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Introduction

MANY SOCIAL SCIENTISTS HAVE studied the relationship between education and religion. Education and religion share certain characteristics: both are strong cultural phenomena with authoritative influence over various domains of human activity and both claim to assist people in achieving optimal development.[1] According to comparativist Joseph A. Lauwerys, education and religion both "provide the young with understanding of man and world; to develop human action, to reconcile man with his social and natural environment, to prepare young people to discharge effectively their tasks as citizens, [and] to improve material conditions and cultural/spiritual aspirations of people."[2]

Nations that desire reform, often after transitioning from the domination of other cultures or regimes, develop education policies that remove or include religion as a vehicle of change. After independence from British colonial rule in 1962, the Trinidadian government implemented educational reforms to remove remaining elements of the colonial past. The government secularized schools run by Christian missionaries, establishing curriculum to develop national and civic unity and supersede earlier denominational values and objectives.[3] Similarly, when the National Opposition Union (UNO) took over the Nicaraguan government from the revolutionary Sandinista communist regime in 1990, UNO identified the reassertion of Christian values as one of its central aims. The UNO entrusted Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo and the Council of Bishops

1. Phenix, "Comparative Study," 7–10.
2. Lauwerys, "General Education," 385–401.
3. Stewart, "Nationalist Educational Reforms," 281–304.

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with the authority to select the leadership of the Ministry of Education.[4] In the wake of World War II, Prince Norodom Sihanouk implemented his Buddhist socialism ideology to modernize his country and establish its independence from France.[5] Sihanouk devoted twenty percent of the national budget building new primary, secondary, and tertiary schools to produce mass education, create national unity for the Cambodian people, and help them earn merit (a key Buddhist concept) by being loyal to the monarchy.[6] He believed this combination of religion and political ideology would be the instrument to transform his country to an industrialized and technologically advanced nation-state.[7]

Some nation-states specifically integrate religious ideologies through different levels of education such as examinations, classroom structures, and textbooks. In Taiwan and Japan, for example, the Confucian tenet of allowing all individuals to participate in government by passing fair and open tests was foundational to the current tradition of competitive college entrance examinations.[8] Keith Sharpe's analysis of the structure of authority, seating arrangements, and curricula in French primary schools indicated that these elements reflected secularized Catholic values while British primary schools mirrored Protestant characteristics.[9] Furthermore, Nicaragua's UNO developed a new subject area for primary schools called *Cívica, Moral, y Urbanidad*.[10] Textbooks in this new subject area focused heavily on Christian, traditional, and middle-class morals.[11]

Some nation-states implement religious education as an instrument of unification and to further social, economic, or political ends. European colonial powers used missionaries to educate indigenous people in Africa, Latin America, and Asia about the Christian religion as a means to gain great control of the people. For example, the Portuguese government established the 1930 Colonial Act to "Christianize and educate, nationalize

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4. Cardinal Obando y Bravo was the Nicaraguan's leading religious authority during the UNO's administration. Arnove, "Education as Contested Terrain," 439–70.

5. Ayres, "Tradition, Modernity," 440–63.

6. Ibid., 449.

7. Ibid.

8. Epstein and Kuo, "Higher Education," 167–219; Shimahara, "Socialisation," 253–66.

9. Sharpe, "Protestant Ethic," 329–49.

10. The English translation of *Cívica, Moral, y Urbanidad* is civics, morality, and politeness. Arnove, "Education as Contested Terrain," 446–47.

11. Ibid.

and civilize" Africans in Angola and Mozambique.[12] The Roman Catholic Church dominated Cuban educational matters during Spanish rule in the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.[13] In Indonesia, Dutch colonials lobbied church groups to send missionaries to establish schools when Muslim uprisings threatened colonial rule in Toraja and other highland villages.[14] Interestingly, some transitional nation-states such as India and Haiti continued to incorporate religion into their educational curricula even after achieving independence from Western control, albeit with some alterations. In place of former colonial faiths, these nation-states sought to advance traditional spiritual heritages like Hinduism and Vodou in primary school textbooks and the curricula, thereby rejecting most of the religious tenets that were foundational to former colonial rule.[15]

Furthermore, a number of studies suggest that religion may influence the demand for education.[16] For example, since post-World War II, Latin American Protestants and Christians in the Sub-Sahara and India place more value on educating their children than other religious groups in their economic and social strata.[17] Religion may also influence the provision of education. The Protestant belief that the Bible should be understood in the nations' indigenous languages helped expand education in many countries in Africa and Asia in the late nineteenth century.[18] Consequently, other religious groups in those countries established their own indigenous schools to preserve the religious identity of their people.[19]

Thus, historically, the relationship between education and religion has often been interdependent. While some social scientists have analyzed aspects of this relationship, there is a lack of research examining the inter-relationship between education, religion, and gender. Specifically, existing

12. Bassey, "Christian Missionary," 27–50.

13. Epstein, "Peril of Paternalism," 241–65.

14. Bigalke, *Tana Toraja: A Social History of an Indonesian People.*

15. Elder, "Decolonization in Indian Culture," 207–17; Michel, "Of Worlds Seen and Unseen," 305–22.

16. For more information on studies that involve the effects of religion on education, see Woodberry, "Project on Religion," 7–8.

17. Ibid., 7; Sundkler and Steed, *History of the Church in Africa*; Ingham, *Reformers in India*; Baez and Grubb, *Religion and the Republic of Mexico*; Sexton, "Protestantism and Modernization," 280–302.

18. Woodberry, "Project on Religion," 7; Woodberry and Shah, "Pioneering Protestants."

19. Ibid. For more information on the Protestant educational expansion, see Woodberry and Shah, "Pioneering Protestants."

research has only minimally explored whether the interrelationship between education and religion affects gender inequities present in different societies. What is the role of religion in education for women? Does religion affect access to education particularly for females?

For women, religion has served as a means to promote education in some cultures. A central belief of the Puritans was that individuals could approach God in prayer and confession only if they could read and understand scripture intelligently. This tenet served to promote public education for women in New England colonies in America during the seventeenth century.[20] Similarly, in 1524, Martin Luther appealed to German Christian schools to include girls and women, declaring that women had a particular moral responsibility for shaping a Christian household and that education was a prerequisite for them to "properly raise and keep house, children, and servants."[21] Confucian respect for learning and "instruction for all without discrimination" contributed to increased female enrollment in schools and expansion of higher education in Taiwan, where the female educational level was among the highest in developing Asian countries in the 1980s.[22]

However, even in recent times religious influences have limited female access to education. Although Confucianism encouraged Taiwanese women to obtain university education without fear of social intolerance, when combined with capitalist development and patriarchy, other Confucian tenets hindered gender equality in education and occupation in countries such as South Korea.[23] As of 1980, 22 percent of males versus 7 percent of females were enrolled in tertiary education in South Korea. By the year 1991, 52 percent of men and 28 percent of women were university students.[24] In addition, restricted education for women prevails in some Islamic nation states in the Middle East. According to the United Nations *2002 Arab Human Development Report*, two-thirds of the sixty-five million illiterate Arab people are women.[25] Lack of educational access for females is due in part to Arab Muslim leaders and clergy members' opposition of *ijtihad*, an Islamic concept that includes independent reasoning and

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20. Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 36–46.
21. Mayer, "Education for All," 731–50.
22. Epstein and Kuo, "Higher Education," 175, 205.
23. Chung, "Women's Unequal Access," 351–74.
24. Ibid., 367.
25. United Nations, *2002 Arab Human Development Report*.

critical thinking.[26] Policies based on strict interpretation of Islamic law have resulted in reduced educational opportunities for women in some Islamic countries.

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

The purpose of this book is to explore how religion has affected Thai females' access to education. Since religion can enable or hinder educational access for females, have religious groups in Thailand influenced learning opportunities for girls and women, and to what degree? Further, what prevailing values have promoted educational growth and development for women? This book will analyze the impact of Buddhist and Christian[27] ideologies on Thai (formerly known as Siamese) educational reforms, regarding female access to the system during the early Modernization Period (1889–1931).[28] Recent Thai governments have assessed this era as significant in the expansion of Thai primary, secondary and higher educational institutions and the Thai king first established official decrees on education modernization, including establishments of the Education Department and other various ministries.[29] The advent of Christian social activism, particularly the Protestant missionaries in Thailand in the nineteenth century, inspired King Mongkut (King Rama IV) and his son King Chulalongkorn (King Rama V) to modernize the country while preserving its Thai Buddhist identity.[30] By befriending Protestant missionaries, these kings learned English and gained understanding of Western politics, economics and the sciences. They used their newly acquired Western knowledge to internationalize Thailand while keeping the country independent from colonization, especially by France and Britain. When the Protestant missionaries arrived in Thailand in 1828, their ultimate goal

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26. AED Global Learning Group, *Education in the Muslim World*, 7.

27. By Christian, I will primarily refer to Protestant missionary efforts in Thailand.

28. Thailand and Siam will be used interchangeably in this book. Thailand was known as Siam to Westerners from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century. The people in the country have always called themselves Thai and their country as Prathet Thai, meaning the "Land of the Free."

29. Ministry of University Affairs, "History of Higher Education in Thailand." The Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Education are the two most important governmental agencies responsible for developing past and present educational systems in Thailand. Absolute monarchy ended in 1932 when Thailand adopted a parliamentary democracy and became a constitutional monarchy.

30. Keyes, "Buddhism and National Integration," 551–67.

was to insure that the Thai people became Christians; they saw education as a critical tool for proselytization and taught both boys and girls the rudiments of reading and writing. The success of early efforts in neighborhood instruction prompted these missionaries to expand schools to include everyone, especially females who were excluded from access to the Buddhist temple education afforded to boys. The Protestant objective of bringing education to all people eventually influenced the Thai government to provide universal public education in the 1920s, near the end of the early Modernization Period.

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

This study investigates the impact of religion on access to education afforded to females from 1889 to 1931 in Thailand. Chapter 2 presents the feminist theoretical framework used in this study to explore the impact of social, political, economic, and religious elements on female education. Chapter 3 describes the key research questions and the methodology employed to formulate answers to these queries. Chapter 4 reviews the historical context of both women and Buddhism in Thailand. Chapter 5 extends this examination to investigate the impact of Buddhism in education for females prior to and during the early Modernization Period. The history of the Protestant missions in Thailand is considered in chapter 6, concentrating on their effectiveness in establishing mass education. Chapter 7 examines the representation of females in Thai public, local, and religious schools by comparing government and Protestant mission statistics of enrollment rates from 1889 to 1931. Finally, chapter 8 discusses the ways Christianity and Buddhism influenced the availability of education for females in Thailand and the significance of the presence of religion in educational training in this period.