

From Liberalization to Renationalization: Ideational Power in Shifting Thailand's Energy Policies (1987-2018)

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論 文 内 容 の 要 旨

State energy enterprise policies in Thailand shifted from liberalization to recentralization and renationalization from 1987 to 2018. The dissertation questions why and how did this policy shift occurred?

Previous studies identified key elements of policy shift as changes in decision makers, energy cost, fiscal burden, international market price, bureaucratic structure. Based on the above scholarship, this dissertation questions the most important remaining question; how did the political leaders initiate the change. Powerful interest groups and actors are often structured around energy policies. A de-facto energy regime is established that cuts across government, market, and society. Thus, to shift policies, the key question would be how to transform the existing energy regime. In other words, what political tools and strategies they utilized in changing the energy regime then the energy policies. This dissertation analyses this political process.

The research was conducted based on government archive materials especially the records from the National Energy Policy Committee (NEPC) and interviewing stakeholders in the government and the state-owned enterprises. Historical analysis of the social movements and media reports supported the above in understanding the interaction between the government and society.

The main finding of the dissertation is that the ideational power was the most effective weapon to delegitimize existing policies, to popularize and legitimize alternative or new energy proposals. The addressed ideas and concepts rearranged the priority order of conflicting interests and agendas among different decision-making actors. Political leaders utilized concepts such as nationalism, security, conflict of interests, fair competition, environment and health, efficiency, in legitimizing and popularizing new energy policies. This use of ideational power was particularly useful to create a coalition between urban middle-class movements and the leadership in making the shift from liberalization to renationalization possible.