

Abstract

This Thesis aims to study the development of neoliberal globalization in Thailand, the impacts of neoliberal globalization on the Thai state and society, and the interactions and responses of the Thai state and society to neoliberal globalization. The period of time of this study covers 1988 to 2007.

The study shows that the Thai state has been vigorously implemented neoliberal policies since 1988, starting from financial deregulation before the age of 1997 economic crisis to privatization after that period and trade and investment liberalization at this time. The deregulation, privatization, and liberalization constitute the core of neoliberal policies. The study proposes that neoliberal policies are very powerful because they are mobilized by transnational capital which takes advantages from globalization process. Neoliberal policies implemented by the Thai state are business-bias policies. They are specifically conducive to the capital accumulation of transnational corporations. Therefore, neoliberal policies have serious impacts on the Thai state and society.

This thesis argues that the Thai state has been defeated because it cannot resist the influence of neoliberal globalization and it cannot solve the problems arising from the implementation of neoliberal policies. Four cases are studied in the thesis. They are the case of Letters of intent, the case of 11 acts, the case of investment promotion policy, and the case of labour policy. The study indicates that neoliberal globalization has multidimensional impact. For example, the submit of the letters of intent to the International Monetary Fund led to the damage of the Thai state's autonomy to implement its public policy. The 11 acts led to the explosion of transnational corporations in Thailand. The investment promotion policy, which is big business-biased, causes harmful effects to small and medium enterprises. And the labour policy exacerbates the sufferings of labourers.

The study argues that one of the main causes of the defeat of the Thai state originates from the domestic institutional structure within the Thai state. That is, the domestic institutional structure is weak. Its weakness is due to the composition of cabinet, many of which come from business sector, has so much power that it has no room for checks and balances, transparency and participation. As a consequence, the bargaining power of the Thai state has been weakened by the forces of neoliberal globalization.