

Disciplinary Power and the Emergence of Student Protest on Anpo Protests in Japan in 1959

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study whether we can understand student activism through the theory of Foucault, and it will mainly depend on document analysis to accomplish this assignment, because analyzing and applying Foucault's thoughts to the student protests in Japan is the primary task. This paper can't give a integrate explanation for the occurring of student activism since it is too idealistic for Foucault's theory that I am hard to imply it to the real life, though I have tried my best to find out any possibility during writing procession. However, in the term of theory, this paper successfully attempts to interpret why the student protest could exist and persist in society for a long period, and also provides some practical and beneficial advice for state government to establish relevant policies used for tackling with the emergency, which are mainly triggered by the student groups, in another term. In general, the paper owns value in the aspect of academy. Nevertheless, this essay still has these limitations. Firstly, from the aspect of materials, this essay is lack of Japaneses materials. Secondly, I have not completely understood the Foucault's theory. Therefore, the study can look into accounting for the student activism in the field of ideology and find out a specific theory to correctly explain the student activism.

Keywords: *Disciplinary Power, Student Activism, Zengakuren, The Anpo Protest (1959), The Japan Communist Party*

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a core conception of Foucault's ideological system to treat students' activism properly by using the theory of disciplinary power, which is a major problem for me. As we all know, high education students are unwilling to attend to political activities in person because they consist a relatively independent group in society. It means that they prefer to express their idea by mental ways, such as publishing their articles on the newspapers or holding a seminar to discuss hot topics and social problems. Compared with other social sectors or institutions, the universities that have autonomous arrangements can provide their students with an isolated environment to avoid much interference brought by the authority, which makes students lack of enthusiasm to get in touch with the outside.

Furthermore, according to Foucault's theory about disciplinary power, it is impossible for a disciplinary society allowing the emergence of student protest. The reason why I choose Foucault's theory is closely related to the daily life, while other theories cannot achieve it.

This research topic is essential because it interprets why the student protest could exist and persist in society for a long period from the perspective of theoretical contribution, and also provides some practical and beneficial advice for state government to establish relevant policies used for tackling with the emergency, which are mainly triggered by the student groups, in another term.

After the introduction, this paper is divided into four sections. Section I is designed for making definitions of student activism and presenting the Anpo Protest. Then section II reflects on existing theories as well as Foucault's theory. Next, section III uses Foucault's idea to analysis the Anpo Protest. Finally, section IV concludes the whole essay, provides limitations and sheds lights on further studies.

2. STUDENT, STUDENT ACTIVISM AND ANPO PROTESTS

Student activism or campus activism is work by students to cause political, environmental, economic, or

social change. Although often focused on schools, curriculum, and educational funding, student groups have influenced greater political events.

Luescher-Mamashela argues that there are many issues in the field of student activism, such as "its causes organisation, ideological orientation and outcomes" [1]. I mainly focus on the ideological orientation since it is important to drive the organisation of the student protest. Students referred to those who pursue the higher education in college and university are close-knit. Therefore, they are easily organised into integration. On the other hand, high education students are unwilling to attend to political activities in person because they consist a relatively independent group in society. It means that they prefer to express their idea by mental ways, such as publishing their articles on the newspapers or holding a seminar to discuss hot topics and social problems, and the universities which have autonomous arrangements compared to other social sectors or institutions can provide their students an isolated environment to avoid much interference brought by the authority, which makes students lack of enthusiasm to get in touch with the outside.

Huang argues the student activism can be prevented through Foucault's theory [2]. I think, to some extent, the theory could be used to avoid the expansion of affairs. However, it may also intensify the disputes between students and authority. Moreover, Huang tends to use the theory after happening of student movement, but I hope to use that at the beginning of the movement.

This essay will focus on one of the most influential student movement which is the Anpo Protest, that were a series of massive protests in Japan from 1959 to 1960, and again in 1970. The protests in 1959 and 1960 were staged in opposition to a 1960 revision of the original 1952 Security Treaty, and eventually grew to become the largest popular protests in Japan's modern era. According to Marotti, Zengakuren, a Japanese student federation, took part in the Aopo Protest as the major force [3]. Eventhough, the security treaty was accepted by the public when it was signed in 1951, but it raised serious protest from the prime minister at that time, Kishi, who tried to revise the treaty in May, 1959. Jones reviewed that this movement surmount the climax in June,15[4]. JCP, Japanese Commuinist Party, actually led the protest through communist league, according to Saruya [5].

3. FOUCAULT'S THEORY AND DISCIPLINARY POWER

What is political power? As Lukes explains in theoretical aspect, "an agency-based perspective is grounded in force, hierarchy, and causality [6]." Which means that political power always enforces oppression from the authority to the public, and definite classes are divided before the power exerted by privileged people.

Then, this kind of power will make people who live in the bottom class compared to the privileged dissatisfied and cause their resistance for rights which, in their opinion, are derived from their daily life and randomly deprived by the top.

However, the scholar just states a real situation and do not explain why authority's actions lead to the public dissatisfaction. In other words, we are still complicated with the reason of student activism occurring and the essence which makes students so annoy that they prefer to protest in a radical way. On the contrary, we may find an answer after learning Foucault's theory. According to him, "power is linked to the creation of meaning and knowledge, which then has the capacity to discipline and shape body and mind [7]." The authority creates an order referred to a specific discipline, then this order is transformed to general knowledge which is used to erect the public thought adapting to the authority's design. With the time going, the primary order become outdated because it is hardly applied to the newest situations and is opposed by the public, although they may just regard that their normal life is damaged by certain persons and cannot realize the essential item. To this extent, students who receive higher education choosing demonstration or violence is mainly resulted from the need of breaking through the primary truth and knowledge, which are as some of fundamental elements consisted of a disciplinary society.

Another scholar, Schmitt, has his own understanding of power, but he discusses it in state aspect [8]. His core idea is that building an associated state union relays on the accuracy of distinguishing the enemy and friend among different states. It is hard for us to make a connection between the student activism and Schmitt's idea, because student movement usually happens within a state but his idea is often presented in the relationship of countries.

Some people argue that we can generalize the conception of power in Schmitt, and that helps us to understand how students let the government to become their opposite due to different desires. I have to say this is a good attempt but I am not sure if we destroy Schmitt's theory when we adopt a generalized explanation. Conversely, no one can deny that Foucault focus on individuals or groups, not nations, all the time, and he strictly limits his arguing in the circle of human being at the beginning without the notion of realistic countries.

Disciplinary power exists everywhere and everybody is subjected to it. It is equal to the system of surveillance to observe people's behaviors in public spaces, such as CCTV, and also works in private spaces through others' report and monitor. Therefore, most people carefully obey the regulations for worrying about being watched and seen as eccentric people who break out the common sense. It is not difficult to believe that such kind of power

has been established in every democratic country and been functioning for a long period.

Sovereign power, as a converse type of power to disciplinary power, is not suitable for people to understand the student activism, since it emphasizes powerful depression exercised by the state, like acts of genocide and torture. Unfortunately, these terrible affairs can't exist in a democratic society, thus students have no chance to face with this kind of threat and suppression and launch movements to object the sovereignty.

In a word, many academics raise various interruptions relating to the power, but they all ignore more or less points and can't properly explain the student activism. First, Lukes does not point out how the bottom class reacts to the top, so the reason why students decide to protest and revolt the society is still a puzzle. Second, it is not reasonable to change understanding method to apply Schmitt's national theory to account for a problem which happens at home. Third, student protest, as a product of a democratic society, can't be born with a sovereign society because it doesn't provide a space for growing. From all the reasons above, it is obvious that Foucault's theory is the best option to interpret the student activism.

4. FOUCAULT'S THEORY AND STUDENT ACTIVISM

In Foucault's argument, school, including university, is designed by the authority becoming a regulated space to educate students and shape their characters which are totally satisfied with country's needs. Foucault reckons that school can cultivate ideal students through capacity, communication and power, which are called as the disciplinary technologies, and the three constitute a disciplinary block. To this extent, we can see that the authority creating a regulated site actually gives students a chance to question and challenge the fixed system because that is impossible to be perfect from beginning to end and to meet with social and public requirements all the time.

On the other hand, to be honest, Foucault's theory doesn't clearly and directly point out the stream of opposition. Specifically, Foucault just make people understand that they all stay at the society controlled by some designers as I just mentioned above and can't follow their mind on many occasions, then he rejects to offer any advice to instruct people to break up the disciplines because his work is limited by himself just describing the truth of living space via his ideological words. Furthermore, capacity, as one of the disciplinary technologies, "stems from bodily aptitudes such as physical strength or is relayed by instruments such as weapons", according to Barbara Grant who studies about disciplining students by Foucault's theory, but it has disappeared in modern school system just for being seen

as a series of over-strict punishments to students [9]. Moreover, student activism aims for protesting not only school problems, but also social issues. While Foucault analysis different kinds of sites regarding them as disciplinary spaces, he never tries to construct bridges among these and merely discusses respectively.

I have to introduce another scholar, Gary Wickham, to support my discourse. "There is something more going on in Foucault's account of modern positive power than a failure to appreciate various historical factors. The 'something more' is a political weakness, a weakness that can be expressed as two charges: that his account contributes to an insidious form of critique, social critique, and that he ends up in inadvertent alliance with totalitarianism [10]." This means Foucault carelessly ignores to consider the complexity of the social, and that makes his opinion general nor specific. In other words, if you take realistic situations into account when you study a country, like Anpo Protest, you will find much weakness about Foucault's theory because it is lack of substantial examples to support itself at the beginning, and it is the destiny of the theory that is unfeasible to explain Zengakuren's movements. Besides, Wickham also argues that Foucault's theory is an "unengaged social critique" which "attacks the present society in the name of a society to come". It is like what I just said, students can realize, as Foucault's imagine, they are under control and surveillance created by the authority, but they can't get any practical suggestions from Foucault to guide their actions and any encouragement to support themselves taking part in anti-society movements in person.

If Foucault's theory is weak for giving a comprehensive illustration to student activism, how do we explain it in a rational way? I attempt to tackle with this question by showing Shimbori's several reasons about the occurrence of Anpo Protest in 1960, especially in the aspect of the student group [11].

Firstly, Shimbori argues that student group represent a stream of social power and students' idea reflect the distance in the society. I think this argument is reasonable, because that reflects the two divisions in the Zengakuren, which one side supports to violent revolution but another side advocate the peaceful revolution.

Secondly, students' number increase in private school and students gather in a relatively small area. This argument is powerful because it reflects the development of the universities in Japan after the WWII which provide students a suitable place for establishing organizations. Nevertheless, this argument has limitation because it does not mention the change in students' ideology.

The third reason avoids its shortcoming by proving that students regard themselves as political elites (or mass) and universities allow students to pay attention to

the real or the academic. This approach accurately points that a kind of motivation which encourages students to involve themselves into the social change.

5. CONCLUSION

In summary, this essay analyses the student activism in three sections. Section I has defined student activism and presented the Anpo Protest. Then section II reflected on existing theories as well as Foucault's theory. Next, section III used Foucault's idea to analysis the Anpo Protest.

This essay made the following contributions. In the term of theoretical contribution, it interprets why the student protest could exist and persist in society for a long period, and also provides some practical and beneficial advice for state government to establish relevant policies used for tackling with the emergency, which are mainly triggered by the student groups, in another term. The paper is great contribution to test the applicability to Foucault's theory. It does not aim to say Foucault's theory is wrong, but it intends to suggest that Foucault's theory is not complete, because it focuses on the maintenance of order in the society, but can be limiting to explain the situations when the order is challenging through, for instance, student activism. Foucault made big contribution to reveal the trend of disciplinary power, but neglected the details of country-specific context. Therefore, to explain the phenomenon of the Japanese student activism, deeply rooted in its complex social realities, we need to take into considerations of the historical context, the development of universities as well as the political situation of Japan at the time. Only in this way could we supplement Foucault's theory and propose compelling explanations.

Nevertheless, this paper still has these limitations. Firstly, from the aspect of materials, this paper is lack of Japanese materials. Secondly, I have not completely understood the Foucault's theory. Therefore, the study can look into accounting for the student activism in the field of ideology and find out a specific theory to correctly explain the student activism.

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