

SEATO MEDICAL RESEARCH STUDY ON NEUROPSYCHIATRY

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Period of Report: 1 April 66—31 March 67

General Information: The goal of neuropsychiatry is to study how cultural, social, and personality factors influence human behavior. Within this context, neuropsychiatric research concerns such topics as transcultural communication, advisor-counterpart relationships, adaptational problems of U.S. families abroad, and studies of socio-cultural organization of communities. These areas are being studied by a group of psychiatrists and social anthropologists. (In addition to the studies reported herein Clark Cunningham, Ph.D. of Yale University and Gertrude W. Marlowe, Ph.D., M.S. Hyg., of the University of Pennsylvania whose studies are supported by U.S. Army Medical Research and Development contracts work in close association with investigators in SEATO Medical Research Laboratory.)

The studies of transcultural communication and advisor-counterpart relationships concern factors influencing information exchange and performance in a situation where representatives of different cultures are required to collaborate in the accomplishment of a task. A study, focused on the relationship between trans-cultural communication and medical student behavior, was conducted at the Faculty of Medicine of Suan Dok Hospital, Chiangmai, where U.S. medical educators are cooperating with the Thai faculty in the development of a recently founded medical school. The results of that study are currently being analyzed. In addition, a Thai and American psychiatrist are jointly examining the relationships between U.S. advisors and Thai counterparts in the military. The influence of such factors as organizational structure, value commitments, individual adaptation, language skills, and interpretation of task definition upon the behavior of the advisor and counterpart is being evaluated.

Preliminary work preparatory to a study concerning the disturbances of thinking in organic brain syndromes has begun. This work has the goal of developing reliable clinical techniques and tests to assess the psychological manifestations of cerebral dysfunction due to neurosurgical and systemic disease. By examining how patients and their families respond to the stress of illness, information is being acquired about the incorporation of the basic symbols of Thai culture into thought patterns of individuals.

The social anthropologists associated with the Department of Neuropsychiatry are performing research into the organization of human behavior in various ethnic groups. These studies are particularly interested in the relative part played by traditional and modern health practices in the context of the community structure. Attention is being given to what people do about illness, and what their general ideas about illness are. In addition, data about kinship ties, institutional structure, religion and rituals, and economic organization of the communities are being collected in order to provide basic understanding of the ethnographic background of each area under study.

A preliminary report on a North Central Thai village has been completed and data collection in a Northern Thai village is essentially complete. Studies of Karen villages and of health practices in Chiangmai city is in progress. The study in Chiangmai city will include a study of the adaptation of U.S. families in the Thai ambient.

STUDY REPORTS

Title: Advisor/Counterpart Relationships: An Organizational Analysis

Principal Investigator: Harry C. Holloway, LTC, MC

Associate Investigator: Supoch Khwanmitra, Colonel, RTA
Supreme Command Headquarters

Period of Report: 1 April 66—31 March 67

Objective: This study will describe the relationships between the formal and informal organization of the Army Advisory Group of MACTHAI, the mission of this unit, and the transactions between advisors and their counterparts.

Description: This study will take as its point of embarkation an analysis of the Army Advisor Group (TAAG), MACTHAI, the immediate unit to which U.S. Army advisors are assigned. TAAG is commanded by a Colonel who is directly responsible to the Commanding General of MACTHAI/JUSMAG. At present, this unit is staffed by more than eighty (80) officers, of whom more than seventy-five per cent have some formally assigned advisory function. This unit and its leadership is directly responsible for giving the advisor direction, sanction, and support in his work with his counterpart.

TAAG will be analyzed as an open system; i.e., a system capable of accepting an import from its environment,¹ transforming this import into a product, and returning this product to the environment. In the process, energy is expended and work is accomplished.² The goal of such work is definable in terms of the unit's mission or missions. In the terms of this model, one function of unit leadership (or command) is to maintain contact with those portions of the environment that are relevant to the accomplishment of the unit's mission, (e.g., Commanding General of MACTHAI and certain units of the Royal Thai Army;) the other function is to control the internal structure of TAAG so that its various sections relate to each other and perform so that the mission of the unit is accomplished. Generally stated the unit leadership has the function of regulating the interaction between the relevant elements in the external environment and the internal structure of the unit may be regulated so the unit accomplishes its proper mission. Some of the implications of this line of reasoning may be clarified by the introduction of the concept of constraint. A constraint is any factor which modifies the choices available to a unit.

The way in which a unit accomplishes its mission is limited by internal and external constraints; e.g., the availability of personnel, the existence of an adequate technology, the financial resources available, the definition of the unit's mission. Clearly, these constraints can change. For instance, a new technology may be developed or higher command may re-define the mission. Since new constraints arise and old ones disappear, the leadership must constantly re-examine the reality of these constraints.

1. In this context, environment means everything outside of the unit boundaries of the Army Advisory Group. MACTHAI is, in this context, a portion of the TAAG's environment.

2. A.K. Rice, The Enterprise and Its Environment. Tavistock. London, 1962.

In the analysis of the Army Advisory Group, this study will collect information which will permit the formulation of the mission of the Army Advisory Group. The sub-tasks required if the unit mission is to be accomplished will be defined and the inter-relation of these sub-tasks to each other established. The inter-relationships of such sub-tasks constitutes one potential source of constraint upon unit performance. For instance, if the number of man-hours available for work is kept constant and there is an increased demand for staff reports from higher headquarters, there may be less time available for personnel to carry out advisory work, unless there is an increase in work output per man-hour. Other constraints upon the unit's activities will be identified and the reality of such constraints will be examined.

The technique which will be utilized in carrying out this phase of the study will be repeated interviews with those who have command or leadership roles within TAAG and with those individuals who fill other roles within the organization. These interviews will aim at collecting information about the work these individuals perform and its relevance to the unit mission. Data from this source will be formulation of the functional relationships within the organization, these formulations will be presented in form of working papers to appropriate representatives of the unit for critique. Perhaps the most important function of these working papers will be to elicit further information about the unit organization.

The purpose of the unit analysis is to establish a clear picture of the work group of the advisor. It is anticipated that this will provide information about: the formal aspects of the definition of the advisor's job, the rewards he receives, the constraints upon him, and his contribution to the unit mission. In this context, the advisors and the unit's formulation of the advisory role will be examined.

The study of advisor-counterpart relationship extends this project beyond the boundaries of the unit and beyond cultural boundaries into the area of cross-cultural research. Most simply and altruistically stated, the goal of the advisor and the counterpart is to enter into a cooperative relationship in which the advisor renders advice and assistance to his counterpart which will be used to increase the efficiency of the Royal Thai Army. Even if this goal is accepted by both participants, the task which faces the advisor and his counterpart is still formidable.

The advisor and his counterpart were reared speaking different languages, and they have learned to place different values on certain classes of behavior (e.g., respect for authority.) Their concepts of what constitutes cooperation versus obsequiousness, advice versus criticism, and modern versus non-modern may be quite different. Their usual techniques for evaluating their own personal impact upon others may be invalid in their transactions with each other since such techniques are frequently based upon implicit, culturally-shaped assumptions about the meaning of a given bit of behavior; the difficulty of interpreting a smile is a classic example of this problem. In a more general sense, the styles of information collection and evaluation may be quite different for the advisor and his counterpart.

In addition, the behaviors of the advisor and the counterpart are influenced by their individual needs, such as their need for social advancement, sensual gratification, friends, and familiar surroundings. The way in which an individual chooses to gratify his needs as well as his response to what he perceives as his counterpart's needs may be important in determining the character of the advisor-counterpart transaction.

In order to describe the behavior relevant to these issues, one of the investigators will act as a participant observer at selected field Advisory Detachments of TAAG. Advisors and counterparts will also be interviewed, using a semi-structured interview format. These interviews will be conducted by the principal investigator (a U.S. psychiatrist) and the associate investigator (a Thai psychiatrist.) Data concerning the advisors' and counterparts' perception of each other and their perception of their accomplishments vis-a-vis their relationship will be investigated. Personal data about advisors and counterparts will be held in strictest confidence.

Data collected will be recorded in field notes and on magnetic tape. These data will be used to describe the organizational structure of TAAG and the relevance of the structure to the performance of the advisor's task, and to assess the significance of the transcultural transactions between advisor and counterpart

as a potential constraint on the performance of TAAG's mission. The collection of raw data will be carried out between 1 January 1966 and 1 July 1967. Further reduction of data and write-up will be accomplished between 1 July 1967 and 1 January 1968.

Progress: Individuals assigned to various duties within the Army Advisory Group have been interviewed concerning their conceptualization of their assigned duties and their activities related to their carrying out of these duties. Similar interviews have been obtained by a more limited number of Thai counterparts. Such information has been obtained from officers working with the staff officers in Bangkok and field advisors. Interview data have been supplemented by information obtained from participant observation of advisors in the work situation. The data accumulated to date are too limited to permit the investigator to draw any firm conclusions at this time. However, from inspection of the data, it does seem that certain concepts like "the oriental mind," and "losing face" are frequently used among the advisors to explain the behavior of Thai counterparts and to explain the advisor's behavior vis-a-vis his counterpart. The conceptual content of these and other common place stereo-typic explanations of behavior will also be investigated in some detail.

The initial design has been modified. It had been anticipated that work on this project would be completed by 1 July 1967. The target date for completing data collection is now 31 December 1967. During the next year individual interviewing of advisors and counterparts will be emphasized. More information will be sought about how they establish reliable interpersonal relationships, exchange information and resolve conflicts. The amount of participant observation in the field will be less than originally planned.

Summary: During the past year data has been collected by interviews and participant observations. In the immediate future the study will emphasize the use of individual interviews to obtain information about interpersonal behavior in the transcultural setting.

STUDY REPORT

Title: Cross Cultural Communication: The Interaction of the American Medical Educator with His Thai Colleagues and Students

Principal Investigator: Richard G. Morrill, Captain, MC.

Period of Report: 1 April 1965—31 March 1966

Objective: To observe and describe interactions between United States medical educator advisors, Thai medical faculty, and Thai medical students, and attempt to identify and relate major variables influencing cross cultural communications in advisor counterpart and teacher-student role relationships.

Description: At the invitation of the Thai Government with the sponsorship of the University of Illinois School of Medicine, and with financial support of USOM, a group of American medical educators have assumed the dual roles of advisors to the Thai faculty and teachers at the Chiangmai Medical School, Chiangmai, Thailand. This situation provides an opportunity to collect concurrent data from the participants in a cross cultural relationship.

This study is investigating cross cultural communications in this setting. Particular attention is being paid to the two main role relationships in which Americans and Thai participate, advisor-counterpart and teacher-student.

With regard to the advisor-counterpart relationship the dynamics of the interpersonal communication across a cultural boundary will be described. The demands and behaviors associated with the advisor role will be emphasized. The investigator is attending individual relationships and the social dynamics of group situations where American and Thai faculty interact.

American teacher-Thai student communication patterns has been studied by observing behavior in small groups. The group involved in teaching rounds have been the group most intensely observed. The investigator has routinely accompanied certain of these groups and collected data concerning verbal interaction in English which can be recorded on a verbal behavior rating scale. These same students have also been observed by the Thai research assistant in teaching rounds conducted in their own language by the Thai faculty for comparative study of their behavior.

The data derived from the naturalistic observation of advisor-counterpart and teacher-student interactions has been supplemented by information derived from structured and unstructured individual interviews with the participants. Simultaneous translation by a translator has been employed when appropriate.

In the course of this study the Thai students have received tests to evaluate their language proficiency and additional questionnaires to assess such factors as ethnic affiliation and to record significant demographic data (age, ethnic background, area of origin etc.). One goal is to correlate the variable of Thai student verbal behavior occurring on teaching rounds involving participation of U.S. teachers, with language ability, grades, ethnic affiliation (genetic and attitudinal), and area of origin within Thailand.

Progress: The training of research assistants in techniques of rating group interaction was completed. A number of medical and surgical rounds involving Thai and U.S. teachers and Thai students were rated on a number of parameters of verbal interaction. The students participating in these rounds were tested for their English speaking ability and their comprehension of English. Their responses to the U.S. advisor-teachers were evaluated using the Thai Osgood Semantic Differential. The demographic data, social background and scholastic performance of all students participating was obtained. Selected students were interviewed for detailed life histories as well as factors related to future planning and their responses to their experiences with U.S. medical educators.

Members of the Thai faculty and the University of Illinois party were interviewed to sample factors relevant to their interaction with each other and with the students. In addition, the principal investigator had an opportunity to act as an instructor teaching the use of behavioral principles in evaluating pharmacological principles. This impressionistic data obtained by observing the interaction of faculty, U.S. advisors and students in structured and unstructured situations will be compared with the reports of advisors and their counterparts of their interactions.

Data collection in this project was completed 10 December 1966 and the assembled data will be analyzed over the next six months. The principal investigator returned PCS to WRAIR, Washington, D.C., on 15 December 1966.