

ABSTRACT

Thesis Title : Vision in Economic Development : A Comparative Study
of Leaders between Gen.Chartchai Chunhavan, Mr.Anand
Panyarachun and Dr.Mahathir Mohammad

Student's Name : Mr. Nipon Sohheng

Degree Sought : Master of Arts

Major : Political Science

Academic Year : 2000

Advisory Committee :

1. Assist. Prof. Dr. Krisna Vaisamruat Chairperson
2. Assist. Prof. Dr. Thipaporn Pimpisuth
3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Chaichana Ingavata

This thesis is a comparative study of leaders' economic vision, focusing on three Prime ministers, respectively the late General Chartchai Chunhavan, Mr Anand Panyarachun both of Thailand, and the present Prime minister of Malaysia, Dr. Mahathir Mohammad.

The study aims first to show the link between their personal backgrounds and their economic visions at the later stage, as the countries' leaders.

Secondly, to explain comparatively how each one's personal backgrounds have influenced their visions as the Prime ministers of their countries. Thirdly, to analyse what are the factors that have encouraged their visions in economic development as well as to compare Thai and Malaysian path in economic development.

The result of this study is as follow: The two former Thai Prime ministers have, in large part, a common background in terms of family, education, attitudes, and

political experiences, whereas Dr. Mahathir 's past personal life, unlike the two Thai leaders, was rather different, particularly for his upbringing in a strict conservative manner, and was educated under colonial rule with no overseas diplomatic experiences.

Despite the main differences, the similarities of their personal backgrounds have, in effect, influenced, to a certain extent, their economic vision namely the formulation of their economic worldview. The three leaders share the same goals in formulating their visions of trying to push forward their countries to the status of a newly industrialized countries (NICs)and to become core economic center in South East Asian region, by supporting the idea of closer regional and sub-regional economic cooperation. However, Dr. Mahathir has shown more his strong personal emphasis on implementing “ Look East Policy “ than the two Thai Prime ministers, who attached greater importance to implementing the liberal policies along the western path of economic and political development.

As Thailand and Malaysia follow the similar direction of economic development, Mahathir's premiership has enjoyed more favourable factors, provided by a longer period of political stability and over a decade long in office with great manoeuvre to dictate the “ Internal Security Act” to help secure his power, as the sole leader than the Thai Prime ministers, who in contrast were limited in wielding their power, by the contending military faction, who strived for political influence.