

## **Equality of Opportunity in Education: A Way to Reduce and Prevent Conflicts in Thai Society**

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### **Abstract**

There are many ways to describe the 2013-2014 political turmoil that led to a series of clashes. It can be described as a conflict between classes; possibly between the middle and lower classes. Many scholars have pointed out the resentment between classes in the political arena, where the middle class seemed to gain an upper hand in influencing national policy until the arrival of Thaksin's regime. However, resentment also appeared in the form of the differences in income, occupation, education, healthcare, and, above all, life chances. It is generally accepted that a person's class can be identified by various means such as level of income, type of occupation, and level of education. These means are highly related. Higher education is needed for any occupations that provide enough salary to reach middle class status. In practice, education in Thailand is not free and can be enormously costly. This makes it harder, if not impossible, for the lower class to climb up the class ladder and receive the same life chances as the middle class. This creates resentment between classes and often leads to conflict. This article aims to demonstrate that, firstly, Thais do not have an equal opportunity in higher education (or at any level); secondly, the level of education contributes to a person's level of income and ability to live properly; thirdly, the lack of educational opportunity prevents poor people from being in a better position in life, it is perpetual and creates resentment between and within social classes which leads to conflict. Finally, this paper suggests it is possible to reduce resentment and prevent conflict by creating more equal opportunities in education for Thais.

**Keywords:** education, resentment, conflict, social class, middle class, lower class, equality, opportunity.

### **Introduction**

We could say that conflict mostly happens between those who have and those who do not have. Let us take a look at the recent conflicts in Thailand, namely, the series of clashes between the Yellow Shirt supporters and Red Shirt supporters. Each side claimed to represent different social classes. One side, the Red Shirts, believed they represented the lower class who are poor, disadvantaged and have no voices in politics. The other side did not outright claim the opposite but kept repeating that

their counterparts were not fit to vote. Many argued that the Yellow shirt camp, in fact, represented the middle class and above, and were protecting their advantages both socio-economic and political. Despite the fact that many in both camps could be identified similarly (both camps contained both rich and poor), the rhetorical speakers from both camps seemed to play along with that notion of who they represented to attract their supporters. And they did it very well; Thai society was divided badly until another "color" faction came in and made

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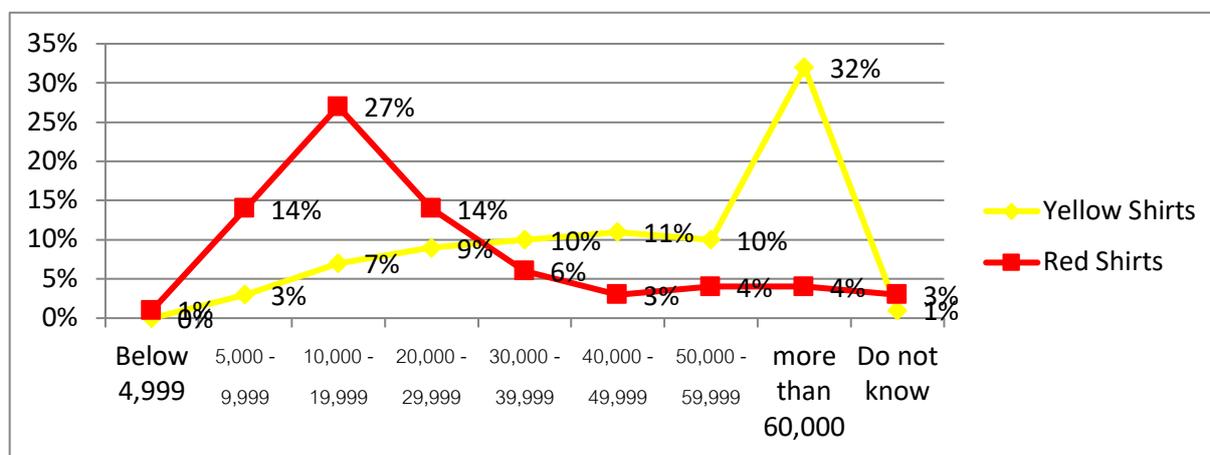
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both Red and Yellow coexist under their "Green" camp.

This paper aims to examine and disclose linkages between the level of education, level of income and political conflict in Thailand, so that the causes of

conflict can be identified and, hopefully, lead to the prevention of future conflict.

### Background of Red and Yellow Shirt supporters

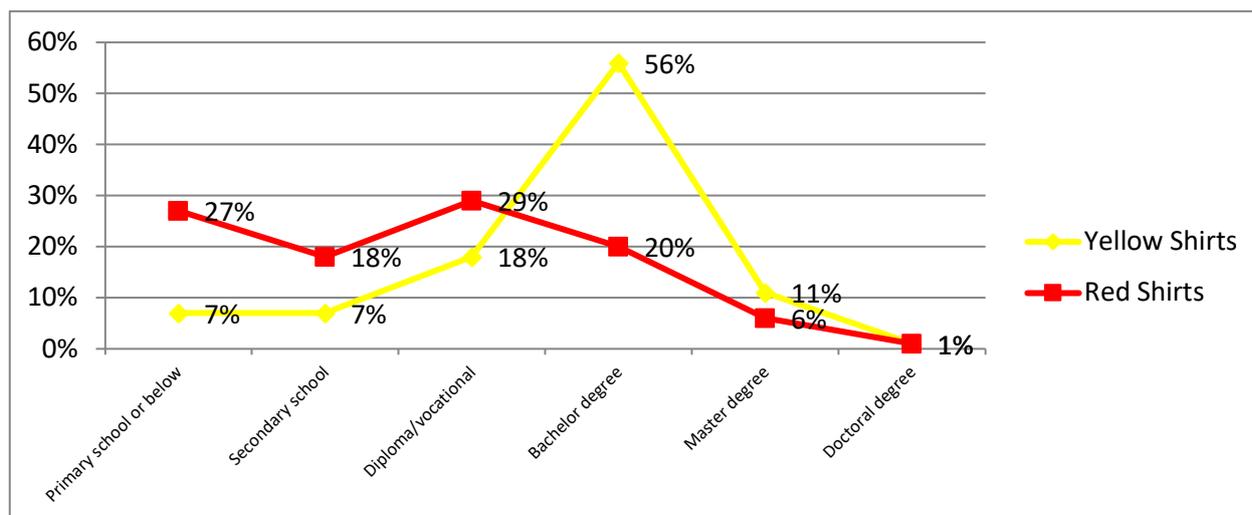


**Figure 1** Income in comparison

Source: Adapted from The Asia Foundation. (2013). *Profile of the Protestors: A Survey of Pro and Anti-government Demonstrators in Bangkok on November 30, 2013*. Retrieved December 10, 2018 from <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/FinalSurveyReportDecember20.pdf>, p. 7

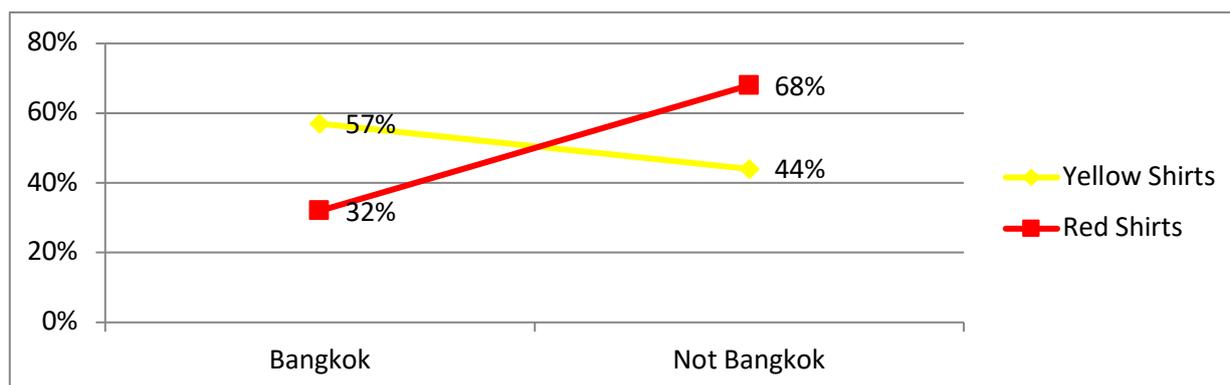
The Asia Foundation (2013) conducted an interesting survey on the profile of the protesters on both sides. Their survey was carried out on November 30, 2013, with the results supporting the claims of identity of both Yellow Shirts and Red Shirts. The above figure shows a major difference between Yellow Shirt and Red Shirt respondents' in terms of household income. More than half of the Red Shirt respondents claimed to receive less than 29,999 baht per month while most of them had only 10,000 – 19,999 baht per month. In contrast, 32% of Yellow Shirt respondents claimed to receive more than 60,000 baht per month and more than half of the overall Yellow Shirt respondents claimed to generate at least 30,000 baht per month. This suggests that Red Shirt supporters were less wealthy than their Yellow Shirt counterparts. And many among the Red shirts were poor. This indicates that the Red and Yellow shirts' conflict can be described as a conflict between rich and poor.

There are many reasons for this difference in terms of household income. Among them is the difference in educational level. As shown in Figure 2, the majority (62%) of Yellow Shirt respondents held at least a bachelor degree while only 32% of respondents did not undertake higher education. In contrast, 64% of Red Shirt respondents were holding less than a bachelor degree while only one-third of the respondents had higher education. This indicates that the level of income, level of education and social class are correlated. It is no surprise that Red Shirt supporters had considerably less income than their counterparts since, based on the data above, they had a significantly lower educational level. The gap between those who had a bachelor degree in the Yellow camp (56%) and those who had a bachelor degree in the Red camp (20%) is enormous. In addition, most of the occupations that can provide a decent salary require at least a bachelor degree. Therefore, both figures are closely linked and provide us with an in-depth detail of the protesters.



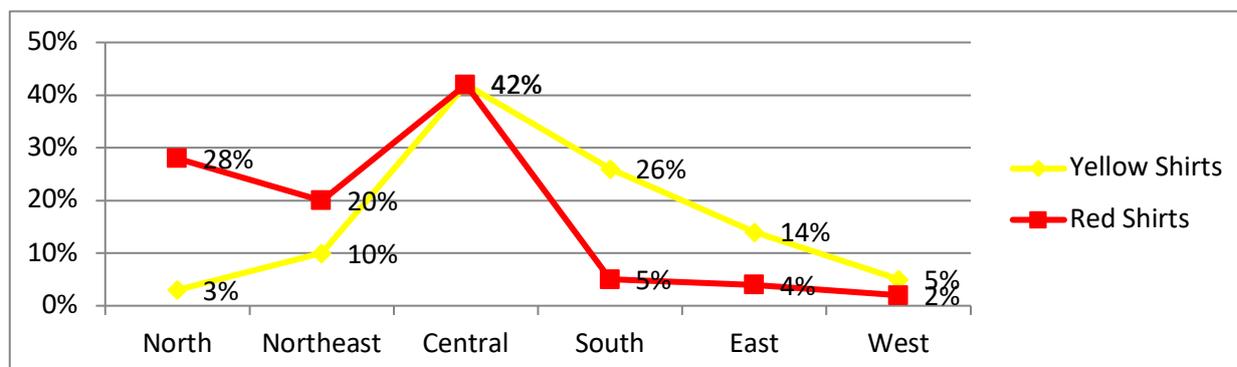
**Figure 2** Level of education in comparison

Source: Adapted from The Asia Foundation. (2013). *Profile of the Protestors: A Survey of Pro and Anti-government Demonstrators in Bangkok on November 30, 2013*. Retrieved December 10, 2018 from <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/FinalSurveyReportDecember20.pdf>, p. 4



**Figure 3** Geographical Residence

Source: Adapted from The Asia Foundation. (2013). *Profile of the Protestors: A Survey of Pro and Anti-government Demonstrators in Bangkok on November 30, 2013*. Retrieved December 10, 2018 from <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/FinalSurveyReportDecember20.pdf>, p. 5.



**Figure 4** Geographical Residence for Non-Bangkok Respondents

Source: Adapted from The Asia Foundation. (2013). *Profile of the Protestors: A Survey of Pro and Anti-government Demonstrators in Bangkok on November 30, 2013*. Retrieved December 10, 2018 from <https://asiafoundation.org/resources/pdfs/FinalSurveyReportDecember20.pdf>, p.

Another indicator is the protesters' geographical residence. As shows in the below Figures, most of the Red Shirt respondents did not live in Bangkok while more than half of their opponents were Bangkok based.

Together with Figures 1 and 2, all 4 Figures above suggest that an uneven and Bangkok-centric development caused an imbalanced wealth distribution between the capital city and the rest of the country. As Phongpaichit & Baker (2008, p.21) noted, conflict in Thailand can be seen as a conflict of class and privilege in which a minority urban middle class, especially in Bangkok, tried to hold the upper hand against the rural masses.

Data from the Asia Foundation (2013) also provided details of the occupations and employment status of the protesters which means that the colors' conflict in Thailand can be seen in many related ways. However, it would not be wrong to say that class conflict is one of the main problems in Thailand. As stated by Ungpakorn (2009, p. 23) a civil war between the rich and the poor is happening in Thailand, but in a more complicated way.

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### **Higher education development in Thailand**

Not only the uneven distribution of wealth but also the uneven distribution of higher education formed grievances for people in rural areas. Watson (1981) explained that when the first state university, Chulalongkorn University, was established in 1917, it was created to produce civil servants for specific government departments and can be seen as a training school rather than a scholarly community (Watson, 1981, pp. 301-302). In other words, higher education was designed for the upper class who would govern the country one day.

It was not only until the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932 that higher education was limited to a small group of elites. Thammasat University<sup>2</sup> was established in 1934 as an open university<sup>3</sup> and linked to the Ministry of Public Justice and the Department of Public Administration (Watson, 1981, p. 302) with the purpose of providing manpower in these fields. During 1942 – 1943, three more universities (Mahidol University, Silpakorn University and Kasetsart University) were opened in Bangkok with the same purpose of providing manpower for government. The creation of Mahidol University, Silpakorn University and Kasetsart University was not aimed to expand higher education to the masses; higher education was still limited to a small group of elites with the purpose of serving government departments. In 1959, the Asian Institute of Technology was opened as an international postgraduate institution using the English

<sup>2</sup> The former name was Thammasat lae Karn Muang University meaning the University of Moral Science and Politics.

<sup>3</sup> Its status as an open university ended in 1960 and it became a public university.

language in teaching (Watson, 1981, p. 307).

According to Anderson (1977, pp. 16-17), Thai higher education was significantly expanded in the 1960s during the Sarit-Thanom-Praphat era as a result of rapid changes in class structure and the occurrence of a new bourgeois stratum in the late 1950s. In 1960, King Mongkut Institute of Technology, the first technological university in Thailand, was founded, and in 1964, Prasarnmitr College of Education, was opened by the Ministry of Education in Bangkok. Many Thais believed that education was a key to social mobility and an important way to access careers in the state bureaucracy. Despite more universities being established, all of them were located in Bangkok and limited to the middle or upper class. It can be seen that education became a tool for class mobility in this period while it previously was for class preservation.

When the middle class began to develop beyond Bangkok, higher education was also expanded to fulfil their demand. In 1964, Chiangmai University was opened in the North, followed by Khonkaen University in 1965 in the Northeast which was a positive sign of major development in higher education in other provinces (Watson, 1981, p. 305). In 1968, another regional university was established, with Prince of Songkla University being founded in Pattani in the South. These universities were designed to generate agricultural and economic development, to stimulate local employment opportunities, as well as to provide trained manpower for these opportunities, and to answer the criticisms that there was an excessive concentration of higher educational opportunities in Bangkok (Watson, 1981, p. 305). It can be seen that the expansion of

higher education in this period was in accordance with the economic expansion in major regional provinces.

Ramkhamhaeng University was introduced as an open university<sup>4</sup> in 1971 to fulfil the growing demands of higher education (Watson, 1981, pp. 307-308). Watson noted that “the creation of Ramkhamhaeng University marks a major policy shift away from linking higher education with man-power demands to accepting the pressures of social demand” (Watson, 1981, p. 308). The establishment of Ramkhamhaeng University was driven by the demands from new high school graduates and their families, particularly the middle class.

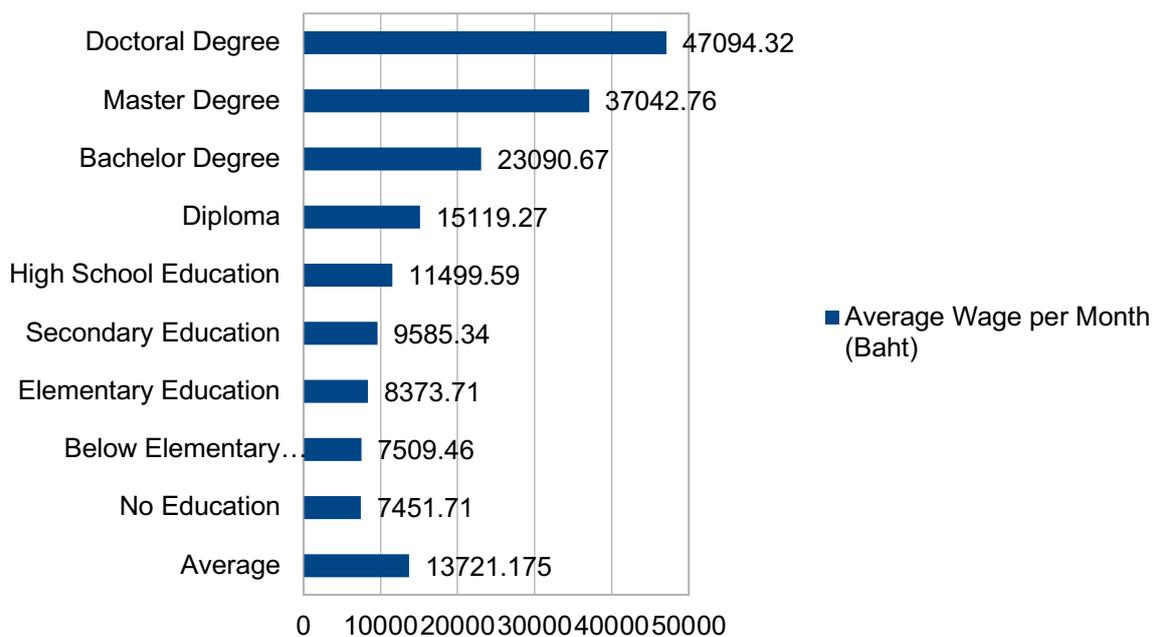
Another open university, Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University, was established in 1978, focusing on long-distance teaching and self-study methods. Since then, universities in Thailand have expanded to other developed provinces with the aim of responding to the increasing demands of the provincial middle class. However, since the middle class is mostly concentrated in Bangkok, higher education in Thailand was mostly developed in the same area. As a result, higher education is still out of reach or is inadequate for the lower classes in rural areas.

In sum, higher education in Thailand started with the purpose of educating a small group of the elite to govern the country. However, with the increase of the middle class in Bangkok, higher education was extended and designed to respond to their demands. Not until regional provinces began to develop economically did the state-run higher education expand to the provincial middle class. It can be concluded that the development of higher education was heavily related to the development of the middle class in each area.

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<sup>4</sup>Technically, Ramkhamhaeng University was not the first open university in Thailand. During 1934-1960, Thammasat University

allowed students to enrol part-time and take some courses outside Bangkok (Watson 1981: p.308).



**Figure 5** Relationship between salary and level of education

Source: Average salary classified by level of education. (2017), Bank of Thailand

**Table 1** Occupation rankings

Rank	Occupation	Status Points
1	Doctor, veterinarian, pharmacist	82.9
2	Cabinet minister	81.8
3	Ambassador	79.7
4	Military officer: general	76.4
5	Provincial governor or equivalent	75.0
6	Architect, engineer	74.1
7	University professor	72.6
8	Nurse	71.5
9	Senator, M.P.	70.0
10	Physical sciences	68.7

Source: Adapted from Suphang Jantawanit (1991), Table 4 and 5, ranked by urban response (as cited in Ockey, 2004, p. 159).

**The importance of education on income**

We can see the differences between supporters from both sides in terms of income and level of education. However,

these two variations are correlated. In general, the level of income depends greatly on a person’s educational level. Unfortunately, the level of education also deeply depends on a person’s level of

income or his or her family's financial status. This creates a situation where poor people cannot afford a decent education, cannot have a decent job with a good salary and their children will repeat this cycle. Conversely, children from a wealthy family will have a good education, high-paid job and their children will likely repeat the same cycle. We do not need to mention all the inequalities poor people face such as the inability to influence national policies or the lack of some basic utilities like water and power in rural areas. Still, it is not difficult to understand why there are resentments between the rich and the poor which, sometimes, lead to a lethal confrontation.

From the Figure 5, it is clear that a university degree is an important factor in the level of income. On average, working people will receive around 13,000 baht per month. However, this figure will vary when education is taken into consideration. The gap can be seen clearly from a diploma holder through to the higher degrees. Graduates at the diploma level will receive a salary 2 times higher than a person with no education. Bachelor degree holders can generate 3 times higher salaries than elementary education holders. Master degree graduates could earn almost 40,000 baht per month compared to around 11,000 baht per month for high school graduates. Those with a Doctoral degree can receive slightly less than 50,000 baht per month while it will take more than 6 months for people with no education to get the same amount. Thus, the level of income is strongly correlated with the level of education.

However, education is not only beneficial in terms of income but also provides prestige as well. As shown in Table 1, the top 10 high status occupations in Thailand almost all involved high levels of education.

Education is undeniably significant in many ways, especially at the higher level. As Giddens (1981, pp. 179-180) pointed out, the difference between skilled workers

and manual workers is the market capacities which are conferred by educational and technical qualifications. This differentiation happens everywhere and not only in income but also in other types of economic reward. In general, non-manual workers enjoy better job security and greater promotion opportunities than manual workers. Moreover, the working hours and benefits also differ between these two classes.

In economic terms, at least a college degree or equivalent technological skills training is required for a person to have an adequate opportunity to have a decent job with enough salary to enjoy a middle class lifestyle (Hamill, 2010, p. 318). In addition, Torche & Lopez-Calva addressed the significance of education as an opportunity for mobility into the middle class (Torche & Lopez-Calva, 2011, p. 41). It can be concluded that higher education leads to a better income. However, education is not free and money can affect how far students can go in higher education and where they can study. Although many universities provide scholarships to students and the government also hands out student loans for tuition fees, it is not sufficient because there are many costs relating to study in higher education. The cost of living will be significantly increased for students from rural provinces to study inside Bangkok. Many students cannot afford to have private tutors which likely decrease their competitiveness against students from wealthy families. Some students from low-income families may have to work and study at the same time or have to stop studying and work full-time.

### **The importance of income on education**

Lynch & O'Riordan (1998) pointed out the significance of finances towards education. They argued that educational opportunities depended on financial ability. Despite the accessibility of educational services, young people with small budgets would not be able to take advantage. Private

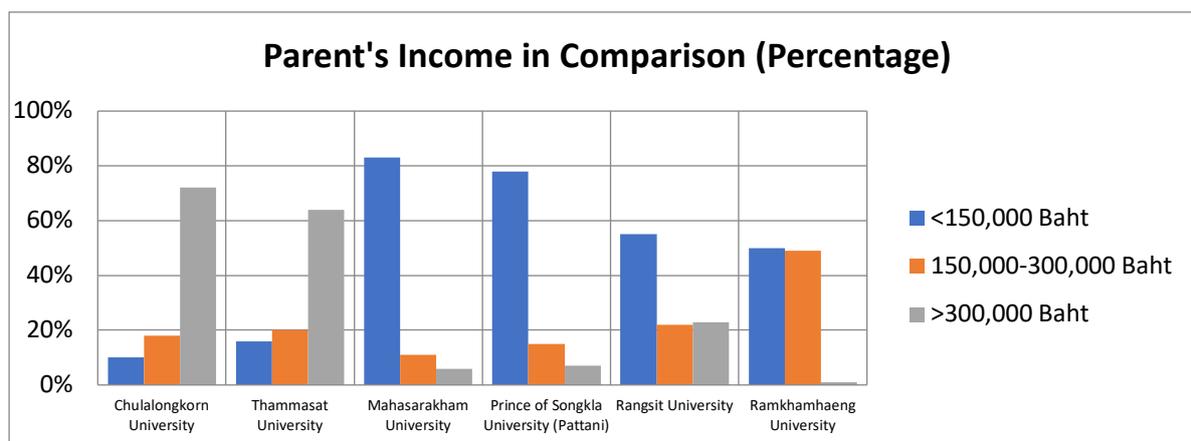
universities with high tuition fees might be out of reach as well as some extra educational resources like computers or expensive textbooks. In other words, students with limited financial support will have fewer available resources for their study. Moreover, poverty would lead to students having less time for study, as they may have to work for income (Lynch & O’Riordan, 1998, p. 459).

The educational disadvantage of any given person or group can really only be fully understood in terms of the advantage of others. The financial, cultural and educational experiences of working-class students need not, in and of themselves, create educational inequality; what creates the inequality is the fact that others have differential access to resources, income, wealth and power which enable them to avail of the opportunities presented in education in a relatively more successful manner (Lynch & O’Riordan, 1998, p. 470)

Haveman & Smeeding (2006) explained that since higher education requires a well-prepared student, those from lower income families who could attain only a low quality high school education have an important disadvantage in the academic foundation required for

higher education. Not only are low-income students not well-prepared in academics, they added, but also unprepared psychologically and culturally. The low income students are more likely to be raised in low income neighborhoods and study in lower quality schools, hence the poor environment could affect their ability (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006, pp. 134-140).

As in case of Thailand, a family’s income dictates a student’s opportunities in higher education. Many cannot study at university level because their families are too poor and need more workforce to generate income. However, those who are fortunate enough to study in university are also separated based on their wealth. Financial support is crucial for student paths in higher education as parental income could determine which or what type of university students can enter. The following data on a parent’s income was collected by the Office of the Higher Education Commission of Thailand and reported on 17 March 2015. This data provides parents’ income of all students in the academic year 2014 from almost all universities in Thailand. Figure 6 shows some example universities and gives us an idea on the differences between students from various universities



**Figure 6** Parent’s Income in Comparison

Note: Using the 2014 data and show only some universities to compare with data from field research conducted during 2012-2013.

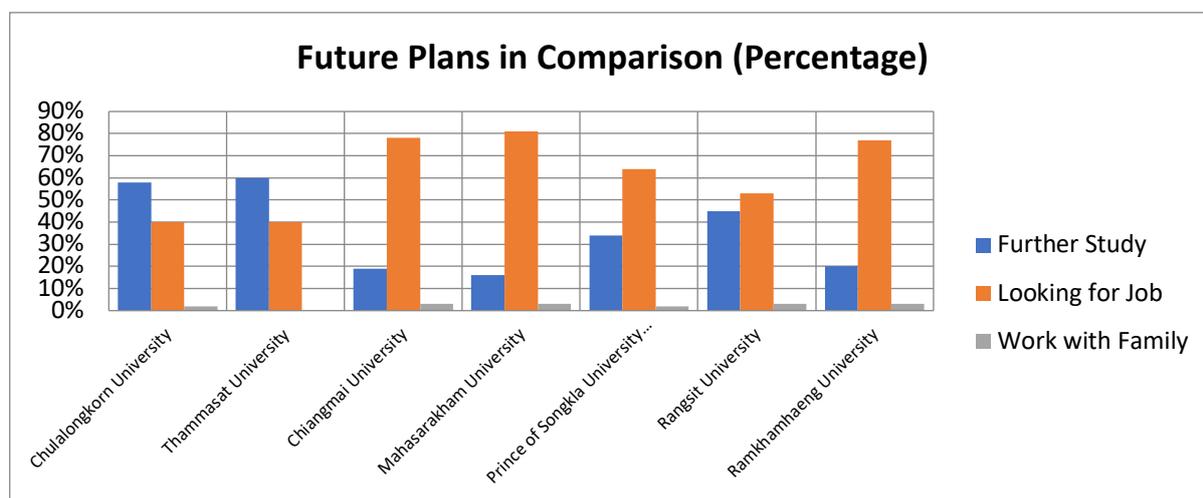
Source: Adapted from The Office of the Higher Education Commission of Thailand. (2015, March 17). Data of Thailand’s university students. Retrieve December 11, 2018 from <https://bit.ly/1RR9c3c>

It is clear that students at high reputation universities like Chulalongkorn University and Thammasat University came from wealthy families. In contrast, students from provincial universities came from significantly less wealthy families. This shows that a family's income affected where a student can study. It is also indicates that certain types of university cater to certain types of students. Students who are Bangkok-based and come from high income families have more choices in higher education and more opportunities in high-reputation universities. On the other hand, students from low income background, either from regional provinces or not, have fewer choices in higher education and less opportunity to enter elite Bangkok-based universities.

These data from the Office of the Higher Education Commission (Thailand) may have some problematic issues. Firstly, a parent's income level is more likely to be an estimation. Secondly, and most importantly, there are a high number of students in each university who claimed that their parents have no income at all; for

example, more than 5,000 students from Chulalongkorn University claimed that their parents have no income. Thirdly, the lowest category of less than 150,000 baht per month is, in fact, considered a very high salary for many Thais since the average income per household for the whole country in 2015 was only 26,915 baht per month.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, this data is a good indicator that shows the influence of wealth over higher education. And it indicates that the Office of the Higher Education Commission did not even consider the number of the poor in higher education is worthy of differentiation and analysis. This emphasizes that higher education is designed for people from good economic background, which is only a small proportion of Thais.

Money not only dictates the place where students can study but also how far they can go in higher education. Life chances of students in each university are different. Future plans of the students can indicate their life chances of what they could possibly achieve or they think they could achieve, as shown in Figure 7.



**Figure 7** Future Plans in Comparison

Source: Data from field research during 2012 and 2013<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Data from the Household Socio-Economic Survey, National Statistical Office, Ministry of Information and communication Technology (2015). Access at <http://service.nso.go.th/nso/web/statseries/statseries11.html> (accessed December 11, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> This data was collected during author's field research in 2012-2013 for Doctoral degree dissertation.

The students who chose “further study” likely have sufficient financial support from their family to pursue a post-graduate degree, which mean they have more choices in their life. In contrast, the students who chose “looking for job” and “work with family” may have limited choices since they may not be able to earn any higher degree or their family cannot support them or they need to have income right after graduation.

This data shows that the participants from elite Bangkok-based universities have more opportunities than their provincial counterparts do. On the other hand, the participants from provincial universities and the Open University have fewer choices in their life. As a university degree is highly related to income, generally, higher degrees mean a higher income. Thus students from elite Bangkok-based universities who have better opportunities to study further could have better income in the future.

We can see the same pattern where students from wealthier families have more choices in higher education as well as better life chances. However, it is also dictated by their class mobility. According to Dahrendorf, education is a specific requirement for managerial occupations, which allow greater intergeneration mobility for working or middle class people. It is unquestionable that education, especially higher education, is an important source of social mobility into elite positions; however, sometimes education is limited to a narrow group of privileged people (Giddens, 1981, pp. 168-169). In terms of schools, Giddens noted, if their equipment and facilities are poor, or if the quality of teaching staff and environment are low, this inevitably affects intellectual development (Giddens, 1981, p. 185).

Besides helping the creation of middle class status, education can be seen as a tool for transferring middle class status. According to Power (2000), education is very important to retain middle class status. For the upper class or elite who are very

wealthy and powerful, she argued, their assets and privilege can be passed through generations without external influence. However, for the middle class, educational credentials are necessary to acquire or retain their status (Power, 2000, p. 134). In her research, she found that the socio-economic status and educational background of parents are important factors in the subsequent educational achievements and occupational location of their children (Power, 2000, p. 137).

In sum, a higher education is necessary for having marketable skills, which can lead to middle class occupations and incomes. Education is not free, especially at higher levels. Although it is not necessarily true that a person with a limited budget would have less opportunity at a university, it does make it harder for that person to be well-educated. Thus, lack of higher education has limited class mobility for the lower class and creates stability of status for the existing middle class. It also creates a perpetuating situation where the poor and their children cannot move upward to better classes. Hence, the question is how can we break this cycle?

### **Equality of opportunity**

The principle of equality of opportunity is that luck, circumstance or social class must have no effect on an individual’s prospect of success. However, it does not mean that individuals with similar effort will reach similar outcomes (LeFranc, Pistolesi & Trannoy, 2009, pp. 1189-1902). This does not mean everyone must be equally gifted at birth or have the same talent but everyone should be able to use all their talents to achieve their goals (Kodelja, 2016, p. 5). The inequality among people with similar effort (to reach the goal) should be compensated since it is not within their responsibility (LeFranc, Pistolesi & Trannoy, 2009, p. 1904). Moreover, the equality of opportunity is not a guarantee that everyone will achieve their goal but it

is a compensatory justice to eliminate inequalities (Kodelja, 2016, p. 17).

In the case of education, particularly higher education, there are many factors beyond students' responsibilities. Families' financial background, social class and even where they live are only a few examples that can affect students' chances in higher education. As we discussed earlier, students from wealthy families inside Bangkok and the surrounding area seem to have more advantages over their rural and lower-income counterparts. However, it is problematic to put every student at the same starting point as it needs to favour the disadvantaged or disadvantage the advantaged (Kodelja, 2016, p. 19). This means that inequality becomes a means of achieving equality, as it corrects prior inequality: the new equality is therefore the result of levelling two inequalities (Kodelja, 2016, p. 19).

Nonetheless, this is not an absolute equality in the sense that everyone will have the same success or all students can study in a high reputation university. It is equality in the sense that everyone should have the same opportunity to be able to enrol in a high reputation university (Kodelja, 2016, p. 19). In other words, those who wish to study in higher education should be able to do so and those who wish to study in a high reputation university should not be limited based on their financial situation or location.

Moreover, educational credentials are very important for class mobility (Funatsu & Kagoya, 2003, p.257), and represent family income status (Albritton & Bureekul, 2007, p. 25) as well as providing prestige from occupations (Vichit-Vadkan, 1979, pp. 4-6). But in Thailand, higher education is currently not for everyone. Economic position plays a major role in ability, motivation and preparedness of youth. As Lynch & O'Riordan (1998, p. 459) noted, educational opportunities depend greatly on financial capability. Children in poor families have more disadvantages than those in wealthy ones

(Haveman & Smeeding, 2006, p. 129). The low-income students are more likely to be raised in low income neighborhoods and study in lower quality schools, hence the poor environment could affect their ability (Haveman & Smeeding, 2006, pp. 134-140). This gives the middle-class students a better opportunity in education as they are better equipped for success (Kaufman, 2005, p. 262). The university itself plays a role in preventing less fortunate people entering higher education by limiting access to university. There are 3 ways to restrict access to higher education; the number of admissions, the admission requirements and the separation of elite universities from others (Kraus, Maxwell & Vanneman, 1979, p. 140).

Of course, it is acceptable that the smartest student should study in the highest reputation university since it is what they deserve. And this 'genetic luck' is not something anyone can or should interfere with. But some luck like inherited wealth or the place where a student's family is living should not be factors in the pursuit of higher education. Therefore, equality of opportunity in education means that every student should have the same starting point. Students from low-income families who cannot hire private tutors should be compensated. Students from low-income families who cannot relocate to Bangkok or surrounding areas to study in high reputation universities should be helped because poor people spend a high proportion of their income on food but rich people can spend more on education, goods, housing and leisure (Hughes & Woldekidan, 1994, p. 141).

However, this does not mean that government should make students equally uneducated or lower the educational standard. But equality of opportunity can be done by increasing the standard of education in Thailand where every student does not need private tutors. Provide opportunities to students who wish to study in higher education and help by levelling the playing field so no one can have some

significant advantages. Provide these chances equally for everyone, and then it is up to them to achieve their goals. The resentment among Thais may decline and some negative belief against government will decrease.

### Conclusion

Education can play an important role in social mobility. However, in Thailand, most people who are already middle class are getting into universities so class mobility is actually constrained and classes are reinforced by the educational system. Since the middle class and the lower class can be separated from each other by the level of education, it is not surprising that the middle class seemingly believe they are smarter than their lower class counterparts. This has led the middle class to believe that the lower class is less politically sophisticated, can be easily manipulated and is not capable of democracy (Ockey, 2001, pp. 313-337). The clean politics that the middle class wanted (LoGerfo, 2000, p. 227; Winichakul, 2008, pp. 24-30) may not really come from their democratic enthusiasm but instead they may want clean politics where the lower class is not included. This led to the conflict between rich and poor (Yellow and Red shirts) and can be seen as a major reason for many conflicts in the past.

It is obvious that we cannot force everyone to have the same political ideology, wealth or level of education but it is possible to ease tensions by reducing the resentment among Thais. The disparity in terms of income can be seen as one of main reasons that causes conflicts and can be resolved by providing an equality of opportunity in education. Thus, people can break the perpetual cycle of poorness. We can see that education is a key to self-development but the educational system does not provide an equal opportunity for everyone. It is important for us to learn from the past to avoid an unfortunate future. History shows that there has been conflict

between classes, between well-educated and less-educated and between urban and provincial populations. By providing equal opportunities in life, education and development, many conflicts can be prevented. Opening up the educational system, which is, in theory, populated by the most progressive elements in society, to greater social mobility and greater acceptance of differences across class divides would be a good beginning to alleviate conflict. These findings of such inequality of opportunities in higher education could lead to a positive change.

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