

Are Environmental Social Movements Socially Exclusive? An Historical Study from Thailand

TIM FORSYTH*

London School of Economics and Political Science, London WC2A 2AE, UK

Summary. — Environmental social movements in developing countries are often portrayed as democratizing but may contain important social divisions. This paper presents a new methodology to analyze the social composition and underlying political messages of movements. Nearly 5,000 newspaper reports during 1968–2000 in Thailand are analyzed to indicate the participation of middle and lower classes, and their association with “green” (conservationist) and “red-green” (livelihoods-oriented) environmental values. Results show middle-class “green” activism has dominated forests activism, but lower-class “red-green” activism has grown for forests and pollution. Newspapers, however, portray all environmentalism as “democratization,” suggesting that the possible exclusiveness of some environmental norms is unacknowledged.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Do environmental social movements enhance democratization in developing countries? In recent years, various analysts, journalists, and campaigners have claimed they do. This assertion is based on the belief that resistance against companies and states engaged in resource exploitation might empower less powerful groups and increase environmental protection (Peet & Watts, 1996; Peritore, 1999). Moreover, as Cohen and Arato (1992, p. 492) have noted, “social movements constitute the dynamic element in processes that might realize the positive potentials of modern civil societies.”

Against this, however, a growing number of social scientists have cited important reasons to question this optimism. First, individuals and social groups may be unable to participate equally in social movements, and consequently movements may not represent nor benefit all people (Covey, 1995). Second, “environmentalism” itself is highly varied, and dominant themes may arise at the expense of alternative perceptions, including those of poorer people (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997). And third, activists might not shape political progress as much as they think, as the reporting and interpretation of social movements may be con-

trolled by other people in accordance with their own values and relations with the state (Tilly, 1994). Consequently, environmental social movements may not always empower less powerful people, or redefine environmental agendas in their favor (Offe, 1985). Indeed, under these conditions, environmentalism might not be socially inclusive, but contain or prolong patterns of social exclusion.

This paper contributes to research about social movements and democratization by assessing the relationship between the social composition and political values of environmentalism in Thailand. In particular, the paper assesses the relative importance of lower and middle classes within social movements, and the co-existence of these with the so-called “green” environmental agenda (which focuses on wilderness conservation and the protection of nature against people), and the “red-green” agenda (which is more livelihoods oriented

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and seeks to protect people and environment simultaneously). Some analysts have argued that the “green” agenda is associated with middle classes, and the “red-green” agenda is an “environmentalism of the poor” (Martinez-Alier, 2002; Nash, 1982). But, to date, little empirical work has tested this association. This paper seeks to do so by asking three key questions: How have different social classes participated in environmentalism? What have been the main political objectives and varieties of environmentalism? And are there associations between the social composition and varieties of environmentalism? These questions are asked for all environmental protest in Thailand, and then specifically for activism concerning forests and industrial pollution.

To achieve these objectives, the paper presents a new methodology for analyzing social movements based on historic newspaper reports. Newspaper reports are useful because—where they exist in good detail—they indicate both the historic events and social participation within social movements, as well as how each was reported. “Journalism,” so the saying goes, “is history’s first draft,”¹ and accordingly newspapers give a record of social movements that builds a common reference point of how incidents of activism became historically significant (Wakefield & Elliott, 2003). The database used in this paper of nearly 5,000 news reports during 1968–2000 is the largest empirical survey of environmentalism of its type, and provides a powerful supplement to analyses based on case studies (Buergin & Kessler, 2000; Forsyth, 2004). The method described in this paper may provide both quantitative and qualitative analyses, although this paper chiefly presents a quantitative overview of its findings.

Thailand is an appropriate location for this research because it has experienced many incidents of activism concerning forest protection, opposition to dams, or concerns about pollution that have been linked to processes of democratization (Hirsch, 1997a, 1997b; Somchai, 2006). The paper starts, however, with a summary of debates about environmental social movements, and the benefits of using newspapers to analyze them.

2. ENVIRONMENTALISM AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

In recent years, various activists and analysts have claimed that environmental social move-

ments may enhance democratization and the empowerment of poorer people in developing countries. For example, writing about environmentalism, the development theorist, Arturo Escobar (1996, p. 65) wrote: “We need new narratives of life and culture . . . this is a collective task that perhaps only social movements are in a position to advance.” But can social movements achieve this?

Social movements have been defined as collective challenges by people with common purposes, usually in interaction with elites and authorities (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991; Ibarra, 2002; Tarrow, 1994). The nature of social movements and their method of analysis, however, vary widely. According to Della Porta and Diani (1999, p. 3), social movements analysis may be divided into four main approaches of collective behavior, resource mobilization, political process, and new social movements. These approaches focus, respectively, on the structural rebalancing of political systems; the cognitive tactics activists use to influence policy; the political opportunities for movements within institutional contexts; and new social identities in advanced societies. All of these approaches also offer insights into the relationship of movements on democratization. Social activism may lead to the greater representation of poorer people in politics, enhance political rights, and create new participatory public arenas of deliberation (McCoy, 2001).

According to much writing on social movements, environmentalism may be considered a “new” social movement because it emerged as an important political force and source of identity along with women’s and peace movements in Europe and North America in the 1960s (Maheu, 1995). Moreover, unlike “old” social movements, which were based on industrial class divisions and their material interests, environmentalism and other “new” social movements have claimed to transcend old class divisions, even if activists themselves tended to be middle class or highly educated (Eder, 1993; Touraine, 1981). Environmentalism may therefore have some tensions for social representation because it claims to be “typically a politics of a class but not *on behalf of a class*” (Offe, 1985, p. 833; emphasis in original).

Many writers about environmentalism in developing countries, however, have sometimes claimed that lower social classes have more agency (Taylor, 1995; Wignaraja, 1993). Writing about Thailand, for example, James Fahn (2003, p. 324), a US-born journalist, considered

environmentalism to be a universal social norm by writing: “the green urge is universal and transcends national and cultural boundaries.” Yet, he also claimed (2003, p. 7):

Whereas the green movement in the North tends to focus on the middle class, in the South not only is it centered more on the farmers and fishermen who rely on natural resources, but it’s also concerned more with who gets to use resources, not just with how they are used. . . In Asia, such activists *are* the mainstream because the majority of the population there is still underprivileged, and the middle class remains a minority (emphasis in original).

And Phil Hirsch (1997a, p. 179), an academic, has commented:

The environmental movement in Thailand has become a significant force in recent years. . . The movement has drawn in a wide range of social, economic and political actors in Thai society. . . In this respect, environmentalism represents an opposition force, but one that has, ironically, been *increasingly inclusive* (emphasis in original).

But against this optimism, other authors have suggested that social movements may not be so socially inclusive. First, can different social classes participate equally in social movements? Clearly, many movements in developing countries have included richer and poorer people. But these also have unequal resources and influence. Covey (1995), for example, found in the Philippines that political alliances between national NGOs and local grassroots organizations generally represented the national NGO interests more effectively. Others have argued that grassroots organizations willingly suppress some objectives in order to gain visibility and win the support of the state or other actors (Lohmann, 1995).

Second, do class differences still matter? Various analysts have argued that environmental values may reflect social class or socio-economic contexts. Nash (1982), for example, argued that the perception of wilderness as beautiful or threatened in the United States was correlated with the growth of urbanization and industrialization, and was therefore most felt by urban, rather than rural, dwellers, often related to social class. Others have argued that the so-called “green” and “red-green” environmental agendas may also be linked to middle and lower social classes, and that a “green” agenda (based on conserving wilderness) may place tensions between urban middle-class perceptions of environment and people who live in the so-called wilderness areas, such as pastoral-

ists or shifting cultivators who are inherently more concerned about the “red-green” (livelihoods-oriented) agenda (Guha & Martinez-Alier, 1997; Neumann, 1998).² Indeed, recent debates about community forestry in Thailand have frequently counter-posed views of whether people and forests can co-exist (Johnson & Forsyth, 2002). Environmentalism should therefore not be considered as one single norm, and movements may result in different varieties of environmentalism being communicated according to the needs and relative strength of different participants.

And third, are both environmental values and structures of social movements shaped historically, and by wider political norms? Rangan (2000, p. 181), for example, claims that the famous anti-logging Chipko movement in northern India reflected various environmental concerns from local people, including the “red-green” concern to protect forest supplies to local sawmills.³ But the campaign became portrayed as a “green” example of women engaged in “tree hugging” because this image gained the sympathy of urban-based environmentalists, academic and international environmental lobbies. Hajer (1995, pp. 64–65) has argued that this phenomenon can be called the evolution of “storylines,” in which conflicts become associated with predefined notions of social blame and responsibility in hidden ways. Consequently, some themes within environmentalism—such as opposition to logging or dams—may carry historic associations, which may not be shared or relevant to all activists or contemporary disputes, or apparent in how social movements are reported (Tilly, 1994). In Thailand, environmental policies have also been linked to nationalism and citizenship, indicating a strong involvement of the state in how environment is defined (Vandergeest, 2003).

As a result of these concerns, many analysts have questioned whether environmentalism is indeed a universal norm or inclusive force. In part, this is because of the difficulty of applying the concept of class—as discussed under new social movements—to societies that comprise rural peasantry and urban workers, and which are further divided by ethnicity, gender, or caste. At the same time, it is important not to dismiss or stereotype middle-class environmentalism as unhelpful to poorer people, or as ineffective (Kim, 2000; Mawdsley, 2004). (The identification of class in this paper is discussed further in the methodology section.)

Similarly, it is sometimes difficult to agree upon a definition of “environmental” concerns that can be shared by different groups. For example, much contemporary environmentalism is associated with the “green” agenda, yet some aspects of environmental justice or the “red-green” agenda may not immediately be considered environmental by some activists. In the United States, for example, discussions of environmental justice and environmental racism (concerning topics such as the location of waste treatment facilities near disadvantaged groups) may also address general questions of public policy and social attitudes as well as ecological risks (Pellow, 2002). In such cases, social activism may help broaden the definition of environmental concerns, or find it use existing definitions in order to gain visibility and support from other activists and the state. Under these conditions, existing forms of environmentalism may exclude alternative conceptions of environmental priorities from less powerful actors.

Consequently, rather than adopting strict definitions of social class or environmentalism, it is more useful to look at how social activism and environmental norms co-evolve, and whether either implies social exclusion. Looking at historic newspaper reports is one way to do this.

3. ANALYZING SOCIAL MOVEMENTS WITH NEWSPAPERS

Social movement research has adopted various techniques including interviewing activists, or analyzing campaigning literature (Diani & Eyerman, 1992). Analyzing historic newspapers may complement these approaches in the following ways:

- Newspapers, or any regular media reporting, provide a basic historical record of events as they happened. This record, however, depends on the detail of reporting, editorial policy, and freedom from state censorship. The style of news reporting also varies between news sources and the type of news report, such as front-page news or features⁴ (Wakefield & Elliott, 2003).
- Newspapers allow quantitative measurements of social actors described in each report as activists or sources of information (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991).
- Textual or discourse analysis may be performed on newspaper reports to indicate social and political values at the time of writ-

ing. These values may be about the topic under consideration, or about the actors described in the report, and the roles ascribed to them. This analysis may be performed on straight news reports, and/or features and opinion pieces (Bauer, 2000; Donati, 1992; Silverman, 1993; van Dijk, 1991).

- Newspaper reports for a specific topic or conflict may be analyzed collectively to indicate how political values or social actors were represented over time. This analysis may indicate the symbolism or “storyline” attributed to the activism (D’Anieri, Ernst, & Kier, 1990; Hajer, 1995).

Of course, newspapers may also be selective historical sources, and avoid some cases of political activism. Newspaper censorship and editorial styles may change over time. Individual journalists may demonstrate personal biases. In response to these concerns, it should be remembered that analyzing newspapers does not aim to provide an objective history of social movements, but to indicate how activism was given meaning and hence became historically symbolic. The limitations of newspapers can be reduced by seeking alternative histories of events, or by interviewing journalists about reporting practice and censorship (Porter, 1992). Comparing similar events from different news sources may also indicate biases.

4. THE STUDY

Historic newspapers were used to measure the social composition and political content of environmentalism in Thailand during 1968–2000. The study asked three key questions:

- How do different social classes participate in different episodes of environmentalism?
- What are the main political objectives (including varieties of environmentalism) of different episodes of activism?
- Are there associations between the participation of different social classes and varieties of environmentalism?

To achieve these objectives, the study analyzed different individual episodes of environmentalism, and then compared episodes linked to forest protection with those concerning industrial pollution. In this paper, the analysis focused on middle- and lower-class actors, and “green” and “red-green” environmentalism, although (as discussed below) further actors and political themes were researched. The

study was restricted to reporting of events in Thailand, and only included international events if they were connected to Thai disputes. Some brief comparison with women's movements was conducted to describe another new social movement.⁵

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

To conduct the study in Thailand, various decisions were necessary. First, which news source? The *Bangkok Post* was chosen for various reasons. It is considered by many to be Thailand's leading authoritative broadsheet, and has reported environmental stories since the 1960s. The *Bangkok Post* is published in English, although its target audience are educated Thai people, and domestic news is written exclusively by Thai journalists.⁶ The use of English language assisted the speed of analysis (although the researcher can speak and read Thai). Like all Thai newspapers, various state pressures have influenced the *Bangkok Post* over the decades, and especially under military governments during the 1970s when the Vietnam War and the fear of insurgency encouraged the closure of some forest areas to public access (Vandergeest, 1996). More recently, the *Bangkok Post* has adopted critical positions to governments, especially since the era of formal democratic elections from 1988.⁷ Indeed, during the military government of 1991–93, the paper famously printed an empty front page to protest against government suppression of news about the May 1992 Bangkok pro-democracy demonstrations (McCargo, 2000). Pragmatically, the *Bangkok Post* also offered a comprehensive library of news clippings since the 1960s, where newspaper staff had already organized into different themes or stories.

A brief comparative study of Thai-language newspapers⁸ was also undertaken for selected themes. This comparison indicated the difference between the day-to-day reporting styles of the *Bangkok Post* with more sporadic and populist reporting of other newspapers. *Bangkok Post* journalists and editors were also interviewed for their personal histories and viewpoints. (These results are not discussed for reasons of space.)

Second, how to identify environmental conflicts? Environmental conflicts were defined generally as cases where various citizens, NGOs, or other activists undertook acts of public demonstration or lobbying of govern-

ment in order to change policy or prevent unpopular developments. Specific conflicts were identified using the *Bangkok Post's* own filing classification in order to avoid imposing outside definitions of grouping news reports. In effect, each clippings file presented the complete "storyline" of different episodes of conflict. Some specific episodes (such as the "Nam Choan dam" dispute) were conveniently identifiable in time. Others, such as general files on "logging" or "air pollution," were ongoing. Table 1 lists each episode of environmentalism. Specialists on Thailand will be familiar with these episodes, although there is insufficient space to allow a full description of each event. (Perhaps, surprisingly, there has been relatively little public activism on matters of climate change or genetically modified crops in Thailand.)

Third, what period to study? The total period of 1968–2000 was selected largely pragmatically as no files for environmentalism existed before this date, and the files of paper clippings were replaced by an electronic database in 2000. However, these dates also conveniently covered the period from the rise of environmentalism as a global political force in the late 1960s. As noted below, some years in the 1970s were not analyzed in order to save time, and to avoid periods of obvious censorship.

Fourth, which episodes to include? All specific incidents of environmental social movements and conflict were included in the study, starting with the Chiang Mai cable car dispute (dating from the early 1970s), but more fully from 1982 with the start of the Nam Choan dam dispute, and in 1986 with the conflict concerning tantalum mining in Phuket (see Table 1). Files on logging and pollution started from 1968. These files sometimes contained episodes of major conflict (such as the political campaign for the 1989 logging ban), but usually specific episodes on these themes were filed separately, and hence the subject matters overlapped. To avoid periods of well-known state censorship, the decision was taken to analyze only the periods of 1968–71, 1978–81, 1988–91, and 1996–2000 for logging, air, and water pollution. (When the cumulative research for forest- and pollution-based activism was analyzed, these files were collated with specific incidences of activism.)

Some stories were excluded. Reports about fishing, mangrove forests, and aquaculture were not included in this survey because of shortage of time, and because these activities—mainly

Table 1. *Environmental conflicts in Thailand, 1978–2000*

Conflict	Dates of first and last news reports ^a	Brief summary
<i>Mainly rural</i>		
Logging ^{a,b}	January 68 (periodically to) December 2000	Ongoing, long-term coverage of public debates about logging, including the 1989 logging ban
Chiang Mai cable car ^c	March 69–April 94	Unsuccessful proposal to build cable car to National Park and Buddhist temple in Doi Suthep
Nam Choan dam	April 82–February 98	Unsuccessful proposal to build a dam in rainforest in western Thailand (Kanjanaburi province)
Pak Mul dam ^a	April 89–December 2000	Dam on river in northeast Thailand, and resettlement and compensation of fishing communities
Pa Kham, Buri Ram forest evictions	June 89–February 95	Government plans to resettle farmers in eucalyptus and pine plantations, northeast Thailand
Other forest evictions ^d	February 94–April 94	Government plans to resettle farmers in eucalyptus and pine plantations, northeast Thailand
Suan Kittu scandal	January 90–December 90	Senator accused of flouting logging/plantation laws (Chachoengsao province)
Encroachments into National Parks ^{e,a}	May 93–December 99	Ongoing opposition to logging/agriculture/tourism/mining in national parks
Yadana pipeline	January 95–December 99	Construction of gas pipeline from Burma through rainforests in western Thailand
Community Forestry ^{f,a}	January 96–December 2000	Ongoing debate about laws governing forest access
Tha Chana scandal	January 96–September 98	MP accused of flouting logging laws (Surat Thani province)
Chom Thong watershed ^d	December 96–December 99	Highland–lowland dispute about alleged damage of upland agriculture in Chiang Mai province
Salween National Park scandal	January 98–May 2000	Illegal logging discovered in national park in Mae Hong Son province
Opposition to <i>The Beach</i>	October 98–March 99	Opposition to government decision to allow filming of a Hollywood movie in two national parks
<i>Mainly industrial</i>		
Phuket tantalum mining	May 86–June 92	Environmental and economic effects of tantalum mining in Phuket, a tourist and fishing province
General pollution ^a	June 88–December 99	Ongoing concern about non-specific forms of pollution
Water pollution ^{b,a}	January 68 (periodically to) December 2000	Ongoing concern about water pollution, including waste water
Mae Moh power plant ^a	October 92–December 99	Concern about a power plant that uses lignite fuel in northern Thailand (Lampang province)
Air pollution ^{b,a}	January 68 (periodically to) December 2000	Ongoing concern about air pollution, especially in cities
Nam Pong river pollution	April 93–August 98	Alleged pollution by Phoenix pulp and paper plant into river in northeast Thailand (Khon Kaen province)
Lamphun industrial poisoning	February 94–October 96	Public debate about industrial poisoning in an industrial estate in northern Thailand (Lamphun province)
Rayong, Map Ta Phut industrial estate ^a	March 94–December 99	Concern about pollution and waste treatment at an industrial estate on the eastern seaboard of Thailand
Prachuab Khiri Khan power plant ^a	November 98–July 2000	Proposed construction of coal-fueled power plant in fishing area with coral reef (eventually rejected)

^a Ongoing stories where the end date of assessment is not the end date of activism.

^b Logging, water pollution and air pollution comprise the total of four sub-periods: 1968–71, 1978–81, 1988–91, and 1996–2000. (This paper does not compare these sub-periods because of shortage of space.) The most important event for logging was activism before and after the logging ban, eventually passed in 1989. There was no file for “general pollution” before June 1988.

^c The Chiang Mai cable car dispute had two distinct periods of reporting: March 1969–March 1971 and April 1985–May 1989 (the last report was in April 1994).

^d Other evictions include Dong Yai (in Buri Ram province, March 1994); Thap Lan (in Nakhon Ratchasima province, February, 1994); and Tha Takiab (in Chachoengsao province, March 94).

^e Community Forestry also includes the localized dispute about forest encroachment and community forestry in Dong Larn, northeast Thailand.

^f This category of Encroachment into National Parks does not include the specific case of opposition to the filming of *The Beach*.

in southern Thailand—also refer to complex questions of Muslim identity that may complicate the analyses of social class. Furthermore, the influence of mangroves alone on forests activism is low compared to other forests (see Flaherty, Vandergeest, & Miller, 1999). Numerous other subjects such as “housing” or “urban planning” were also not included as specific topics, as they were not specifically labeled as environmental, but could be considered by future research.

Fifth, how to analyze social composition of activism? This was achieved both quantitatively and qualitatively. The number of different actors cited (in active or passive roles) in each news report was identified and counted. The original research counted various categories including state actors (*e.g.*, politicians, forestry agencies), international organizations, scientific experts, businesses, as well as members of middle and lower classes. Most of these actors were self-evident (it is acknowledged that non-state actors may sometimes overlap with state). Scientific experts were identified when an individual was cited as giving formal expertise. Where the individual came from a state agency or company, *etc.*, both “expert” and the other sector were marked.

This paper, however, focuses only on middle and lower-class actors. The identification of these was more complex, and inevitably involved simplifications (see Table 2). Identification was only done after guidance from Thai journalists, NGO workers, and academics.⁹ In practice, “middle class” implied relatively wealthy individuals and/or those educated to tertiary level. It also included people of obvious

“upper” class such as aristocrats (although the highest members of Thai royalty were treated separately). “Lower class” frequently referred to factory or agricultural workers in menial tasks, or various villagers or slum dwellers. Politically active monks were generally considered “middle class” when they fitted the description of intellectuals voicing concern for all society, even though many monks are from poor backgrounds and some work specifically with the poor. (Despite their high visibility, monks were reported prominently in only few disputes, notably the Chom Thong watershed struggle, and the evictions of villagers from forest plantations in northeastern Thailand.)

The classification of middle- or lower-class organizations needed much care, and raised the possibility of autocorrelation when comparing actors with varieties of environmentalism. Organizations were classified primarily according to their membership rather than views about environment. Nonetheless, this approach did result in classifying some organizations as “middle class” that were overtly campaigning to protect wilderness or architectural sites, including some who sought to exclude farming groups from these areas, particularly in Chom Thong (see Table 2). “Lower-class” organizations included trade unions and NGOs campaigning for workers’ or poor farmers’ rights. It was acknowledged that this classification would occasionally simplify complex social relations, but it assumed the approach adopted would provide a useful platform for findings.

And sixth, how to analyze political content of reports? News reports were analyzed for underlying political messages and assumptions about

Table 2. Summary of guidelines used for identifying political actors in news reports

“State” actors	“Middle class”	“Lower class”
—Politicians (<i>e.g.</i> , ministers)	—Intellectuals speaking out about environment (<i>e.g.</i> , Boonsong Legakul)	—Factory workers, agricultural workers, residents of poor housing
—Government ministries	—Educated, or elite Thai citizens	—Trade unions
—Government agencies (<i>e.g.</i> , Royal Forest Department, and their spokespeople)	(including university students speaking as students)	— NGOs or alliances associated with poor people (<i>e.g.</i> , Assembly of the Poor)
	—Members of Thai royalty (except the highest echelons)	—Farmers’ organizations or movements associated with poor (<i>e.g.</i> , Chomthong lowland farmers’ group; Northern Farmers’ Network)
	—Some NGOs with high middle-class involvement (<i>e.g.</i> , Seub Foundation, Dhamanaat Foundation)	
	—Monks who take a stance about environment	

NB: these actors are all within Thailand, and exclude international actors.

environment. This analysis took two stages. In the first stage, an open-ended discursive analysis of text was applied to identify the political viewpoint underpinning the subject matter of reports. For example, some themes identified at this stage included concerns about ecology; concerns about state failure (including corruption); the threat of unregulated business; social injustice; community strength; or various optimistic views such as the benefits of wealth or technology. These themes existed alongside the subject matters of reports such as forests or dams. The incidence of different themes in each report was recorded both quantitatively (the number of times these themes occurred) and qualitatively (using textual analysis).

The second stage of analysis then accumulated these diverse frames into four overview frames that simplified the initial classification of political content. These broader frames aimed to describe the initial classification, but in ways relevant to wider debates about environment and development. These overview frames were “green” and “red-green” forms of environmentalism (defined above); “democratization” (referring to any sub-frame that emphasized state failure or the benefits of community action); and “modernization” (referring to sub-frames stressing the benefits of economic growth, technology and an unreformed state). Table 3 gives an expanded definition of how each overview frame was defined.

The advantage of identifying frames in two stages is that it allows further studies to use the sub-frames to create different overview frames if needed. It should be noted that it was possible for each report to have scores for more than one of these overview frames, and that frequently some frames would often co-exist.

Finally, it was important to consider changes in newspaper reporting itself. Journalists and editors at the *Bangkok Post* were interviewed

to assess their own viewpoints, and changes in editorial policies. The *Bangkok Post* now has increased its page numbers over the years, and, in keeping with international changes in journalism, has increasingly adopted an anecdotal style of reporting, which emphasizes descriptions of individuals rather than a distant summary of events. The methodology used in this paper cannot remove these biases, but can acknowledge these changes.

6. ANALYSIS

In total, 4,672 new reports were analyzed (a total of 88,315 “column inches” of text). The methods above produced the following information:

- Quantitative measurement of different actors cited per report
- Quantitative measurement of different political themes cited per report
- Qualitative examples of text demonstrating environmental storylines

(For reasons of space, however, this current paper focuses chiefly on quantitative findings).

Information was initially presented on a daily basis, but was totaled for each specific episode of activism and for each month and year. This structuring allowed the comparison of different episodes of activism; average total of activism on a year-by-year basis; or between different themes of activism, specifically concerning forests and industrial pollution.

Tests of association were also applied to quantitative information about the different actors and political themes of activism. Simple linear regression was used to test associations between class composition and different political themes, using Pearson’s “r” coefficient as the indicator of association. These tests, however, risked certain statistical weaknesses. Tests

Table 3. Summary of guidelines used for identifying overview framings of news reports

“Green” environmentalism	“Red-green” environmentalism	“Democratization”	“Modernization”
—“Natural environment is threatened”	—“Environmental change is a threat to people’s health and livelihoods”	—“The state is corrupt or failing and needs reforming”	—“Economic growth is good”
—“Nature is beautiful”	—“People need resources to live”	—“Communities can govern effectively”	—“Technology is a useful solution to environmental problems”
—“People are a threat to natural environment”	—“Poor people know how to look after environment”	—“Social movements are positive forces of political reform”	—“The state is strong and does not need reforming”

could be performed on data collected on a daily, monthly, or yearly basis. In all cases, the clearest relationships were found when using monthly or yearly data, but these datasets inevitably had fewer observations. It was decided to accept this limitation in order to explore which trends became apparent. In order to make charts clearer, “r” coefficients were presented in an accumulated fashion (*i.e.*, one year’s total was added to the previous year), meaning that the strongest long-term associations are shown by rapidly ascending lines.

(a) *Social composition of activism*

Figure 1 shows the growth of new reports on environmental subjects in Thailand since 1968. Table 4 indicates statistical summaries concerning the social composition and overall political messages contained in each episode of conflict. Figure 2 charts the long-term trend in these numbers.

Figure 1 is consistent with most histories of environmentalism in Thailand since the 1960s (Buergin & Kessler, 2000; Hirsch, 1997a, 1997b; Ubonrath, 1991; Vandergeest, 1996). News reports about pollution and logging began in 1968, but the first public campaign on “environment” was to stop a cable car on the Buddhist shrine of Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai in the early 1970s.¹⁰ This “green” focus on environmentalism grew in the 1980s with a successful campaign (involving international NGOs such as the World Wildlife Fund) to pre-

vent the construction of a large dam in the Nam Choan forest in the western rainforests of Kanjanaburi province, and concerns about the impacts of tantalum mining on tourism and fishing in Phuket in 1986. By the late 1980s, various organizations were campaigning to achieve a national logging ban (which was passed in 1988, the same year as the cancellation of the Nam Choan dam). Since 1988, there have been several test cases of the logging ban (often including alleged rule bending by politicians such as in the Suan Kitti and Tha Chana scandals), and various worries about encroachment into national parks (see Table 1).

After the logging ban, however, environmentalism arguably changed toward a more “red-green” agenda by considering the social justice of relocating villages in northeastern Thailand by a military government (1991–92) and later by the Royal Forest Department, and the long-standing debate about the ecological and social impacts of the Pak Mul dam on poor fishing communities. Concerns about industrial pollution also highlighted social justice by considering the impacts of coal-fired power stations (Mae Moh and Prachuab Khiri Khan). Perhaps, most importantly, the debate about the new community forestry bill (still ongoing) discussed rules for greater public participation in forest governance, and posed conservationist (“green”) activists against livelihoods-oriented (“red-green”) campaigners. In particular, disputes about community forestry have questioned how far upland minorities in northern

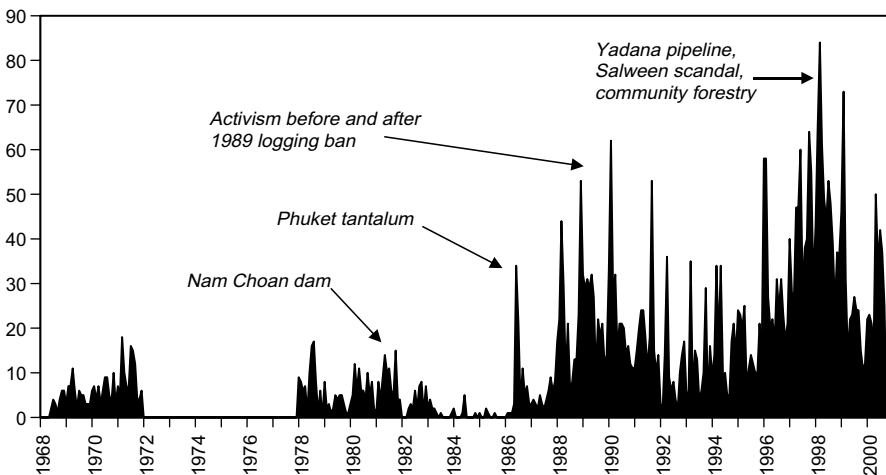


Figure 1. Number of total environmental reports, by month, with key peaks indicated. Source: *The Bangkok Post*. (See text for explanation of sampling and the gap in data between 1972–1977).

Table 4. *Statistical summaries for environmental conflicts in Thailand, 1968–2000*

Basic descriptions, conflict (see Table 1)	Total news reports	Average column inches	Actors per news report				Political frames of stories per news report			
			“State”	“Middle class”	“Lower class”	“Green”	“Red-Green”	“Democratization”	“Modernization”	
Women’s rights	180	55.93	0.72	1.14	0.57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
Logging (total of four periods)	1,342	16.54	1.23	0.17	0.26	0.20	0.09	0.21	0.67	
Chiang Mai cable car	36	11.11	1.28	0.36	0	0.25	0	0.11	0.75	
Nam Choan dam	147	19.23	0.91	1.20	0.07	0.34	0.02	0.40	0.17	
Pak Mul dam	365	22.61	0.64	0.38	0.69	0.18	0.19	0.45	0.30	
Pa Kham, Buri Ram evictions	48	21.67	1.15	1.02	0.90	0.08	0.65	0.31	0.40	
Other forest evictions	26	17.77	1.65	0.46	0.81	0.23	0.19	0.15	0.33	
Suan Kittu scandal	63	24.22	1.70	0.06	0.10	0.06	0.03	0.43	0.19	
National Park Encroachments	78	28.83	1.44	0.81	0.17	0.29	0.04	0.46	0.28	
Yadana pipeline	209	22.53	0.72	1.05	0.13	0.42	0.19	0.35	0.28	
Community Forestry	242	24.79	1.36	0.33	0.55	0.28	0.12	0.35	0.40	
Tha Chana scandal	79	21.41	1.80	0.10	0.13	0	0	0.28	0.70	
Chom Thong watershed	29	34.66	1.07	0.76	1.38	0.17	0.21	0.59	0.14	
Salween scandal	104	22.22	2.22	0.05	0.21	0.13	0.02	0.47	0.56	
Opposition to <i>The Beach</i>	42	20.36	0.90	1.07	0.19	0.71	0	0.40	0.19	
Phuket tantalum mining	100	23.95	1.27	0.16	0.13	0.06	0.01	0.13	0.88	
General pollution	276	24.45	0.96	0.28	0.26	0.20	0.22	0.31	0.24	
Water pollution	549	17.04	1.08	0.10	0.32	0.28	0.48	0.22	0.36	
Mae Moh power plant	103	14.49	1.14	0.01	0.90	0.01	0.39	0.36	0.34	
Air pollution	412	17.79	0.99	0.05	0.33	0.13	0.50	0.15	0.53	
Nam Pong river pollution	48	16.90	0.98	0.29	0.25	0.35	0.13	0.17	0.67	
Lamphun poisoning	33	32.06	1.18	0.03	0.85	0.03	0.52	0.55	0.12	
Rayong industrial estate	95	16.73	1.47	0.13	1.07	0.19	0.55	0.49	0.34	
Prachuab Khiri Khan power station	66	52.52	2.45	0.64	1.67	0.67	0.06	1.56	0.70	

Source: Analysis performed on reports in *The Bangkok Post*.

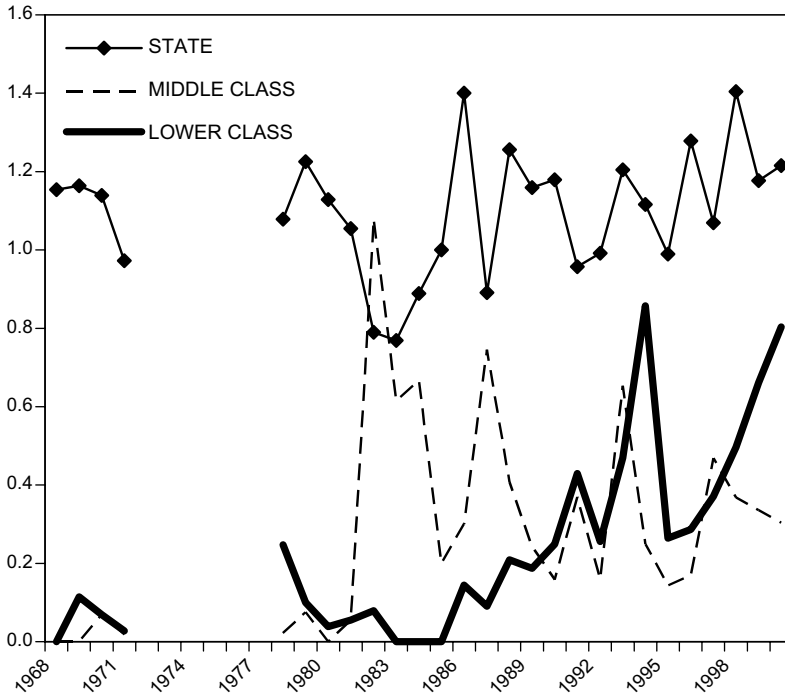


Figure 2. Representation of state, middle-class, and lower-class actors in all environmental stories 1968–2000 (average actors per news report). Source: Bangkok Post.

Thailand should be considered as destroyers of forest, or whether the state and some NGOs have overstated environmental concerns to enhance visions of national security (Forsyth & Walker, 2008; Vandergeest, 2003). The Chom Thong dispute (concerning the campaign to resettle Hmong farmers in Chiang Mai province) is one example of this (see Table 1), although previous attempts to resettle ethnic minorities from national parks (such as the Karen from the Thung Yai Naresuan national park in the western forest complex, or other resettlement of Hmong) before the 1990s were generally not reported. A new Assembly of the Poor emerged in 1997 to campaign about poverty, livelihoods, and environment (Somchai, 2006), and the 1997 Constitution asserted the rights of communities to participate in decisions affecting resources.

Figure 2 shows the statistical trends in the social composition of environmentalism during this period. As shown in Figure 2, the representation of different classes has changed markedly in environmental news reporting. State actors have been most prominent, with a relatively stable average of approximately 1.2 states actors

mentioned per report. However, lower-class actors have increased markedly, from approximately 0.1 actors per report in the early 1970s to high points of 0.8 in the late 1990s. Middle-class actors, however, have declined from a high point (during the Nam Choan rainforest dispute) in 1982, of more than one actor per report, to approximately 0.4 in the late 1990s. At surface value, this suggests that environmental news reporting has become more inclusive of lower classes, and therefore may achieve a form of democratization. However, these results do not indicate whether the higher citation of lower-class actors reflects a growing presence of poor people in social movements; changes in journalistic practices; or—more controversially—the desire of journalists or NGOs to report lower-class voices to gain political legitimacy.

The results for individual episodes of activism, however, are more complex. The study of women's movements showed that middle-class actors were cited at a high level of 1.14 per story, compared with 0.57 lower-class actors. This imbalance is consistent with theories about new social movements that suggest this kind of identity-based politics is (as stated by

Offe above) “of [the middle] class, but not necessarily on behalf of a class.” But this pattern is not necessarily matched by all environmental conflicts. The five conflicts with most middle-class actors were the Nam Choan dam (1980s; 1.20 actors per report); opposition to *The Beach* (1998–99; 1.07); the Yadana gas pipeline from Burma (1990s; 1.05); protests against village evictions in northeastern Thailand (1990s, 1.02 actors); and concern at encroachment of national parks (1990s; 0.81). (It is worth noting that the encroachment in the Salween national park reported hardly any middle-class actors, and was largely reported as an affair involving state actors.) The average of middle-class actors for all reports, for the entire database, was 0.3, compared with 0.37 for lower-class actors and 1.17 for state actors.

Lower-class actors were generally less reported, but featured more frequently in specific episodes. The five conflicts with most lower-class actors were the Prachuab Khiri Khan protests against a power plant (1998–2000; 1.67 actors per report); the Chom Thong action against upland agriculture in watersheds (1996–99; 1.38); pollution in the Rayong industrial estate (1990s; 1.07); pollution at the Mae Moh power plant (1990s; 0.90); and the evictions in northeastern Thailand (1990s, 0.90).

These results also indicated that some episodes had higher incidences of lower and middle classes either being present or absent at the same time. The evictions in northeastern Thailand had the highest mutual presence of both middle and lower classes. Other events with both included the Chom Thong dispute (where lowland poor farmers allied with middle-class environmentalists against upland farmers), and to a lesser extent, the Prachuab Khiri Khan power station (where fishermen resisted the damage to livelihoods, but environmentalists expressed concern about the impacts on a coral reef).

Examples of conflicts where both lower and middle classes were absent were the Suan Kittti scandal, the Thailand Chana scandal, and illegal logging in the Salween national park. All of these episodes involved alleged corruption of politicians or government agencies, and news focused on state actors.

(b) Political content of activism

Table 4 also summarizes the incidence of political messages in reports about different events. Figures 3 and 4 also chart the changes of these messages over time.

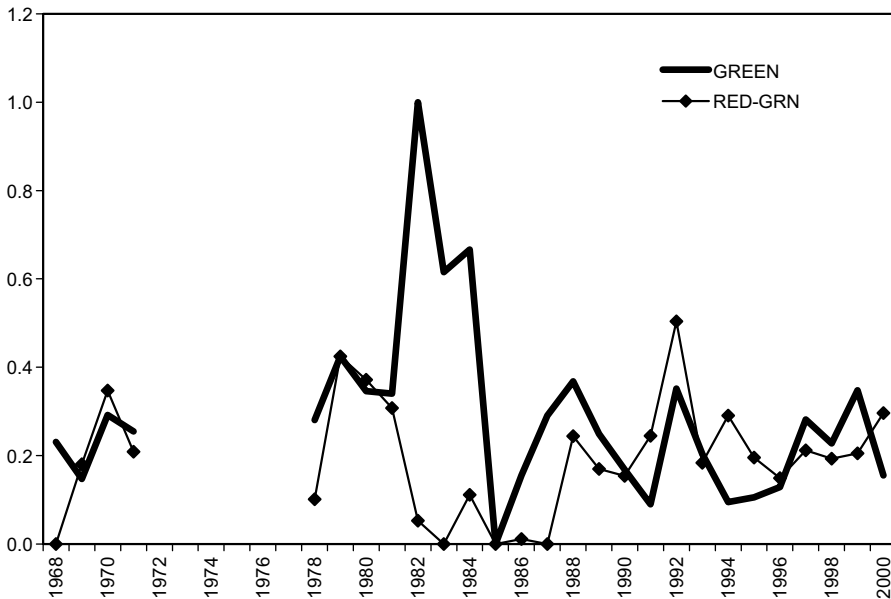


Figure 3. Themes of “green” and “red-green” environmentalism in all environmental news, 1968–2000 (average number of frames per report). Source: Bangkok Post.

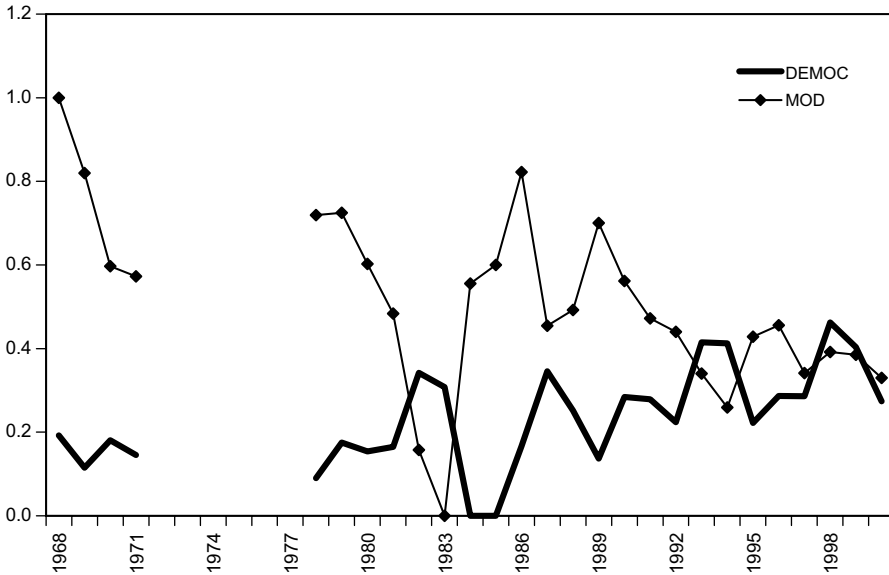


Figure 4. Themes of “democratization” and “modernization” in all environmental news, 1968–2000 (average number of frames per report). Source: *Bangkok Post*.

Figure 3 demonstrates that “green” environmentalism reached its peak during the start of the Nam Choan dam campaign in the early 1980s. This is not surprising as the dam was a threat to an internationally regarded rainforest area, and most overtly environmental groups at that time were concerned with threats to wilderness and national heritage. Yet, perhaps surprisingly, “green” and “red-green” environmentalism have been reported relatively equally at all other times, and indeed “red-green” environmentalism even outreached “green” views in 1992 because of concerns about pollution, especially at the Mae Moh power plant, and in 1994 because of the north-eastern evictions. These results suggest that—with some explicit exceptions—environmentalism in Thailand has reflected both concerns about ecological damage alone, as well as the impacts of degradation on people.

It is not clear, however, how far these reports of “green” and “red-green” environmentalism indicate changes in the underlying definitions of “environment.” For example, the most overtly “green” story reported was the opposition to the filming of *The Beach* in two national parks (1998–99), which was claimed to be environmentally damaging. The evictions of villagers from plantation areas in northeast Thailand (mainly 1994–95) were highly “red-green” be-

cause they portrayed social injustice. But did these incidents accurately reflect the levels of environmental threats, or use existing concepts of environmentalism to gain political attention? In the case of opposition to *The Beach*, activists were worried about the apparent corruption of the state in apparently privileging a foreign film company to enter and change the landscape in parks. Activists deliberately used language of ecological risk to gain legitimacy. Newspaper reports (in the *Bangkok Post* at least) reflected this language.

Similarly, the environmental concern shown for industrial pollution in cases such as Mae Moh power plant or poisoning of workers in the northern region industrial estate (in the mid-1990s) showed a new attention onto the health risks faced by factory workers and citizens, and the inadequacy of the state in addressing them. But the opposition to the coal-fired power station in the coastal site of Prachuab Khiri Khan (1998–2000) mainly defined environmental damage in terms of impacts on a local coral reef (*i.e.*, a “green” environmental concern), rather than on health risks to people. Similarly, in disputes concerning forest evictions, some reports were clearly “red-green” because they focused on the injustices of eucalyptus and pine plantations for the livelihoods and rights of poor villagers. But

reports still maintained concern for ecological fragility, and newspapers would carry simultaneous “green” reports about deforestation elsewhere in Thailand. Consequently, many reports would use pre-existing environmental definitions or norms to discuss social justice, rather than engage in redefining pre-existing definitions of degradation.

More generally, however, these disputes have nonetheless been portrayed as cases of “democratization.” Figure 4 demonstrates that news reports since the 1960s have increasingly adopted the theme of “democratization” while focusing increasingly less on “modernization.” These trends reflect the decline in state censorship and increasing level of open political debate in Thailand, and the tendency for early environmental reporting to emphasize technological and economic benefits rather than social concerns. For example, many activists claim that the Chiang Mai cable car dispute and Phuket tantalum mining controversy were instrumental in solidifying environmentalism and civil society in Thailand, yet, the *Bangkok Post* largely reported them both as “modernization.” This suggests that newspaper reporting and popular histories held by NGO workers are different in these cases. Reports concerning the Nam Choan dam in the early 1980s, however, did not emphasize modernization as highly.

Consequently, “green” and “red-green” environmentalism have remained largely equal themes in environmental reporting, but the theme of environmentalism-as-democratization has increased over time. These trends are consistent with political histories of Thailand, which link environmentalism with resistance against military or unaccountable governments (Hirsch, 1997a, 1997b). Yet, it is not clear if this focus on democratization has allowed greater diversity in how environmental risks are portrayed, or whether journalists use the theme of environmental risks as a means to demonstrate the lack of state accountability. Much reporting on pollution has brought attention to the risks faced by poorer people and their angry responses. But, as shown by opposition to *The Beach* and the Prachuab Khiri Khan coral reef, the theme of ecological fragility may still take precedence in newspaper reports over more livelihoods-oriented approaches to environmental risk.

(c) Tests of association

Pearson’s “*r*” coefficients were calculated to measure the association of middle and lower

classes with the overview themes of “green,” “red-green,” environmentalism and “democratization.” (“Modernization” is not assessed in this paper for reasons of space.) To make these tests clearer, episodes of environmentalism were collated into groups concerning forests or pollution.¹¹ The aim of this analysis was to contribute to general debates about the role of social class in determining different kinds of environmentalism, and whether there was any association between different social compositions of environmentalism and popular beliefs about “democratization.”

As discussed above, charts use accumulated “*r*” coefficients (*i.e.*, values were added year-on-year). The strongest long-term associations are indicated by rapidly ascending lines. Figure 5 shows there is a high, on-going, association of middle classes with “green” environmentalism since the 1980s. The next highest influence is in lower-class “red-green” environmentalism, which has risen sharply since the 1990s, followed by middle-class “red-green” environmentalism. The weakest overall association is between lower classes and “green” environmentalism, although this rises slightly in the late 1990s.

These results reinforce the expected trend that middle-class activism has been strongest in “green” issues. This was especially apparent during the Nam Choan dispute of the early 1980s, but has always been strong. However, two other periods can be identified: during 1988–94, there is a strong correlation between middle- and lower-class “red-green” environmentalism; and during 1994–2000, there is a weakening in “red-green” environmentalism, and a relative strengthening in “green” environmentalism from both lower and middle classes. These later two periods seem to represent public concern about strong-state policies during the return of the military government 1991–92, and its legacy in resettling villages in the northeast; and the later debate about community forestry from the mid-1990s. The information in Figure 5 suggests that resettlement policies in the early 1990s were considered as damaging to people, but that discussions of community forestry have generally been linked to a more “green” agenda. This latter stage is controversial because activists have argued whether community forestry is a class issue, and whether poorer villagers agree or disagree with proposals to limit devolved governance or certain land uses (Jintana & Routray, 1998). The trends in Figure 5 cannot confirm

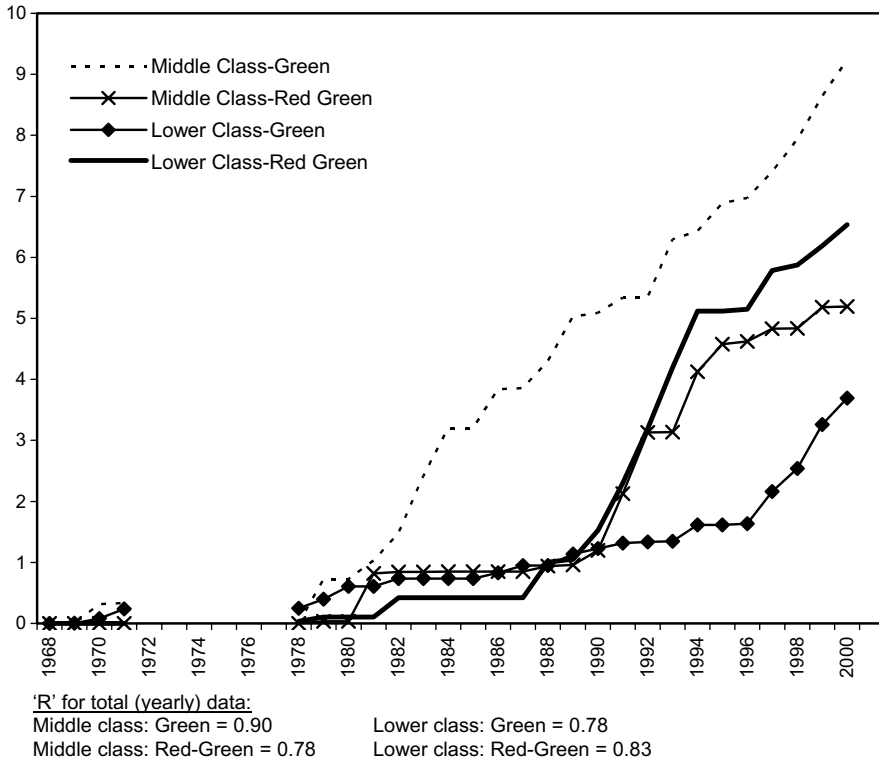


Figure 5. *Forests activism: association of social class and varieties of environmentalism (accumulated Pearson's "r").*

whether such views were indeed voiced by poor villagers, or spoken on their behalf by NGOs or journalists. But this research can indicate that the *Bangkok Post* did show an increased association of lower-class actors and "green" thinking in the late 1990s.

Pearson's "r" coefficients were also calculated for yearly data of activism for forests, and revealed very strong associations of 0.9 for middle-class actors and "green" thinking; and 0.78 for middle-class and "red-green" thinking; and 0.78 for middle-class and "red-green" thinking. Such statistics should obviously be treated with caution for inferring about general relationships concerning social classes and environmentalism. But they do support previous assumptions that the "green" environmental agenda is more likely to be associated with middle classes, and "red-green" environmentalism with lower classes.

Figure 6 charts the relationships between social class and different types of environmentalism in stories concerning pollution. Here, the results are different. Firstly, there is no one, clearly influential, social class or type of envi-

ronmentalism over the entire period. Yet, it is clear that the perception of pollution has changed from largely "green" by both middle and lower classes during 1984–96, toward a more dominant "red-green" perception by lower classes since the early 1990s. The weakest of all environmental agendas for pollution has been middle-class "red-green" thinking. These trends again suggest that middle classes were more concerned at the impacts of pollution on ecology generally, rather than on poorer people. Yet, the results also suggest a movement toward democratization within environmentalism, because the lower classes are becoming more prominent in defining debates about pollution, and using "red-green" terms to do so.

"R" coefficients were calculated for yearly data for pollution activism, and revealed much weaker associations than with forests. Associations with "green" thinking were 0.46 for middle classes and 0.44 for lower classes. Associations with "red-green" thinking were 0.47 for middle classes and 0.61 for lower classes. These results suggest that—despite the

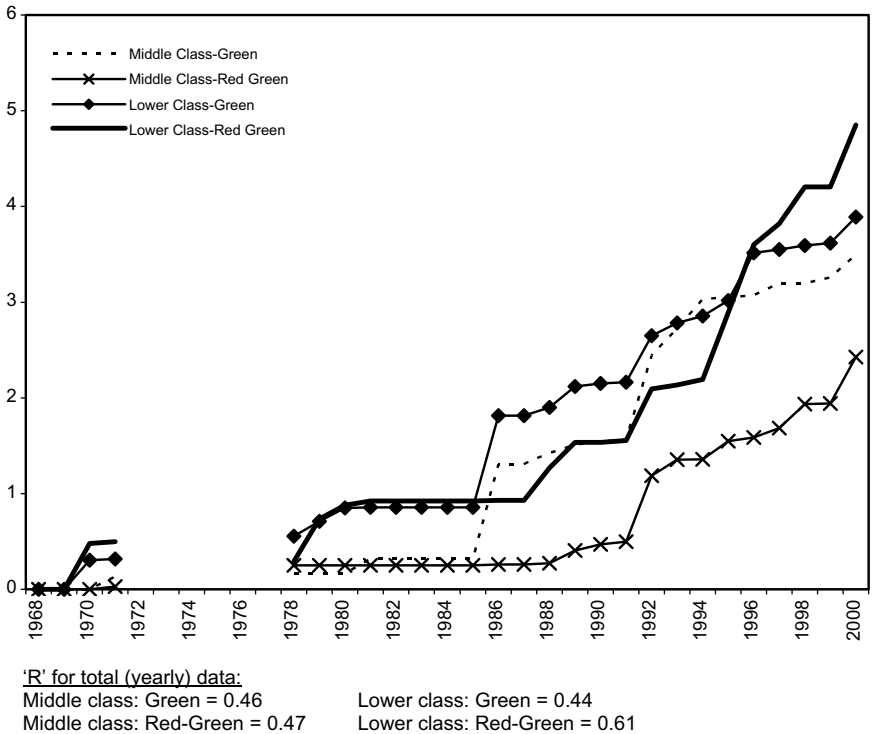


Figure 6. Pollution activism: association of social class and varieties of environmentalism (accumulated Pearson's "r").

trends observed above—the overall associations of environmentalism and pollution are still relatively weak, and that most overtly “environmental” discussions in Thailand are associated with forests rather than pollution.

Finally, Figure 7 charts the relationships between the reporting of different social classes, and the presence of “democratization” as a political theme of news reports in stories involving forests and pollution. Here, the most obvious trend is that “democratization” is highly associated with middle-class activism concerning forest issues since the late 1980s. This is consistent with other discussions of environmentalism in Thailand that suggest the campaigns against the Nam Choan dam and logging ban in the 1980s became symbolic of wider campaigns for democracy. The association between middle-class activism and democratization, however, became weaker in the early 1990s. By the late 1990s, lower-class activism was increasingly associated with democratization concerning both forests and pollution. This last trend is all the more noteworthy, as—before the 1990s—democratization and

lower-class forests activism were very weakly associated.

Why have lower-class forest activists become increasingly linked with democratization? In the past, newspapers often portrayed forests-based activism by poor people as law breaking or ecologically destructive (for example, by burning pine and eucalyptus plantations in northeastern Thailand, or by performing shifting cultivation in watershed zones). Evidence, however, does not suggest that these activities are now viewed in different ways. One explanation might be the growth in public activism following the 1997 Constitution, which invited public participation in debates about natural resource management. More controversially, however, this finding might also indicate the desire of journalists or activists to influence the debate about community forestry legislation by adopting the language of “green” environmentalism and “democratization.” Figure 5 shows that “green” environmental activism from lower classes has increased during the 1990s as well as the presentation of this activity as “democratization.” In principle, these trends

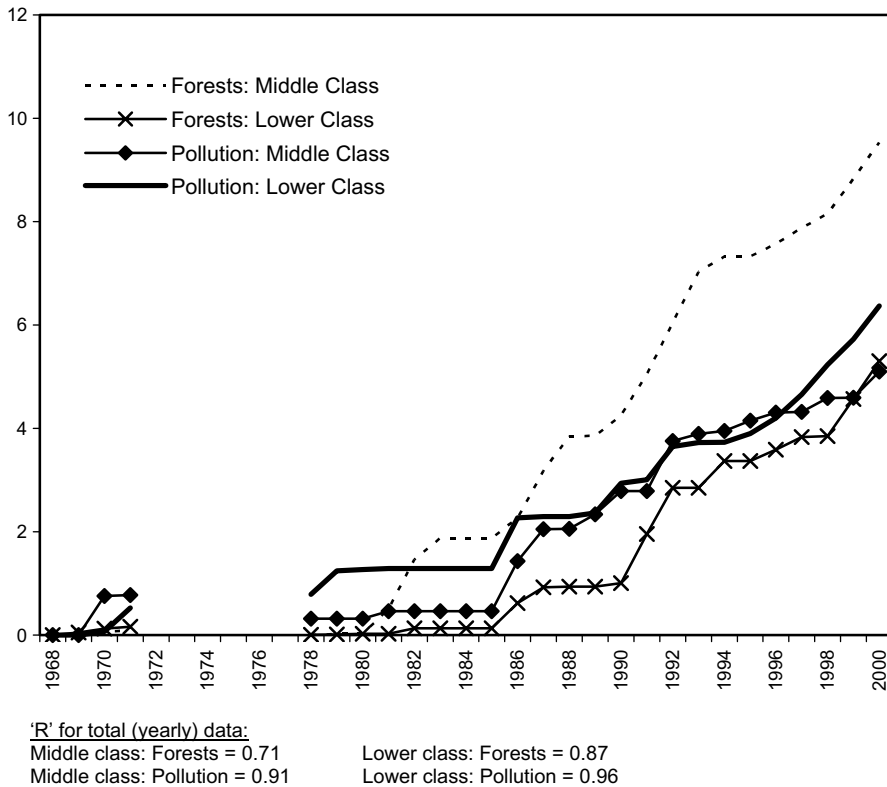


Figure 7. Association of forests and pollution activism on perceptions of democratization (accumulated Pearson's "r").

could indicate a growing conversion of agricultural smallholders to the "green" environmental agenda; the desire of these people to appear "green" in order to win support from other NGOs and the state; or the wish of other activists and journalists to portray poor forest users in these terms. (Or, indeed, a mixture of these factors.) Some analysts have argued that the debate about community forestry has deliberately portrayed some poorer minorities as environmentally friendly in order to win political support from both "green" and "red-green" lobbyists (Walker, 2001). The observed rise in "green" environmentalism and "democratization" among lower classes might provide further evidence for this claim.

The association of "democratization" and environmentalism was also calculated using yearly data. The "r" coefficients of "democratization" with forests activism were relatively strong, at 0.71 for middle-class activism and 0.87 for lower classes. But these associations were extremely high for stories concerning pol-

lution, with 0.91 for middle classes and 0.96 for lower classes. These results indicate that all forms of environmentalism are highly associated with "democratization," and that the involvement of lower classes (even in the "green" agenda) is especially considered democratizing. It is also worth noting that the associations between social classes and "democratization" are higher than those between social classes and "green" or "red-green" environmentalism. These findings indicate that environmentalism may be considered democratizing in its own right, even if poor people do not necessarily participate in redefining environmental problems.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This paper has sought to investigate the democratizing impact of environmental social movements in developing countries by presenting a new methodology based on analyzing the

historic representation of political activism in newspapers. Nearly 5,000 newspaper reports from Thailand during 1968–2000 were studied to identify the social composition and political content of environmentalism, and whether the presence of social class was linked to “green” (conservationist) or “red-green” (livelihoods-oriented) varieties of environmentalism, and whether such acts were portrayed as “democratization.” This methodology presents a potentially useful way to analyze both the short-term membership and subject matter of social movements, and the long-term symbolism attributed to them.

Many discussions of environmentalism and democratization in developing countries have suggested that environmentalism tends to be dominated by the middle classes, and that environmental norms of social movements tend to reflect the “green” rather than “red-green” agenda. This paper has generally confirmed that environmentalism in Thailand has been dominated by middle-class “green” activism, especially concerning forests. Yet, the presence of lower-class activists has increased significantly since the 1990s, and environmentalism has increasingly considered “red-green” topics too. Moreover, at the surface level, newspapers have linked environmentalism with “democratization,” or the criticism of the state and belief in community action. Environmentalism is very highly associated with popular concepts of “democratization,” especially involving lower-class activism, and particularly concerning pollution.

It would therefore appear that environmentalism in Thailand has been a democratizing force, both by forming an arena to criticize the state, and by becoming more diverse and socially inclusive itself (Hirsch, 1997a, 1997b). But this paper disagrees that environmental norms associated with environmentalism are universal, or shared by different classes (Fahn, 2003). Some approaches to community forestry, for example, include methods such as large-scale forest plantations or the resettlement of villages that impact negatively on rural livelihoods, especially among upland minorities in northern Thailand. Various “red-green”

activists and campaigners have opposed these approaches to environmental management, but not all newspaper reports have considered this kind of activism to be democratizing or environmental. It is also not clear if the observed rise in lower-class “green” environmentalism concerning all forests since the late 1990s reflects an innate “green” agenda from poorer people; the imposition of this viewpoint on them by journalists as a means to gain legitimacy for conservationist approaches to community forestry; or the tactical adoption of a “green” agenda (or “storyline”) by villagers as a way to gain political visibility. Further methods are necessary to clarify this trend.

Consequently, this paper raises some important questions for the relationship of environmental social movements and democratization in developing countries. At one level, it is clear that environmentalism has attracted various political criticisms of the state, and that newspapers have considered lower classes to play a legitimate role in democratization. But at another level, the environmental norms associated with environmentalism may actually be more diverse and socially divisive than commonly portrayed, and yet newspapers have frequently displayed any form of environmentalism as democratizing. In other words, environmentalism may sometimes be portrayed as an “environmentalism of the poor,” but it is not always clear if the poor have defined what it means to be environmental. For these reasons, environmentalism—in Thailand at least—cannot be seen as a classic new social movement in which activists claim new social identities that represent all social classes. Rather, a more effective assessment of environmentalism and democratization needs to look at the evolution of environmental norms as well as the apparent participation in any form of activism. There is a need to look more closely at the social divisions implied by “green” versus “red-green” environmentalism; how, why, and by whom different activists or reporters link political activism to environmental norms; and how far different environmental norms empower or disempower various political objectives.

NOTES

1. This statement is commonly attributed to Philip Graham, the publisher of the Washington Post 1946–63.

2. These varieties of environmentalism, of course, reflect other theoretical approaches to environment of

ecocentrism, or deep green environmentalism (that emphasizes ecological fragility and the existence of a “nature” external to human influence); and technocentric, or anthropocentric environmentalism (that accentuates the human experience of environmental change, and adaptation to ecological limits). Debates are divided on how far these matters are class related. Feminist scholars have also argued that gender is an important influence on the types of environmentalism.

3. The Chipko Andolan (Embrace the Tree) movement in the present Himalayan state of Uttaranchal in India started in 1973 when villagers spontaneously demonstrated against the logging of Ash trees by a sports goods company. Over time, the activity grew into a resistance movement against the contract system of logging where village people would embrace trees (inspiring the term, “tree hugging”). Many key activists wanted to protect local sawmill cooperatives. But in 1977, a section of the Chipko activists decided to oppose all tree-felling activities in the region, and attracted attention from international environmental NGOs. Others have also alleged that Chipko became absorbed into wider regional politics of defining Uttaranchal province (Rangan, 2000).

4. Newspapers, and newspaper articles, vary greatly. Serious broadsheets may provide the most detailed news reports. International wire-news agencies (such as Reuters or Associated Press) may also serve the same service, but be written in a style that is communicable to international readers. Both broadsheets and wire agencies also produce news “features,” which provide more in-depth discussions or illustrations than straight news reports, and occasionally opinion pieces (“op-eds” or editorials), which provide one writer’s personal view.

5. “Women’s movements” was a file kept at the *Bangkok Post* library. This was later merged with the

campaign for a 90-day maternity leave. The total years for women’s movements recorded was 1988–96.

6. Some features or opinion pieces are written by *farang*, or western journalists. Most international news is written by international wire news agencies.

7. Thailand had short experiments with universal adult suffrage during the 1970s, but this principle is generally considered to have been adopted on a permanent basis in 1988. However, further military governments occurred during 1991–92, and in September 2006.

8. *Thai Rath* and *Matichon*.

9. Various people were interviewed, but I would especially like to thank Chayan Vadhanaputhi, Ji Ungkaporn, Kamol Sukin, Noi Thammasatien, Pasuk Pongpaichit, Prawase Wasi, Sanitsuda Ekichai, Supara Janfitcha, Surapon Duangkhae, Ubonrath Siriyuvasuk, and Wasant Techawongtham.

10. At this time, there were generally few environmental NGOs, and these tended to focus on the concerns of elites about the protection of national architectural or natural heritage (such as the Society for the Conservation of National Treasures and Environment established by Boonsong Legakul).

11. The only major environmental conflict excluded from this classification was the Pak Mul dam, which focused on the ethics of building a dam in northeastern Thailand, with associated displacement of fishing communities. Mangrove forests were also not specifically included in “forests” because of the decision to avoid debates about aquaculture—although many general discussions of forests included mangroves, and the total level of reporting about mangroves was small.

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