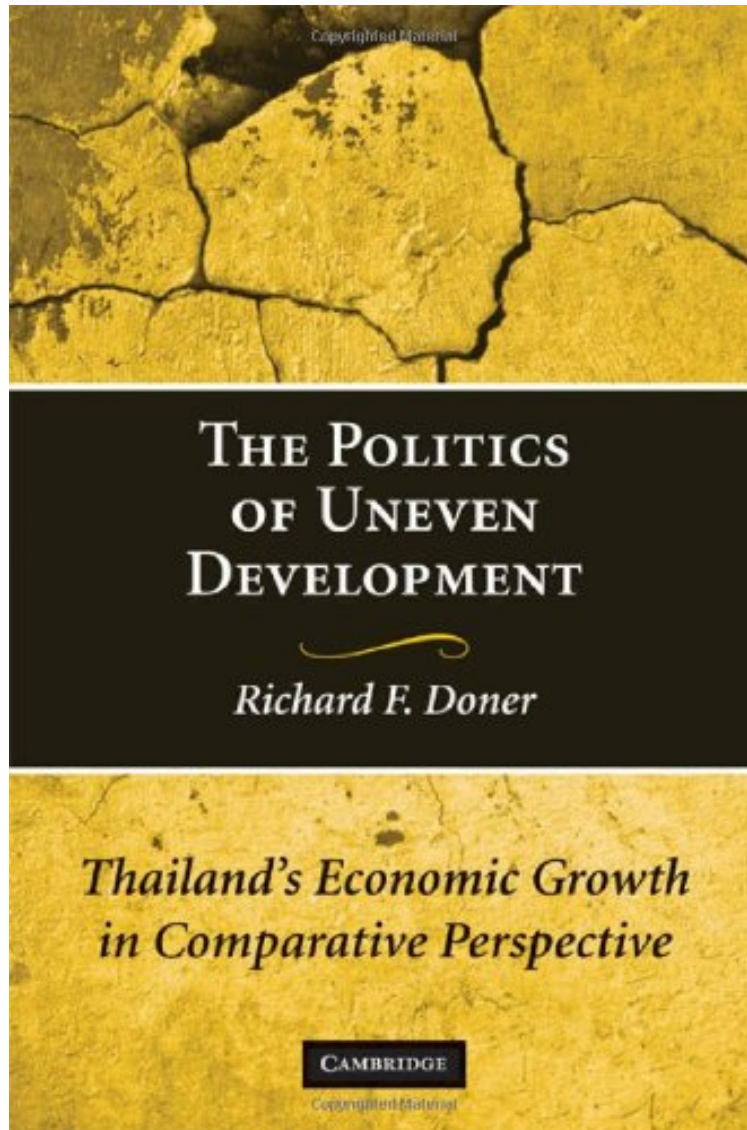


# The Politics of Uneven Development: Thailand's Economic Growth in Comparative Perspective

*Richard F. Doner*

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**Richard F. Doner : The Politics of Uneven Development: Thailand's Economic Growth in Comparative Perspective** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Politics of Uneven Development: Thailand's Economic Growth in Comparative Perspective:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great Read - Highly Recommend if Interested in Economics or Thailand  
By Paul Cielinski Doner explores Thailand's economic performance and growth compared to "competitor countries" (in terms of shifting jobs to and away from Thailand). Doner also explores Thailand as an "economic lager"

and discusses the "nutcracker" Thailand finds itself in between countries that are "higher quality", for example China, and countries that are "lower wage", such as Singapore. The analysis examines how Thailand has been "upgrade challenged" by reviewing three Thai industries Sugar, Textiles and Automotive. In each industry example, Doner shares how Labor Productivity, Human Capital, Investment Capital, Non-Domestic Investment, Policy, Entrepreneurship, Growth by Employment, Regime Type, Research and Development, Import Dependence, The Rural-Urban Gap and Institutional Capacity have carved Thailand's history and path. Great read but a little wordy. Definitely for those interested in Economics and have had at least a class in Macro Economics.

Why do some middle-income countries diversify their economies but fail to upgrade; to produce world-class products based on local inputs and technological capacities? Why have the 'little tigers' of Southeast Asia, such as Thailand, continued to lag behind the Newly Industrializing Countries of East Asia? Richard Doner goes beyond 'political will' by emphasizing institutional capacities and political pressures: development challenges vary; upgrading poses tough challenges that require robust institutional capacities. Such strengths are political in origin. They reflect pressures, such as security threats and resource constraints, which motivate political leaders to focus on efficiency more than clientelist payoffs. Such pressures help to explain the political institutions; 'veto players' through which leaders operate. Doner assesses this argument by analyzing Thai development historically, in three sectors (sugar, textiles, and autos) and in comparison with both weaker and stronger competitors (Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Brazil, and South Korea).

"Rick Doner has long argued that the study of development requires a close consideration of how industries evolve. In this important new book on Thailand, he combines his deep knowledge of the country with compelling theoretical arguments about the institutional determinants of upgrading and long-run growth." -Stephan Haggard, University of California, San Diego "Why do some countries make transitions to higher levels of technology and economic development and others fail? Doner's important study tries to answer this question...Doner's book is a fascinating methodological encounter for he knows Thailand well while skilfully locating Thailand's development in comparative perspective. This is good area studies and good political economy. Doner's book is well-structured, remarkably logical, and theoretically sound. While the author is fluent in his theoretical perspectives, he writes about technological upgrading and economic development in an exceptionally clear manner, making the book accessible to a wide audience." -Kevin Hewison, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill "This book is a tour-de-force. It tackles some of the biggest questions in comparative political economy with both innovative theorizing and rich empirical work. Whether one's interest is in the political economy of development, comparative political institutions, or the political economy of Southeast Asia, this book is a must read." -Allen Hicken, University of Michigan. "This book charts exciting new directions in the study of the political economy of development. In recent decades, development stalled in a range of middle income countries, and scholars have been trying to figure out why. Doner's insightful book gives us a convincing answer. Doner first unpacks the concept of development to isolate recent challenges of upgrading and then shows how overcoming these challenges requires enhanced institutional capacity that in turn depends on a relatively rare set of political conditions. The book is a model for combining broad theory and penetrating empirical analysis. Anyone concerned with the problems of inequality, upgrading, and development in the 21st century will want to read this book." -Ben Schneider, Northwestern University "This is a landmark book. It synthesizes the large literature on structural change and upgrading, and analyses several national economies and several sectors to show what determines progress in both. The result is a model of institutional and political analysis, which combines case studies with systematic comparisons. While Thailand is the main focus, the book is directly relevant to a large number of countries which are stuck in the 'middle-income trap', whose success in breaking out of the trap is crucial for a more equal distribution of world income." -Robert H. Wade, London School of Economics

About the Author Richard Doner received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of California, Berkeley, and is currently Associate Professor of Political Science at Emory University. His previous books include *Driving a Bargain: Automobile Industrialization and Japanese Firms in Southeast Asia* (1991) and (with David McKendrick and Stephan Haggard) *From Silicon Valley to Singapore: Location and Competitive Advantages in the Disk Drive Industry* (2000). He co-edited (with Frederick Deyo and Eric Hershberg) *Economic Governance and the Challenge of Flexibility in East Asia* (2001). He has published numerous book chapters and articles in journals including *International Organization*, *World Politics*, *Studies in Comparative and International Development*, *World Development*, *Journal of East Asian Studies*, *Journal of Asian Studies*, *Policy Research, Business and Politics*, and *Journal of Asian Business*. He has also consulted for several corporations and the World Bank on issues having to do with economic development in Southeast Asia.