

Patterns of Industrial Policymaking in Thailand :

A Case Study of the Automobile Policy, 1962 - 1982

This study explores the patterns of industrial policymaking in Thailand and the role of domestic actors and Japanese multinationals in making industrial policy. The study is focused on the interaction among the three groups of industrial policymakers : the Thai state, Thai business, and external actors--especially the Japanese government and multinationals in the automobile industrial policy area -- during the period from the 1960s to 1982.

This study finds that the three approaches of bureaucratic polity, pluralist, and early dependency that have been used to analyze Thai politics fail to explain the Thai state in its relationships with business groups during the period of this study. An alternative explanation based on the new dependency model (Cardoso school) is presented. This model provides an explanation for the relationships among the three major actors : the Thai state, Thai business, and external actors during the 1960s to 1982 are analyzed and compared. The case study shows that the influence and role of each actor are different depending on the different political and economic environment of the automobile industry, but the characteristic of an 'elite alliance' among the state, local business, and external actors in making the industrial policy is constant. Scholars and political parties which have played a significant role in industrial policymaking since the early 1980s are still from the elite alliance. The grassroots groups such as labor, which have had a limited role in Thai politics since 1973, do not play a significant direct role in industrial policymaking for the automobile industry.