthai, 2009). Buddhist values and principles have been used to reinforce the notion of good persons and good citizens through the prescription of moral knowledge and conduct, thus making, as Mulder (1997) observed, the "individual-centered approach to ethics […] the means of glossing over the structural causes and systematic problems of corruption, exploitation and social injustice …" (p. 61). At the same time, school textbooks from the period of 1932 to the end of the 1990s projected a narrow idea of citizens' rights being confined to formalistic notions of voting rights in a representative parliamentary system.

Although political processes in the 1990s led to some shift toward the idea of participatory citizenship and a greater recognition of values and practices that respect democracy and rights, the conventional concept of citizenship embedded in Thai values and norms, loyalty and discipline as well as an individual-centered approach to ethics remains prominent. This can be seen from the National Education Act of 1999 which stipulates that values such as rights, freedom, equality and human

dignity be inculcated along with the promotion of Thai identity, religion, national culture, and local and Thai wisdom (Section 7, National Education Act, 1999). The National Education Curriculum of 2001 and its 2008 revision further prescribe desirable qualities and traits of students to be developed. These are: i) loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy; ii) honesty; iii) discipline; iv) having a thirst for knowledge; v) living sufficiently; vi) working hard; vii) valuing Thainess; and viii) having a volunteer spirit. Most of these values reflect the conventional notion of citizenship qualities rather than those that respect rights and democratic norms.

Furthermore, although school textbooks prepared under the 2001 national and 2008 revised curricula projected both traditional and liberal citizenship values and characteristics, one finds that there are contradictions in the ways that conventional norms and the emerging ideas of democracy and rights are presented in the current school textbooks. Similarly, while prescribing a more active political and civic role for citizens under the constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms, the role of students as suggested in school textbooks is confined to what Westheimer and Kahne (2004) identified as personally-responsible citizens rather than participatory or justice-oriented citizens. In the same vein, although current school textbooks acknowledge the problems of inequality and conflict in Thai society, there continues to be a lack of critical reflection on the issues, and recommended solutions to the problem are subsumed within the sphere of individual conduct. In this respect, the kinds of knowledge and values projected through school textbooks reflect conservative political goals of education, making school textbooks a non-promising avenue for critical citizenship learning.

7.2 What kinds of citizens are being constructed? : The formal and the hidden curricula

Along with the conservative political and cultural educational goals which carry important implications for citizenship learning and education for democracy and social justice, Thai education is also required to respond to growing demands in economic and social spheres. Thus, aside from the above-mentioned eight desirable qualities and traits which should be inculcated, the National Education Curriculum

also aims at developing students' competencies in communication, thinking, problem-solving, life-skills and the use of technologies (Ministry of Education, 2008). These competencies reflect the kind of skills required for the globalized economy. At the same time, skills such as problem-solving and critical thinking can be positive for the development of democratic citizenship. However, in practice, schools serving students from different socioeconomic backgrounds may prioritize certain values and skills over the others, and thus contribute to differentiated citizenship learning (Ho et al., 2011).

This study has also shown that despite following the same national education curriculum, Thai schools are able to devise their own school-based curricula and pedagogical approach that can either promote or hinder the development of democratic citizenship. School curricula that involve real issues and concerns along with an inquiry-based pedagogical approach, such as the one adopted by the Rainbow School, are able to generate meaningful and critical learning for young people. This learning process has allowed the students to develop a greater awareness of social and development issues which can be seen as moving toward inculcating a participatory and justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). Under the notion of participatory citizenship, citizens play an active role in organizing actions to address problems in the community or society while justice-oriented citizenship see citizens asking questions and attempting to "change the established system and structure that reproduces the pattern of injustice over time" (ibid: 240). Although it will be an overstatement or even a contradiction to claim that "changing the established system and structure that reproduces the pattern of injustice" is the intended purpose of education of any Thai schools, including the ones under study, the fact that students at the Rainbow School began to raise questions on the impact of the National Spatial Development Plan on local communities, and on the space for young people to engage in determining the country's development direction demonstrates the way in which school-based education can construct citizens who would begin to challenge the status quo.

Nonetheless, this positive role of schooling is not without contradictions. This is because not only do the majority of Thai schools not embrace the kind of progressive curricular and pedagogical approach practiced at the Rainbow School, but

schools also inculcate the kinds of values and practices that can run counter to those of democratic citizenship. In most Thai schools, curricular and pedagogical approaches centered on traditional and memorization-based learning remain the norm as Thai teachers continue to rely on conventional teaching methods (Nattapong, 2010). At the same time, schools that serve students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, as in the case of Chaisri Secondary, adopt a deficit perspective that focuses on developing basic literacy and livelihood skills for marginalized youth and an emphasis on instilling discipline and obedience. Not only is this practice a direct hindrance to education for democracy and social justice as it reproduces inequality and injustice in education, but this education perspective also reinforces traditional notions of personally-responsible citizenship that prioritize the duties and good character of citizens (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004: 240).

Furthermore, routines and practices in most Thai schools tend to reinforce the conventional notion of citizenship embedded in loyalty to the three institutions, respect for authority and hierarchy and adherence to discipline and order, as can be seen through the mandatory practice of singing the national anthem and the morning assembly ceremony observed in both case study schools. Such practices, along with school rules and disciplinary systems which are used to regulate students' appearance and conduct, have been an integral part of school life. As most of the these school rules and disciplinary systems were conceived long ago and are being imposed on students without them having a say, they can have the effect of socializing young people into accepting authoritarian control and obedience at the expense of fostering values and practices of participation, mutual respect and critical reflection (Thornberg, 2009). At the same time, despite the Ministerial Regulation prohibiting corporal punishment in schools, such acts are still being carried out. This can have the effect of undermining a democratic education (Harber and Mncube, 2012: 113-115). In the context of this research, this effect can be seen through the way in which students at Chaisri Secondary in general and members of the Student Council in particular express their endorsement of the school rules and disciplinary system by seeing them as "normal" and effective.

However, schools can practice what may be called "democratic control" by providing space for different members of the school community to participate in

decision-making processes concerning school rules and disciplinary systems. Such a practice can be partly seen in the way in which the Rainbow School tried to engage different stakeholders to come to an agreement on rules concerning student uniforms, although some questions may be raised on the process of this particular engagement. In any case, there are also challenges to such democratic practice as tensions exist in reinforcing those rules. Davies (2008: 144) suggests that an important indication of school democracy can be found in the system by which school rules or codes of conduct are reviewed by all students and teachers on a constant basis. Not only would this process enable values and expectations to be communicated in a way that would generate a collective understanding among members of the school community, but it would also help to avoid the effect of unexplained, ambiguous rules and inconsistent punishment. The latter situation, as Schimmel (2003: 18) pointed out, can teach the students "to be non-questioning, non-participating, cynical citizens in their classrooms, schools and communities," the characteristics which undermine the goal of democratic citizenship education. Whether schools adopt formal curricular and school processes and practices which enable critical thinking, participation and mutual respect or those which reinforce obedience and authoritarian control is closely related to the school philosophy as well as the function of schools in controlling and socializing young people into social and moral norms. At the same time, there are larger economic, political and cultural ideologies which also inform citizen construction in schools.

7.3 Ideologies, inequalities and citizenship construction

This study has attempted to establish that formal and hidden school knowledge and practices are influenced by educational philosophy as well as diverging economic, political and cultural ideologies which serve competing goals of education. Economically, a localism/sufficiency development ideology on the one hand and a liberal economic agenda on the other have been operating in tandem in Thai society. Similarly, in the political realm, while deliberative and participatory democracy has taken shape along with the political reform process of the 1990s and in light of the political conflicts from late 2005 onward, the idea of democracy embedded in Thai cultural norms and Buddhism as well as in representative democracy continues

to be emphasized. At the same time, while Buddhist ideology linked to the conventional notion of 'Thainess' and the belief in *karma* remain influential, there have been attempts to draw on Buddhist teaching and practice that is more connected to Buddhist wisdom of spiritual freedom and its social dimension.

The National Education Act of 1999 (and amendments of 2002) and the education reform policy brought together diverging themes and hence represented compromises between different interests (Jungck, 2003; Tan, 2007; Annop and Mounier, 2010). For example, Annop and Mounier (2010) pointed out that despite recognizing the necessity of adopting modern knowledge and technology so as to compete in the global liberal economy, an important objective of the Thai education reform policy reflects a conservative view of maintaining traditional Thai values through adherence to the idea of Thainess as a protection against negative global forces and individualistic tendencies. Buddhism has been given a renewed emphasis in the formal school education through the Buddhist Way Schools' project intended to enable the development of good and virtuous Thai people and citizens (Ministry of Education, 2003).

This study has illustrated that this ideological dichotomy along with diverse educational demands and existing inequalities in Thai society can have the effect of differentiated citizenship construction. Schools embedded in different socio-economic contexts negotiate these ideologies and diverging aims of education in different manners. Those which cater for the middle- class and the elite are able to negotiate the prevailing economic, political and religious ideologies as well as the diverging educational demands to meet the schools' education philosophy and the needs of the students and their families in terms of developing desirable citizenship skills and values. This can be seen through the adoption of a localism ideology as the means and context for innovative teaching and learning at the Rainbow School. On the contrary, the school attended by students from poor socioeconomic backgrounds responded to the localism ideology by training in local knowledge and craft skills for sufficient livelihoods and the local economic production role of their students. The result of this is a system of differentiated economic citizenship construction that serves the division of labor in the capitalist economic system.

Similarly, schools also negotiate democratic ideology and the idea and practice of participation variously with the effect of differentiated citizenship construction. On the one hand, representational and institutionalized forms of democracy through schools and student councils have been widely promoted as an avenue for school democracy (Trafford, 2008; OBEC, 2010). On the other hand, there are practices of informal and non-institutionalized participation and decision-making that may be seen as less bureaucratized. While both types of school democracy can contribute positively toward education for democratic citizenship when implemented meaningfully (Davies, 2008), the two models are drawn from distinct conceptions of democracy and as such they offer somewhat different forms of citizenship learning. Representational democracy focuses on citizens' role as voters and the decision-making process is in the hands of a small number of 'leaders.' This is different from the ideal of direct democracy where citizens are required to actively engage in political life (Carr and Hartnett: 1996: 43-44). In both models however, an important question to ask must also concern the purpose and outcome of such participation or democratic forms. This is related to the understanding that participation and democracy should not be merely a form but should entail some outcomes of emancipation (Saneh, 2001: 148-9) and social justice (Anderson, 1998: 576).

Ideals aside however, in the context of Thai schools, the way schools choose to prioritize one practice of school democracy over another may involve various considerations. In the case of Chaisri Secondary for example, it became evident that the student council provides a platform for leadership development for some students while also functioning to serve the interests of the teachers and school authorities. The role of the council as representing the voice of students seems to be more limited by the conventional sphere of participation that has been promoted. In the same vein, although students and teachers at the Rainbow School, which has adopted a kind of communitarian and direct democracy, are expected to be able to voice their concerns or have a say in important school policies and practices through an egalitarian school structure, there are challenges associated with the way in which this practice runs into conflict with traditional Thai cultural norms of deference and obedience toward authority and seniority. This situation has raised questions about the

kind of democratic and autonomous citizens that can be constructed in the Thai context.

7.4 Buddhism and education for democracy and social justice

Writing on Buddhism, Democracy and Identity in Thailand, McCargo (2004: 155) noted that despite the understanding that religion forms an important component of political culture, there is a paucity of literature on the relationship between Buddhism and democracy. Moreover, while it is widely acknowledged that Buddhism plays an important role in citizenship education in Thai schools, the implications of the ways in which Buddhist principles and virtues are instilled through formal and informal school curricula have been subjected to limited critical reflection. By investigating citizen construction in Thai schools, this study has tried to raise questions about these implications.

With Buddhism being given a renewed emphasis, schools have been encouraged to draw on various Buddhist values and principles to guide school routines and practices and to construct good persons and good citizens. Although schools may emphasize different Buddhist virtues to provide a moral direction and for citizen construction, the teaching of moral values across different schools tends to be based on moral imperative rather than discussion of different understandings of values. Schools serving students from a low socioeconomic background such as Chaisri Secondary have drawn on Buddhist values and principles such as those of respect (*kharawatham*), unity (*samakkhitham*) and wisdom (*panyatham*) to construct good persons and good citizens who are disciplined, responsible, well-mannered and free of vice. At the same time, moral and ethical training by both teachers and the monks focusses on instilling values of gratitude and loyalty to the nation, religion and monarchy while urging youth to ‘do good things’ and refrain from engaging in delinquent behavior. Furthermore, although personal responsibility and other moral virtues promoted by the school are not unimportant, the way they are being inculcated through obligation and obedience rather than by means of critical reflection suggests that Buddhism is being used to serve Thai socialization that will produce grateful and responsible youngsters for adults, and obedient and disciplined citizens for the state. As such, this learning

process reinforces the conventional concept of citizenship based on character development rather than moving toward the construction of a more participatory and justice-oriented citizenship (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004). This situation is somewhat different from that at the Rainbow School where the Buddhist principle of systemic and holistic thinking or *yonisomanasikara* is drawn upon to guide the school's teaching and learning approach. At the same time, the school also embraces a Buddhist practice of communal and moderate living in order to instill values of personal as well as environmental responsibility among its students. However, as illustrated in this study, this project of citizen construction is not without its tensions as some students feel a disconnection between the way of life promoted by the school and their own middle-class background. Furthermore, findings from this research reinforce the understanding that there are important differences underlying the concepts of democracy and social justice between those embedded in Buddhism and the ones articulated under a liberal Western philosophy.

According to the scholar monk P.A. Payutto, who has extensively articulated the social vision of Buddhism, the causes of exploitation, discrimination, conflict and all forms of destruction in the world can be seen as arising from individual moral defilements of greed, hatred and delusion (P.A. Payutto, 1993). In order to overcome human suffering and environmental destruction and for all to live in peace, human beings must cultivate themselves through the right kind of education in order to eliminate the wrong view or belief (*micchaditthi*). Thus, while a system of rule of law such as that of human rights may be important as a protection of the basic rights of individuals, the venerable monk argued that this is insufficient as a guarantee for civilization and freedom (P.A. Payutto, 2003a: 37-8). This is because, in his view, the enforcement of rights itself can result in social division and conflict if not accompanied by the right perception of individuals cultivated through genuine education as well as positive[1] ethical reinforcements based on harmony and happiness, and on what he calls "a caring society" (ibid: 43). In this respect, while Buddhism has something to say about the conditions of society, the ultimate way to achieve a

[1] Here, P.A. Payutto contrasts this positive ethics with that of human right norms and standards which he considers to be based on a negative ethics as they focus on self-restraint or obligations (P.A. Payutto, 2003a: 45).

harmonious and just state of being for all lies in the cultivation of the inner moral conscience of individuals rather than by addressing existing structures and processes which may be unjust. This understanding also suggests that the concept of accountability central to the working of human rights norms and standards may be less important in the Buddhist scheme of thought.

The Buddhist view of individual and social ethics outlined above also informs the Buddhist understanding of democracy. According to venerable P.A. Payutto, democracy as a system of popular rule requires that people cultivate themselves to become righteous so as to be able to be their own rulers. This involves, at a basic level, respecting agreed principles, rules and regulations; and at a higher level, seeking truth (*khwam ching*), goodness (*khwam thuk tong di ngam*), and usefulness (*prayotsuk*) (P.A. Payutto, 2001: 43), although the details of these latter three elements are not further articulated.

With regard to the democratic principles of liberty, equality and fraternity, the scholar monk has made some critical observations of American democracy so as to draw lessons for Thailand without commenting directly on the state of Thai democracy. In his view, while the US has championed the democratic principles of liberty and equality, it has faced many challenges in upholding the principle of fraternity[2] or 'unity' (*samakkhi or ekaphap*) –the terms used by the abbot (ibid: 51). In this respect, the venerable monk suggested that although ensuring basic liberty and equality is necessary, forging fraternity or unity holds the key to achieving a more lasting equality and freedom. As unity can be forged, according to the abbot, through Buddhist virtues of kindness (ibid: 61-64) we are back to the cultivation of an inner moral conscience to pursue the substance of democracy defined within the ambit of Buddhist social philosophy. This moral approach to democracy and social justice carries important implications for the kind of education for democratic citizenship and social justice that is possible in the Thai context.

[2] In commenting on this topic in his book entitled *Kan sangsan prachatipatai* [The Creation of Democracy], P.A. Payutto referred to three publications including: *The Disuniting of America*; *The De-Valuing of America*; and *Two Nations*.

7.5 The possibilities and challenges for education for democracy and social justice

The concept of education for democracy and social justice in this study revolves around the idea that education and schooling can challenge the status quo and bring about changes through the inculcation of democratic and justice-oriented citizenship. At the same time, education for democracy and social justice is about schools recognizing and promoting democratic values and principles of participation and equity which would enable students and other members of the school community to experience a democratic way of life and for education to contribute toward greater equality in society.

This thesis has shown that a progressive pedagogy and innovative curriculum is capable of generating the kind of social learning that can contribute toward the development of democratic and justice-oriented citizenship. However, it is also evident that democracy and social justice was not the main aim of the school's progressive educational approach. Rather, social and environmental literacy and activism among students developed as a by-product of the inquiry- and community-based learning approach intended to serve the development of individual students and their skills for the 21st century economy and society. Although an alternative school like the Rainbow School can attempt to engage in a more critical process toward change by consciously placing the goal of democracy and social justice at the center of its education vision, there are challenges to the democratic and social justice aspirations that are associated with the existing socio-economic inequality in Thai society and the way in which Thai education reform has envisioned its education democratization project. On the one hand, education reform has provided a level of autonomy for schools to experiment with and implement varied pedagogical and curricular approaches appropriate to the local context. On the other hand, schools embedded in different socio-economic contexts are implementing and producing very different kinds of education and citizens. Although the differentiated education system may not have been triggered by the current education reform, it has the effect of reinforcing rather than closing the gap. While this is the case, it is important to recognize that progressive middle-class and community-based groups who support the education democratization project through education reform may have very different

views and understanding about the concept of "differentiated education"; on what constitutes democracy and social justice in education; or the goals that education should serve. This situation can also present another challenge to the idea of education for democracy and social justice.

For those involved in the alternative education movement, differentiated education is about providing an education that is suitable for the needs of individual learners. At the same time, it is associated with the provision of varied and diverse kinds of education – a 'choice' of education which has, to a certain extent, become understood as the democratizing of education.[3] In this regard, the presence of community-based schools, the public and private Thai schools that offer regular, vocational and specialized education programs and the growing number of international schools in Thailand may be presented as reflecting the expansion of democracy in education. However, from the critical education and social justice perspectives informing this study, this situation can present a challenge to equity in education as schooling options for many disadvantaged youth tend to be limited by their families' socioeconomic status and cultural background (Apple, 2004). Furthermore, although it has been pointed out that "schools are morally obligated to give all children an education that allows them to take advantage of their political status as citizens" (Ho et al., 2011), it is evident that different kinds of schools and education programs offer diverse citizenship learning experiences which can have important implications on how students see themselves as citizens.

In this connection, a question must be raised again on the competing purposes of education in general and the goal of the citizenship curriculum in particular (although I follow Lason-Billings (cited in Stevick and Levinson, 2005: 7) who argued from an anthropological perspective that "all education is citizenship education"). While Thai education reform has tried to respond to the economic and child-developmental demands on education to develop learners who are able to think for themselves and who can communicate effectively through learning reform that is based on a child-centered and active learning approach, conventional notions of citizenship based on obedience and respect for authority and seniority continue to be

[3] See Suchada et al., 2005 for a discussion of the alternative education movement in Thailand.

reinforced through both formal and hidden curricula. In this respect, Mulder (1997: 61) has cautioned that "by trying to force students into the moulds of obedient subjects of the state, self-controlled Buddhists, and tractable children in relation to parents and seniors, Thai schools may stifle spontaneity, motivation and initiative." In order to move toward education that can generate critical reflection, democracy and social justice, not only must contradictions in the current education system and the function of schooling be exposed, but attempts must also be made to create a new discourse in education that places democracy and social justice at the center.

By investigating what schools do through their formal curricular and other systems and practices which enable or hinder education for democracy and social justice, this study hopes to contribute to the knowledge while generating a greater interest in the field of critical (citizenship) education in Thailand. By focusing on "progressive" and "democratic" schools, this research also hopes to provide some insight into the nature and philosophy of these schools and the extent to which they are able to challenge the status quo and bring about positive social change. As evident in this study, both "progressive" and "democratic" schools in Thailand are operating within a powerful national ideology. Thus, despite what some of them may be capable of doing, they continue to function in the interests of a narrow economic, political and cultural agenda. Nevertheless, while recognizing that formidable challenges exist in conceiving a new education agenda that can begin to question the status quo, there are indications that changes in pedagogical practices that are underway in some "progressive" schools may be able to contribute positively to the new direction. By further creating a richer and a more detailed understanding of the role of education and schooling and its relationship with the larger society from a more critical perspective, a greater critical awareness and understanding of the broader moral and political purposes of education may be developed that may see some light for the transformative potential of education in Thailand.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
LIST OF RECORDED INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUSED GROUP DISCUSSIONS (FGD)

I. Rainbow School

Item	Name/Category	Profile	Length of service at the school	Interview Dates
1	Teacher A	Teacher of social studies, female	About 2 year	10.10.2011 05.01.2012
2	Teacher B	Teacher of social studies, female	More than 10 years	01.07.2011 10.02.2012 11.04.2012 03.05.2012
3	Teacher C	Teacher of social studies, female	More than 5 years	13.07.2011 16.01.2012
4	Teacher D	Teacher of social studies, male	About 1 year (former student)	17.10. 2011
5	Teacher E	Teacher of Thai Language, male	More than 5 years	04.08. 2011 25.01.2012
6	Teacher F	Teacher of English, male	Less than 1 year	30.09. 2011
7	Administrator G	Secondary school section, female	More than 10 years	10.10.2011 03.05.2012
8	Administrator H	Principal, female	More than 10 years	17.10.2011 03.05.2012

Item	Name/Category	Profile	Length of service at the school	Interview Dates
9	Staff I	In charge of students' admission and service, female	More than 10 years	21.07.2011
10	Parent	Mother of 2 children at the Rainbow school	N/A	27.09.2011
11	Students M 3/1	5 students; all male	N/A	17.10.2011
12	Students M 3/2	4 students; all female	N/A	05.01.2012
13	Students M 4/1	5 students; 3 male and 2 female	N/A	16.01.2012
14	Students M 4/2	4 students; 2 male and 2 female	N/A	12.01.2012
15	Students M 5	3 students; 2 male and 1 female	N/A	06.02.2012
16	Students M 6	2 students; all female	N/A	10.02.2012

II. Chaisri Secondary

Item	Name/Category	Profile	Length of service at the school	Interview Dates
1	Teacher J	Teacher of Social Studies, female	About 3 years	15.06.2011 06.01.2012
2	Teacher K	Teacher of Occupation and Technology, female	More than 10 years	19.07.2011 28.12.2011
3	Teacher L	Teacher of Thai Language & Head of Disciplinary Section, male	About 3 years	26.09.2011
4	Teacher M	Teacher of Math, female	More than 10 years	22.09. 2011
5	Teacher N	Teacher of Arts, male	More than 10 years	22.02.2012
6	Teacher O	Teacher of English, female	More than 5 years	13.01.2012
7	Teacher P	Teacher of Science, female	About 1 year	12.07.2011
8	Teacher Q	Teacher of Social Studies, female	About 1 year	29.02.2012
9	Administrator R	School Director, male	Less than 2 years	28.12.2011
10	Current student council members	7 students in M6; 2 male and 5 female	N/A	09.08.2011
11	Incoming student council members	4 students in M4, all female	N/A	29.02.2012
12	Students M 3/1	4 students; 2 male and 2 female	N/A	26.08.2011

Item	Name/Category	Profile	Length of service at the school	Interview Dates
13	Students M 3/2 (a)	5 students; 3 male and 2 female	N/A	22.09.2011
14	Students M 3/2 (b)	5 students; all female	N/A	26.09.2011
15	Students M 4 (a)	4 students; 2 male and 2 female	N/A	28.12.2011
16	Students M 4 (b)	3 students; all female	N/A	06.01.2012
17	Students M 6	2 students; male	N/A	26.09.2011

APPENDIX B
SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Protocols (for principals, administrators and teachers)

1.1 Explain research objective, discuss procedures to maintain confidentiality and secure statement of consent to record the interview.

1.2 Briefly question backgrounds of the interviewees

- How long have you been in this position?
- Why do you join this school?

I. Questions for principals and administrators

1.1 What are some of the current priorities of the schools? Why do you see them as important?

1.2 Was there different emphasis/vision of the schools previously? If so, what were they?

1.3 (For alternative school) Your school promotes experiential, community-based learning, what are the reasons for this?

1.4 (For schools recognized as democratic) Why has your school been recognized as democratic?

1.5 How has the school gone about doing this? What policies, curriculum or pedagogy are in place to support this?

1.6 How would you assess the achievement or impact so far?

1.7 How are decision-makings done in the school? Please give example.

1.8 How do parents, communities, teachers and students involve in school activities/priorities? What is the nature of their involvement e.g., decision making or as participant in an event etc?

1.9 How does the disciplinary system work here? Who set the rules?

1.10 What kinds of students are enrolled in this school? Does the school admit students with special needs? Does the school have scholarship for needy students?

1.11 What qualities do you want to see/develop most in your students? Teachers? Why are they important?

1.12 How do you and the school help to develop these qualities?

1.13 What are some of the important challenges that the school face? How do you deal with them?

1.14 What are your views about the current education system and policies in relation to building democratic citizenship?

II. Questions for teachers

2.1 What qualities do you want to see/develop most in your students? Why?

2.2 What principles/approach do you use to conduct your class? Why?

2.3 How do you choose what materials to use for your subjects?

2.4 How important is student participation in your pedagogical approach? How do you encourage this? How successful has it been so far?

2.5 How important is critical thinking? How do you teach student to be a critical thinker?

2.6 How do you discipline your students?

2.7 Does the school allow teachers to share their views about school management/ curriculum design?

2.8 Does the school encourage democratic decision-making? Please give some examples.

2.9 What rights do you have as a teacher? Do you feel that these rights are respected by school administrators? Please give examples.

2.10 Please share about some happy moments you've had in your teaching/ as a teacher in this school.

2.11 What are some of the important challenges that you face as a teacher in this school? How do you deal with them?

2.12 What are your views about the current education system and policies in relation to building democratic citizenship?

III. Questions for students (focus group interviews)

3.1 Why do you come to this school?

3.2 What aspects of school do you enjoy most? Why?

3.3 What aspects of school do you enjoy least? Why?

3.4 Do you think this school is different from other schools? How?

3.5 Do the school administrators and teachers ask for opinion of the students about anything e.g., school rules, any special projects/events? If yes, please give examples.

3.6 What would/can you do if you do not agree with certain policies and practices in school? Why?

3.7 What kind of space do you have to voice your opinions?

3.8 Do you consider that your school respects and/or promotes diversity? How?

3.9 How do teachers and administrators discipline students? What do you think about this approach?

3.10 Have any of you experienced or know of anyone who has experienced discrimination in the school? How? What you do/ think about this?

3.11 What rights do you have as a child/ a student? Do you feel these rights are respected or protected by school administrators and teachers? Why?

3.12 Do you feel safe in this school? Are there problems with violence or bullying? Please explain.

3.13 Do you have any opportunity to get involved with outside community? What kind of activities have you been involved in?

3.14 What are your biggest concerns as a student? How would you address them?

3.15 Do you want to see any changes in your school? Or in the education system? Or in the society? What can do you to contribute toward those changes?

APPENDIX C

SAMPLES CLASS SCHEDULES

I. Rainbow School (Mathayom 3/1; Term 2)

Day/Session	**8:30-9:30**	**9:30-10:30**	**Break**	**10:45-11:45**	**11:45-12:45**	**12:45-13:45**	**13:45-14:45**	**Break**	**15.00-15:30**	**15:30-16.00**	**16:00-17.00**
Monday	Social S.	Social S.		English	Lunch	IT	IT		Homeroom	Club	
Tuesday	Math	Science		Science		Project*	Project*		Project*		Project*
Wednesday	Math	Thai		Thai		English	English		Homeroom	PE	
Thursday	Thai	Thai		Buddhism		Math	English		Social Studies		Social S.
Friday	Science	Science		English		Math	Math		Homeroom	Music/Arts	

* Project for Mathayom 3/1 in the second term focused on Social Studies subject (in other two Mathayom 3 classes, the project sessions focused on Science and Math). Note: One class session is 60 minutes at the Rainbow School

II. Chaisri Secondary (Mathayom 3/1; Term 1)

Day/Session	8:30-9:20	9:20-10:10	Break	10:20-11:10	11:10-12:00	12:00-13:00	13:00-13:50	13:50-14:40	Break	14:50-15:40
Monday	Social S.	English		Arts	Thai		Chinese	Math		English
Tuesday	English	Health		History	Readings		Occupation			Counseling
Wednesday	Thai	Social S.		Occupation /products		Lunch	English	Arts		Scouting
Thursday	Social S.	Science		PE	Readings		Thai	Math		Ethics
Friday	Technology			Science			Math	English		Sufficiency agriculture

Note: One class session is 50 minutes at Chaisri Secondary

APPENDIX D

MISISTERIAL REGULATION ON STUDESNTS' BEHAVIOR 2548 B.E (2005 A.D.)

Item 1 School and university students must not engage in the following behavior

(1) Avoiding school attendance and leaving the school premise without permission.

(2) Engaging in gambling.

(3) Carrying weapons or explosive devices.

(4) Buying/selling/consuming alcohol, smoking cigarettes or other substances.

(5) Stealing from and extorting others.

(6) Engaging in fighting or other acts which may disturb the public moral.

(7) Public display of inappropriate sexual behavior.

(8) Engaging in prostitution.

(9) Night-time roaming and gathering which create public nuisance and troubles for oneself and other people.

(Royal Thai Government Gazette, Vol.123. Section 1 ko., pp. 17-18, 6 January 2549 B.E (2006 A.D.). Author's translation)

BIOGRAPHY

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- “Creating a Culture of Democracy and Human Rights in Thai Society: Critical Reflections from School Textbooks.” *The First International Conference on Human Rights in Southeast Asia.* Bangkok, Thailand. 14-15 October, 2010.
- “An Examination of the Construction of Democracy and Citizenship in “Progressive” Thai Schools and Implications on Social Justice.” (Poster presentation) *The Fifth Academic Conference* organized by the Office of the Higher Education Commission, Chonburi, Thailand, November, 2012