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# A Theoretical Analysis of Non-formal Education as a Social Movement for Change in Thailand

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In a society where class conflicts arise, people usually form a collective group to lead change. One underlying tool for change may be based on non-formal or informal activities. Recently in Thailand, following the May 2014 military coup, the New Democracy Movement (NDM) arose. It was formed by a core group of 14 students from a variety of class backgrounds. The group was popularized by its call for an investigation into the corruption in the construction of a military park in January 2016. The NDM group represents both a movement against the military junta and one to end the political deadlock in society (Haberkorn, 2015; Silvan, 2016; Taylor, 2016). It has close links with the Khon Kaen University Faculty of Law-based Dao Din students, who attempted to work with villagers in educating them about their rights, for example in the face of state-backed mining projects ("Military Summons Villagers," 2014; "Thai Military Forbids," 2015). These events provide an opportunity to look back at the original Thai student social movement, which was born in 1973 and was the first mass student movement in Thailand to make use of non-formal education.

Non-formal education is typically defined as a system of education for those who have missed the opportunity to attend formal system, and it is also recognized as an education format for disadvantaged groups (Coombs & Ahmed, 1974; La Belle, 2000; and UNESCO, 2011). Non-formal education is also viewed as a convenient approach to cover widely dispersed groups of population and convenient for the management of educational activities. It is distinct from formal education, and it is much more flexible, versatile, and adaptable (Coombs, 1976). Paulston and LeRoy (1975) produced a groundbreaking typology of Non-Formal Education (NFE) from a literature review by presenting a relationship between "Goals," "Controls" and "Dimensions." They classified the dimensions and control of non-formal education into four groups. These types share the core function of themselves being a function of a development process, either self-realization, political socialization, or national economic development. The types comprise human resources development, non-formal education for rural development, non-formal education for "life-long learning," and non-formal education in social movements.

Firstly, the human resources development approach aims to maximize the skills and knowledge of people through training. This type of non-formal training

provides education for personnel in order for them to meet new, expanded knowledge and skill requirements. The functions include (1) activities oriented towards developing the skills and knowledge of members of a labor force who are already employed; (2) activities designed to prepare people, mostly youths, to enter employment; and (3) activities designed to develop skills, knowledge, and understanding which may be equivalent to that provided in formal schools. This form of NFE stems from the development needs of countries and associated problems of schooling. When organized into an integrated network of NFE projects and programs, they would serve a growing need or urgency to search for alternatives or supplementary education to formal schools. Secondly, non-formal education for rural development can reach various groups of adults and youths with a wide range of skills development in order to increase their job productivity. This kind of non-formal education has been implemented to a limited extent in Thailand, especially after the stipulations of the 1999 National Education Act. This approach of non-formal education aims to balance social and economic development, with an emphasis on equal distribution of resources as well as a strong voice for people and their participation in shaping the decisions that affect their lives. Coombs (1968) and Coombs and Ahmed (1974) also advocated an integrated approach to education which employs formal, non-formal, and informal education in order to meet rural people's needs. In this approach, the target populations' needs are taken into account. Coombs (1976) viewed that this planning for this type of non-formal approach should be integrated within a national strategies framework for rural development. Thirdly, the non-formal education for "life-long education" concept views education as (1) developing in individuals a life-long desire to learn, and (2) providing learning supports which would enable individuals to continue their education throughout their lives. In this way, non-formal education can be a means for personal liberation. Fourthly, non-formal education in social movements occurs in the following situations: (1) a certain class feels oppressive restrictions on their power and participation, and (2) an ethnic group and corporative tradition of sound organization enables class movement ideologies and

alternative institutions. Paulston and Le Roy (1975) illustrated this form of NFE by employing the history of the Scandinavian folk movement in the 1930s as a case of alternative non-formal education programs created by folk/farmer/working class movements. The folk high schools stood apart from the formal education system, which prepared middle- and upper-class youth for university and elite roles. It offered a variety of non-formal courses from general education to social movement education programs seeking to establish the peaceful orientation and reconstruction of Scandinavian societies.

A human resources development model using non-formal education is usually closely related to the changing employment structure and national development planning. The implementation of this type of non-formal education would appear to enable individuals to increase their productivity and consumption and lead to an increase in the standard of living. It is used as a means of helping to alter basic structure and class relationships (Paulston & Le Roy, 1975, p. 579). In Thailand, non-formal education was formally implemented according to a concept of "Khit Phen", or learn to know how to think. This referred to an educational approach that stimulates awareness in people so they think and act reasonably. The "Khit Phen," concept was developed from Paul Freire's consciousness raising ideology (e.g., Freire, 1970). However, the concept was modified to suit Thai culture and the local situation (Sungsri & Mellor, 1984; Nopakun, 1985). Thailand, through this concept, aimed at human resources development. This was because the modified concept of education seen as suitable for the needs of society during the 1970's focused on the structural–functional.

## Literature Review: Concepts of Social Movement

Social movement theory is based on sociology and political science. A social movement is the outcome of complex interactions between social and political structural conditions (Rootes, 1990). Three factors identified to explain the development of social movement include motivation, mobilizing structures, and political opportunities. In every social movement,

mobilizing structures are created by social movement actors, with shared reasons behind their decision to participate. Mobilizing structures are collective vehicles through which people can become engaged in collective actions. Political opportunities usually arise both from constraints and enabling situations. Smelser (1963) explained through his ground-breaking *Theory of Collective Behavior* that a social movement is an act of collective behavior. According to Smelser, six determinants of collective behaviors usually operate in combination to produce a burst of collective activity. These are: (1) Structured conduciveness. This means that we should expect a mass acting collectively to lie in an area like urban conglomerations, universities, and factories; (2) Structural strain among values or norms in society; (3) Spread of generalized beliefs. Social strains give rise to ambiguities in individual belief systems (Roberts & Kloss, 1979). And, the individual may opt for a belief system in which certain individuals are responsible for the existing sorry state of affairs; (4) Participating factor. This can be any emotionalized situation that leads to an escalation of activities; (5) The mobilization of participants for action. At this stage, the function of communication and persuasion of the masses is crucial. So, these factors will usually lead to the emergence of a leadership. Charismatic leaders are the most important actor at this stage; and (6) The failure of social control. Smelser (1963) concluded that spontaneous uprising on either the Right or Left can sometimes be translated into social movements if the collectivities of like-minded individuals persist, develop long-range tactics and goals, and translate their anxieties into a political consciousness (Roberts & Kloss, 1979, p. 39).

A social movement has been defined classically as a social collective that has some elements of planning or goal orientation within it (Roberts & Kloss, 1979). There is a dynamic relationship between trends and movements. For example, industrial processes, with their inhumane practices, disorganize, indeed destroy human lives. Movements arise to protest this destruction of life, and they may adopt one of two tactics. First, they may oppose all further industrialization and the use of technology. Second, they may oppose the oppression associated with industrialization and opt for more humane use of technology. As we look at the

trend toward increasing bureaucratization, we can see that it involves the use of planning and rationality in human affairs; we can also see that bureaucracy as a source of hierarchical control and irresponsible power. Some may react to bureaucratization by calling for a mystical alternative to rational planning (Roberts & Kloss, 1979). Roberts and Kloss (1979, p. 8) provided a typology for the dialectical relations between trends and social movement in terms of oppressive tendencies and utopian possibilities, illustrated in Table 1.

Following Table 1, social movements are born from basic contradictions in systems of power and oppression. The table illustrates that the master trends and methods of control also indicate the existence of oppressive tendencies, hierarchical control, and goal displacement. The social movement considered in this article falls within the category of an anti-bureaucratic movement.

*Analysis of the Origins of a Social Movement*

A social movement can be governed by structural binds on power relations. Structural binds are stress conditions caused by discrepancies between the perceived situation of a group and the perception of what is just, possible, and expected. Binds concretely represent power relations between a mobilized group and society (Paulston, 1979). Factors which can help us understand the emergence and development of social movement include motivations, mobilizing structures, and political opportunities (McAdam, McCarthey, & Zald, 1996). Motivations refer to the reasons and the shared meaning of people who decides to participate, while mobilizing structures are means which people mobilize and engage in the actions. The political opportunities refer to the set of political constraints and enabling situations and opportunities that lead to the social movements.

Understanding the situation of the social movements is crucial when considering the case of the student movement in Thailand. There were two conditions governing the Thai student movement.

**1. The political bind: Thailand was under martial law for more than ten years**. For decades, the Thai military was in power. The military remained very strong. Most university students viewed that military rule did not solve the country's economic and

**Table 1**

*Dialectical (Antithetical) Relations Between Social Trends and Social Movements: Oppressive Tendencies and Utopian Possibilities (adapted from Roberts & Kloss, 1979, p. 8)*

| MASTER TRENDS<br>Method of control | SOCIAL MOVEMENTS | POSSIBLE DIALECTICAL TRANSFORMATIONS<br>Interactions between social movements and liberative potentials of master trends |
| --- | --- | --- |
| I. Bureaucracy<br>A. Oppressive tendencies<br>Objectification<br>Alienation<br>Hierarchical control<br>Goal displacement<br>B. Liberative potential<br>Planning rationality | I. Anti-bureaucratic movements<br>Worldwide student movements<br>Cultural revolution in China | I. Planning with minimal division of labor (for example, East European workers' councils, the Chinese experiments ad-hoc-cracies) |
| II. Cultural-economic imperialization<br>A. Oppressive tendencies<br>Racism<br>"Coca colonization"<br>Exploitation<br>B. Liberative potential<br>Enlargement of social-political scale | II. Anti-imperialistic movements<br>Nativistic revitalization movements (pre-political)<br>Nationalist reformers<br>Nationalist revolutions | II. Enlargement of political scale<br>Destruction of tribalism parochialism (for example, Ujamaa experiments in Tanzania, Land reform in Third World countries) |
| III. Industrialization<br>A. Oppressive tendencies<br>Dynamic poverty<br>Creation of "false needs"<br>B. Liberative potential<br>End to oppressive labor | III. The labor movement and its variants<br>Unionism<br>Syndicalism<br>Socialism<br>Communism | III. Technology for liberation industrial democracy (fragmented empirical examples in Scandinavia, pre-Stalinist Russia, China) |

social problems, especially in rural areas. In 1968, the government completed drafting a constitution. The students then demonstrated and asked the government to lift martial law and to ensure a fair campaign for the 1969 election. The government responded by declaring that, even though the 1968 constitution had been promulgated, the population of Thailand was still under a law which prohibited public assembly without government approval, until martial law was lifted. In the 1969 election, large numbers of university students volunteered to monitor voting at the polling booths. Their observations of falsifications and corruption in the voting procedures increased their political awareness and hence their involvement (Ingavata, 1981).

After December 1972, the government was more arbitrary and repressive than any other preceding military regime. Thirty-seven persons accused of subversive activities were summarily executed without normal court procedures or established channels of justice. Furthermore, the structure of the bureaucracy was very strong and authoritarian. The new cabinet expanded the personal power of the two top leaders in the military regime. The Prime Minister resumed his positions as Prime Minister and Minister of Defense and also took control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Deputy Prime Minister retained his post as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, and so forth. The general belief was that there was widespread corruption in the bureaucratic system (Darling, 1974).

**2. Economic bind**. The acceptance of Western values created a high demand for inputs. The development of the centralization of industry for the benefit of the well-to-do and business sectors meant that the production and labor forces from rural areas served only the big cities, primarily Bangkok. The gap between the rich and the poor widened. Then, in 1972 the economy was struck by a severe drought, which reduced the rice surplus for the following year. In June 1973, the government was forced to take the unprecedented step of temporarily halting rice exports to conserve adequate food supplies for domestic consumption. Moreover, the under-unemployment of graduates was another problem that created dissatisfaction among university students, leading to an increasing interest in politics and the discovery of new values (Jumbala, 1974).

Like most third world countries, Thailand at the time faced the problem of high inflation rates and an increasingly high trade balance of payment deficits. Also, a quarter of the population, those living in rural areas, did not share equally in the benefits of economic growth. However, during the military government, the rural population was less concerned than the urban population. The rapid growth in total population (3.3%) caused an economic depression (Jumbala, 1974). These conditions built up an internal conflict among students. The stress was increased by the perception of the way society was and the way it should be.

*The Organization*

After the 1969 election, the university students decided to form an inter-university organization, the National Student Centre of Thailand (NSCT). This was established in Bangkok in 1970. The main purposes were non-political. It was interested in the organization of social activities. Also, in 1969, Dr. Puey Ungphakorn had established the Thai Rural Reconstruction Movement Project. This organization based its mission on providing opportunities for students to reach out to the community. Students from various disciplines had an opportunity to learn and acquire experiences, to feel responsible for helping society and to work ethically in real social circumstances. The main motto was (International Institute of Rural Reconstruction, 2017):

Go to the people, live among them, learn from them, plan with them, work with them, start with what they know, build on what they have, teach by showing, learn by doing.
Not a showcase but a pattern.
Not odds and ends but a system.
Not piecemeal but an integrated approach.
Not to conform but to transform.
Not relief but release.

*Leadership*

In 1972 Thrirayuth Boonmee was elected secretary general. He organized more politically oriented activities. For example, within six months (September 1972–February 1973), Thirayuth was able to call for a demonstration from an organization of approximately 100,000 members. He forged an enclave of power under his control to carry out his political activities by using the NSCT as a center (Heinze, 1974). Thirayuth launched a campaign to boycott products from Japan and to promote locally made products. After this campaign, the NSCT gained more popularity with both students and the people. This activity aroused a feeling of nationalism, especially among Thai students. This was the first step in the emergence of Thai student power (Morell & Samudavaniji, 1979).

## The Objectives of the Movement

Potential movement objectives can be classified as follows (Paulston, 1979, p. 6):

**1. Transformative movement.** The objectives call for the basic structural alteration of a social order, or for a fundamental alteration within a given sector of the social order. The movement's objectives are essentially based on the idea of liberation and self-determination and seek a radical restructuring of the social order.

**2. Reformist movement**. The objectives seek to alter a relationship within the social order without drastic structural change. These efforts are directed towards correcting social defects which detrimentally affect the movement constituency.

**3. Separatist movement**. The objectives attempt to break away from the existing social order for the purpose of establishing a segregated subsystem within it.

**4. Reactionary movement**. The objectives seek to counter and reverse changes brought about in the existing social order.

The main objectives of the Thai student movement were "reformist" because the students wanted to change from an authoritarian military regime to a democratic system, with more political participation.

*The Mobilization of the Movement*

The 1968 constitution, which provided some civil liberties such as freedom of speech and assembly, encouraged political activities among students. Many study groups and student movement groups in universities in Bangkok wrote and published essays and books expressing progressive ideas which articulated the problems of the country. These included criticism of the government's policy and its functions, especially corruption within the Thai bureaucratic system. Imperialism and the third world's problems were also issues in the discussions. The NSCT was the main center to mobilize the movement, leading to many demonstrations from 1972 until 1973. The movement started among the groups of university students, and the majority of the movement's groups were from universities in Bangkok. College students and civilians joined the movement later. The movement started gaining traction in May 1973, when a picture of a crashed helicopter in a newspaper revealed that government officials had been hunting in a national park. The government insisted that this group had been on a secret mission. Tensions grew when nine Ramkhamhaeng University students were expelled for publishing a satirical magazine. A protest of 30,000 students, which tied up Bangkok traffic for two days, ended in chaos. The King then intervened, instructing that the students be reinstated but suspended for two terms (Heinze, 1974).

In early October the police arrested 12 students, including the Secretary General of the NSCT, for plotting the overthrow of the government. The students then formed a demonstration group from October 6, 1973, until October 14, 1973. The demonstration called for the release of the 12 arrested students, the promulgation of a new constitution, and also the resignation of the Prime Minister (Darling, 1974). The demonstration ended on October 14, 1973, when

a government party of 24 individuals departed the country. A civilian government was then appointed.

*The Pedagogical Processes*

The concept of non-formal education involves the pedagogical processes of education in order to educate different groups of people, via different subtypes such as adult education, continuing education, on-the-job-training, out of school education, farmers training skill development training, or extensive services. Moreover, it is also well recognized as an empowering process which can be oriented towards the development of socioeconomic structures and relationships through group action-taking. Paulston (1979, p. 10) classified non-formal pedagogical orientations into three types: A) The Poetic–Historical (idealistic and spiritual); B) The Rational-Pragmatic (literacy, numerical, and organizational skills); and C) The Ideological–Confrontational (militancy and struggle). Education in the Thai student movement during this period emphasized the type C orientation. The pedagogical activities in the movement can be described as follows. Informal education played an important role in the movement because the military government was very powerful. Any other approach to education was impossible. The objectives of the movement were mobilized by seminars, the meetings among the student leaders which were provided regularly by the NSCT. Most of the strategies concerned demonstrations, so there was no need for training in any skills or techniques for the movement. The pedagogical activities were mostly provided during demonstrations. Hyde Park–style free speech opportunities were arranged. Pamphlets and leaflets were distributed. For university students, there were some political–ideological books which groups of students circulated for reading in the campuses. The demonstration plan was also designed in August 1973 as an activity of the NSCT. The student leaders provided a seminar at Thammasat University and the plan was designed. Socialization was the other activity in the informal education approach. University professors were also facilitators. That is, professors had been telling students for years that Thailand needed a more responsive system of government (Zimmerman, 1976). This socialization activity was started by small groups of students who were nonetheless dedicated and

influential. Moreover, in the Thammasat University Faculty of Political Sciences, the students had a better chance to study the political system than other students. These students then shared their ideas and discussed them with their friends (Interview with former Faculty of Political Science students, personal communication, January 16, 2009).

*Pedagogical Processes for the 1973 Movement*

The pedagogical activities in this period, that is, those which emphasized the ideological confrontation of militancy and struggle, relied heavily on an informal education approach. It worked effectively only among intellectuals and groups of students. This can be concluded from the participants in the demonstrations. There was an increased number of students, from the universities to the colleges and technical schools. The mobilization of the movement could not reach the majority of the population because of the political control. Big group meetings and discussions were not possible as they were banned. However, every movement of students also facilitated the political awareness of the Thai people, and after October, 1973, the public paid more attention to political matters and had more concerns about the political situation in the country. In particular, the NSCT became the center for the social movement and political education. In general, it may be concluded that the pedagogical activities during this period achieved their goals by changing the military government to a civilian government. Furthermore, the new constitution was promulgated about one year after the uprising, in early 1975. The increasing political awareness of Thai people influenced subsequent educational developments after 1973.

*The Role of Education After the 1973 Uprising*

From 1973 to 1976, Thai politics was in a transitional period. The old political values were replaced by a new democratic contribution. The students played an important role in mobilizing political awareness. They tried to encourage the majority of population to have more involvement in political participation. The movement was aware that disadvantaged groups of the population, especially peasants and workers, were uneducated, passive, and did not understand

the concept of democracy. This group of students then proposed a democratic education program to the government. This program was aimed at preparing the population for the elections and was supported by the civilian government. The program was launched under the supervision of the University Bureau. It called for volunteer students and was called "Back to the countryside" (Jumbala & Mitprasat, 1997). The students were trained before going to work with the project. The students employed personal contacts as well as group contacts in their teaching. They spent 30 days in each village. There were no rigid schedules in their teaching. Thus, it was convenient for the learners who could learn or attend lessons whenever appropriate for them. There was also an exhibition of democracy procedures in the villages during the period that the students worked on the program. This pedagogical approach can be classified as a rational-pragmatic, emphasizing literacy, numerical, and organization skills, or Paulston's (1979) type B. The form of education program was clearly non-formal education.

Other types of pedagogical activities also contributed to the informal education approach. These activities included a conference, discussions, demonstrations, and speeches. The activities can be described as follows (Ingavata, 1981):

**1. International Conference**. In November–December 1973, the students arranged the Asian Economic Conference at Chulalongkorn University. There were representative from six countries. This conference protested against military aid and investment from outside countries. They suggested that the Third World countries should have the right to determine the kind of aid which was appropriate for their needs. This led to demonstrations protesting American power based in Southeast Asia between 1974 and 1975, protests against Japanese products in 1975, and protests against U.S. intervention in Vietnam in 1975. During the demonstrations, there were speeches and leaflets, and printed materials were distributed. This gave the public more information about international affairs as well as encouraged feelings of nationalism.

**2. Music and songs were used for consciousness-raising**. The songs were composed to facilitate consciousness-raising among the peasants. The words in the songs described the peasants' lives. All the songs

pointed out how hard the peasants worked and how easily the elites reaped the profit. Group of musicians travelled around the countryside and presented this music. The students who taught democratic education also introduced the songs to the peasants.

**3. Publications**. During this period, the civilian government promulgated the new constitution, so publications could be presented more freely than during the previous period. Most of the student leadership wrote about the new ideas of democracy and revolution in books and periodicals. For example, Thirayuth Boonmee, one of the leaders, translated the book *The Chinese Path to Socialism* from English into Thai (Ingavata, 1981). In addition, several revolutionary books were widely distributed among university students and intellects.

## Analysis of the Pedagogical Processes

All the pedagogical activities were widely mobilized in the countryside, especially the non-formal education program, which was also termed "democracy education" (Jumbala & Mitprasat, 1997). In general, the non-formal education program in this movement did not have a clear structure because there was no standard curriculum or certification for participants. However, at the beginning of the program, the content was planned and the teaching personnel were trained. The interpersonal approach worked very well during the initial period. The peasants and the workers trusted the students because the students understood their problems. It was said that during the democratic education period, the peasants and workers preferred consulting the students about their problems rather than government officials. According to the aims of democracy education, the students believed that if they provided knowledge to people, that meant that they were giving power to people. Democracy education was founded on the principle that a democratic society needs the participation of the majority of people. Thus democracy education was launched. But, in real situations, the students encountered economic and social problems, which indicated the exploitation of the poor by the rich. Their philosophy was changed. The students then chose to use some other approaches to call for equality for these disadvantaged groups.

The ideological-confrontational approach was then used. In the short period of dealing with democracy education and consciousness-raising strategies, the most predominant activities were:

1. March, 1974: a group of peasants demonstrated with the demand for a guaranteed price for rice.
2. June, 1974: the peasants and students requested for the peasants rights concerning farm debts filed.
3. November, 1974: requests for rights about farm rent (especially for the period for renting) (Mezey, 1975).

Also during this period, the workers went on strike and asked for increased wages. This was the first time in the Thai social context that peasants and workers had demonstrated. This indicated a growing awareness of human rights among poor people. The movement seemed to grow, and the number of participants seemed to increase. The pedagogical activities during this period then created an opposing elite movement.

This elite movement arose out of the following process. When the demonstrations against the factory owners, the landlords, and the government officials occurred, they caused a chain reaction in all the ruling class people. This indicated that the approach of spreading democracy education throughout the whole range of the population (mostly rural illiterates), including workers, gradually built a class conflict. While the students carried out policies and implemented strategies for achieving goals, such as social justice, economic equality, and anti-corruption in the bureaucratic system, elite groups then formed opposition groups designed to counter this movement. In the Thai social context, the relationships between the bureaucracy and extra-bureaucratic organizations are connected via interrelationships. The first level of relationship is between the bureaucracy and upper classes, such as the leaders of government ministries and businessmen. A second level is between the bureaucrats and the citizens (Jumbala, 1974). These opposition groups can be called right wing groups. In the Thai context, the right wing groups consisted of the military, police officers, land owners, factory

owners, and middle class people. To gain support from the majority of the population and reduce the power of the student movement, the elite groups provided a reactionary non-formal education program called the "Village Scout" training program. This training program declared its slogan as "To protect nation, monarchy and religion" and aimed to form a sense of unity in the population. It consisted of a two-week training program. Military officers, school teachers, government officials, and some privileged groups constructed the program. The pedagogical orientation emphasized the ideologically constructed confrontational, that is, militancy struggle. Songs, dances, and games were employed for encouraging unity among various groups. In the military coup d'état in October, 1976, the Village Scouts were also used as a civilian paramilitary force to protest against the student movement in their last demonstration (Jumbala, 1974).

The civilian government could not stop the conflict among the various groups. The situation from late 1975 seemed to indicate that the new civilian government was controlled by the military bureaucratic business complex and that its relationships with these elite groups had become deeply rooted (Ingavata, 1981). This indicates that the major power group dominating the system was not changing. Bureaucracies can become unbelievably powerful instruments for change or, as in this case, for guarding the status quo (Roberts & Kloss, 1979), as in October, 1976, a coup d'état completely destroyed the student power and all social mobility in Thailand (Ingavata, 1981).

In brief, it can be concluded that the pedagogical activities in the student movement were partly successful, such as in building up a leadership and leading to the mobilization of a movement. It also opened up a better chance for different groups in society to participate in political activities. For example, a civilian government was established, a new constitution was promulgated, and the public had a better chance to express their opinions as well as to publish their ideas more freely. Furthermore, there were elections in the country, the number and influence of political parties increased, and a land reform act was proposed.

However, there were still some objectives which pedagogical activities could not achieve during this period. The movement could not attain the goal of building up a democratic society, and democracy education could not develop a real awareness of democracy in the population in the countryside. The pedagogical activities in the movements can therefore be summarized in Table 2.

As can be seen in Table 2, during 1973, there was no reaction from the status quo. The reason may be because the pedagogical activities mobilized only the students and intellectuals and because the goal of the movement was anti-bureaucratic. However, after the 1973 revolution, the movements aimed at facilitating political awareness and consciousness-raising among the majority of the population. This approach worked against the status quo. Nonetheless, as Paulston (1980) noted in his study of ethnic movements, social

**Table 2**

*Pedagogical Activities in the Student Movement*

|  | Informal Ed. | Non-formal Ed. | Pedagogical Orientation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Before 1937 | Speeches Demonstrations Printed Materials Seminars Discussions Meetings | - | The ideological confrontation: Militancy and Struggle. |
| During 1973–1976 | Publications Seminars Conferences Demonstrations Songs & Music | Democracy Education | The Rational Pragmatic: Literacy, Numerical & Organizational Skills. (And partly ideological confrontation) |

movements are tolerated only when their potential threat to the status quo is in some degree acceptable to those in control of the policy, the military, the courts, and the police.

According to Paulston's (1979, p. 18) paradigm of social movements, the student group falls under the concept of "Subordinate Movements," which implies a mass movement that is nonetheless small in power. Meanwhile, the elite's group falls under the concept of "Dominant Movement," with a small size but more power. This reason meant the student movement encountered difficulty in making change built on an effort from below. With more power and money support from various groups of elites, the elite's movement was able to acquire larger support in a short period. The student movement then turned into a minority group because the middle class moved to join the elite group. Tellingly, Paulston (1979, p. 17) noted,

> When minority movements representing groups of relatively small size and little power seek to alter the status quo in ways detrimental to the perceived interests of the majority, their educational programs can rarely implant new values and behaviors that can be rewarded time either in or out of the movement context.

After the reformist movement's objectives were achieved, the students' political consciousness caused them to become more involved, and they attempted to increase freedom and quality of life for the poor. The problems of unemployment and poverty indicated economic pressures and social injustice. The students also realized the discrepancy between what they had learned in their education and what they perceived (Bakke, 1966). The students then made the second move towards new goals, namely, political participation for the majority of the population and for social justice. The students chose to use informal and non-formal education as tools for achieving these goals. They launched these pedagogical activities in November, 1973 and maintained them until late 1976. However, the pedagogical activities during this period could not attain their goals, as the movement only succeeded in a few, limited aspects.

Moreover, the evidence presented by this case of a student movement indicates that the type of consciousness-raising effort undertaken hardly ever achieves its goals in the Thai social context. The student movement paid full attention to the disadvantaged groups, the workers, and peasants because they realized that these disadvantaged groups are the majority of the population. The students encouraged adults to be active participants in a democratic society. They also deliberately placed adults (mostly rural poor and illiterates) in critical confrontation with the problems. Nonetheless, this approach was not willingly accepted by the elite groups.

This may indicate that the approach as developed by Freire (1970), which emphasizes problematic confrontation, may not be accepted by Thai elites. Freire believed that the adult literacy process must engage the learners in the constant problematizing of their existential situation (Mackie, 1981). It was believed that the Thai student movement had implemented a problem posing approach in their informal education project. This can be observed from the motto of the rural reconstruction project, as well as from the student activities themselves. Primarily, the Thai student organization based its orientation on having students work with villagers in rural, educational, and occupational development. The goal of the project was to help develop villagers in order for them to become self-reliant. Nonetheless, it ultimately failed when it confronted, and was confronted by, elite power.

## Discussion

The theoretical analysis of the Thai social movement as shown above suggests the inefficacy and outright danger, within the Thai context, of an educational social movement arising from a bottom up approach. But, in the 21st century there are examples of successful social movements involving non-formal education arising from the integration of the top-down and bottom-up approaches. In particular, Rincón-Gallardo and Elmore (2012) explored how and under what conditions a countercultural educational practice can be brought to scale as a transformative initiative, based on how the Learning Community Project (LCP) in Mexico operates. Since the year 2000, Mexican lower-secondary education had experienced

a large percentage of students scoring below basic levels of proficiency in Math, Spanish, and Sciences. Many approaches were launched, but none of them demonstrated an improvement in student learning and achievement. So, it was imperative to transform the educational system (Rincón-Gallardo & Elmore, 2012). Implemented by the Mexican Ministry of Education, the LCP project aimed to promote the reform of instructional practice in public schools across the country. Though apparently top-down, the approach was grounded in countercultural practices.

The LCP pedagogy was based on the concept that learning occurs when students' interests are matched with the capacity of the teacher. The process of the instruction was that the teachers offered the topics and themes that they would master and each student will choose those topics he or she is most interested in. It was necessary that topics be mostly taken from the core curriculum. However, the teachers can include relevant topics according to students' interests, such as current social issues in farming. Once students choose their topics, the teachers or tutors inquire about students' background knowledge by asking questions to guide students. When the students master their topics, they prepare to presents their work to teachers, tutors, their peers and community on what they learned in the learning process. Then, the students who finish their work and presentations can become tutors for other students at the school or for other schools in their area, or simply for adults who are interested in the topics. Their projects create a knowledge-based community and network among people who participate in the presentation. This pedagogy employs the traditional practice in the school system in which teachers are the knowledge providers. Nonetheless, the new learning model also provides opportunities for students to become active agents in learning and sharing their knowledge with other adults and students.

The counter-cultural origins of the instructional model in this pedagogical model was derived from the Convivencia Educative, A.C. (CEAC), which was a small non-governmental organization. This NGO had been promoting educational development for marginalized Mexican communities who could not access formal education services. Similar to the Thai "Khit-Pen" concept, the founder of the NGO, Gabriel

Cámara, based his educational philosophy on the critical pedagogy of Ivan Illich and Paulo Freire. His intention was to develop non-formal educational projects to help the youth and communities take control over their learning. The LCP has many of the attributes of an ideal countercultural non-formal education movement, including the fact that "…people work in face-to-face relationship with others who are more knowledgeable than they are…knowledge moves through the network through a reliance on public discourse about learning which in turn, reinforce accountability for quality among members of the networks" (Rincón-Gallardo & Elmore, 2012, p. 484) and "Teaching and learning and policy and practice are conceptualized and performed as dialectical and horizontal relationships of mutual influence…" (p. 485). The CEAC had its origins in the Post-Primary Project which was supported by the central government National Council for the Promotion of Education, to assist students and young instructors in developing the capacity for learning independently. The Project reached 350 rural communities in 27 Mexican states, receiving much critical acclaim, then in 2003 it transformed into the CEAC group and decided to introduce the learning community model into the national formal education system via a variety of small instructional development projects (Cámara, 2006, 2008, as cited in Rincón-Gallardo & Elmore, 2012, p. 475).

How and under what conditions a countercultural instructional practice can be expanded and integrated into a large number of schools is obviously of crucial interest in the Thai context given the fact a third of Thai youth age 15 are functionally illiterate (Lathapipat & Sondergaard, 2015). Rincón-Gallardo and Elmore (2012, p. 478) reported that both the contexts in which LCP developed and various features of the LCP model itself contribute towards the sudden expansion, which can be "explained by the ability of its actors to spur a social movement that has created and capitalized on personal and collective motivation, mobilizing structures, and political opportunities to consolidate a countercultural practice in classrooms and expand it across the educational system." In this light, it may be pointed out from the Thai experience that non-formal education can be implemented for the development or movement of the masses when a counter-cultural

student movement group, such as the Dao Din students, join hands with the administrators and mobilizes the movement through a community network. Most importantly, the philosophy of the Freirean "Khit-Pen" concept, which was once used in the informal education system in Thailand, should be reconsidered and reintroduced into the formal education system in a way similar to the Mexican case. According to this traditionally counter-cultural concept, the learning and instruction approach must encourage the learners to think critically, and the role of learners and teachers can be interchangeable. In Thailand, historically the quality of learning achievement is considered to be low, as recognized by the need for the 1999 National Education Act. As part of the educational reform movement in Thailand, the 1999 National Education Act legislated three main types of education: formal, non-formal, and informal. The last two types were intended to enhance access to diversified education services for learning and self-development on a continuous basis in accordance with people's needs and interests. The non-formal education service also provided an education program for those who dropped-out, for under privileged groups, and for skill development for labor forces (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999).

However, the main focus of recent reforms has been implementation via a solely top-down approach. Yet, there are some grounds for optimism. One of the new practices of education development in Thailand is the Professional Learning Community (PLC) concept. Schoolteachers nationwide have been learning about PLC for teacher development. The main activity includes the teachers spending time working together. They all have to accept each other as equal parties. This initiative seems to be similar to the LCP as reported by Rincón-Gallardo and Elmore (2012). One of the key practices in the Mexican movement is "nodes" (collegial terms), which are created at the school, district, state, and national levels. These nodes work to consolidate and disseminate LCP's core practices, including community involvement and the notion anyone can be a teacher. The Mexican case study therefore shows how large-scale educational reform can achieve the official support which non-formal education provided by student social movements often lacks. Since social movements are known as, and

studied as, political struggles, the Mexican case may provide a new strategy for the promotion of large-scale and sustainable change for the development of the education system and the people of Thailand, via the adoption of nodes and development of Thailand's PLC towards the LCP's aims, objectives, and operational procedures. Crucially, the state-backed adoption of non-formal community education in the Thai context, perhaps involving the generally well-received approach of arbitration via local Ministry of the Interior Damrongtham Centers, where members of the public and communities can file social grievances, could lead to a reduction in the level of confrontation between the Dao Din student social movement, reduce the risk of life, and achieve some of the original educational goals of the 1973–1976 Thai student movement.

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