

SOUTHEAST ASIAN STUDIES

<https://englishkyoto-seas.org/>

<Book Review>

Morishita Akiko

**Tadayoshi Terao and Tsuruyo Funatsu, eds. *Origins and Evolution of Environmental Policies: State, Time and Regional Experiences*.
Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021.**

Southeast Asian Studies, Vol. 10, No. 3, December 2021, pp. 470-473.

How to Cite: Morishita, Akiko. Review of *Origins and Evolution of Environmental Policies: State, Time and Regional Experiences* edited by Tadayoshi Terao and Tsuruyo Funatsu, eds. *Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3, December 2021, pp. 470-473.

Link to this book review:

<https://englishkyoto-seas.org/2021/12/vol-10-no-3-book-reviews-morishita-akiko/>

View the table of contents for this issue:

<https://englishkyoto-seas.org/2021/12/vol-10-no-3-of-southeast-asian-studies/>

Subscriptions: <https://englishkyoto-seas.org/mailling-list/>

For permissions, please send an e-mail to:

english-editorial[at]cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp



Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University

“tradition” and “fashion” in textile production in the modern world.

Fiona Kerlogue

SOAS Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, University of London

Origins and Evolution of Environmental Policies: State, Time and Regional Experiences

TADAYOSHI TERAO and TSURUYO FUNATSU, eds.

Cheltenham and Northampton: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021.

Since the 1990s, the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE)—one of the established social-science research centers in Japan specializing in studies of developing countries—has initiated various collaborative research projects relating to environmental problems and policies in Asia and other regions (Terao 2013). The research results have been regularly published through research reports, articles in scholarly journals, books, and other publication forms, but many of them are written in Japanese. Hence, not all the knowledge and insights accumulated through these projects have been shared with global readers who are concerned with environmental issues in developing countries. To fill this gap, *Origins and Evolution of Environmental Policies* clearly shows the scholarly achievements obtained through the IDE’s research projects over the past decade on environmental policy formation in East and Southeast Asia.

The volume raises two research questions: Why were appropriate measures not taken until industrial pollution and environmental problems became so serious?; and Why were the possible measures not fully implemented, even though the problem had existed for a long time and possible measures were known? (p. x). Through case studies, the author of each chapter carefully examines the process of environmental policy formation, particularly in the early stage, and identifies major structural factors that have hindered the pursuing of effective environmental policy and administration in the country. Four case studies in East and Southeast Asia are provided: environment pollution and health policy in China (Chapter 3); air pollution control policy in Taiwan (Chapter 4) and Thailand (Chapter 5); and water management in Southeast Asia (Chapter 6). The volume also includes the case of the United States (Chapter 7) and Germany (Chapter 8), aiming for comparative analyses between developed and developing countries.

There are three approaches this book has adopted to analyze environmental policy formation in East and Southeast Asia. First, it takes a path dependence approach that stresses the historical backgrounds of policies. The basic idea is that “newly formulated policies are often framed by existing public policies” (p. 4). Second, it compares the formulation process of environmental policy between developed and developing countries. Finally, it emphasizes on the role of the state

in the success or the failure of environmental policy formation. These approaches distinguish the volume from many other scholarly works on environmental governance in Southeast Asia. The latter have been inclined to analyze the causes and effects of environmental degradation, details of environmental policies and regulations, and politics over natural resources (e.g., Hirsch and Warren 1998; Ross 2001; Hall *et al.* 2011). These studies often highlight that the state has exploited and enclosed natural resources through development projects and conservation programs, and stress the significant role of local communities, domestic non-governmental organizations, and international organizations in finding a sustainable solution to environmental issues. This volume, on the contrary, sheds light on the non-monolithic features of the state by demonstrating conflicts and negotiations among state agencies over resource and environmental policies.

The introduction (Chapters 1 and 2) explains details of the research approaches and provides readers with a useful framework to capture the distinctive characteristic of environmental policy, that is, “latecomer public policy.” It denotes that environmental policy emerged only after development policies and agencies were established and implemented. Specifically, environmental problems such as pollution and waste problems became serious under rapid industrialization, and were then publicly recognized and addressed. Due to this “latecomer” feature, environmental policy was “often regarded as a subfield of other public policies, that is, public health, labor safety, social welfare, and even industrial policies” in the early stage of policy formulation (p. 17). Subsequently, the government tried to consolidate environmental policy as a new domain in public policy, and it required coordination and negotiation among existing government agencies as well as various stakeholders with their own bureaucratic, political, and business interests. In such a situation, environmental policy was often limited or less prioritized than development policies.

In Chapter 1, Terao Tadayoshi and Funatsu Tsuruyo also point out that the term “the environment” in the field of governance and regulation initially referred to environmental problems stemming from industrialization, such as pollution and waste problems. However, its scope has since gradually expanded to include a long-existing problem of natural resource depletion, which had been separately classified as a resource management issue. Moreover, since the 1980s, natural resource conservation has become increasingly discussed in the framework of global environmental issues, including global warming. Consequently, the contemporary definition of “the environment” comprises not only environmental problems, but also natural resource management and conservation.

The volume provides two case studies about Southeast Asia (Chapters 5 and 6). Chapter 5 focuses on pollution control policy in Thailand and Chapter 6 on water management in Southeast Asian countries. In Chapter 5, Funatsu demonstrates how Thailand’s “dual system” of pollution control was established and developed during the past 50 years. The “dual system” refers to the shared responsibility of controlling industrial pollution between development and environmental agencies, namely, the Ministry of Industry (MOI) and the National Environmental Board (NEB).

The system was adopted in 1975—when the first environmental law was promulgated in Thailand—and it placed the primary authority with the MOI. Although the environmental law was revised in 1992 aiming to strengthen the NEB, the authority of development agencies continues to exceed the authority of environmental agencies. Funatsu discusses how such fragmented administration system has hindered effective pollution control in Thailand through the case of the Map Ta Phut air pollution dispute.

In Chapter 6, Sato Jin examines the history of interdependent relations between the state and society over irrigation management in Southeast Asian countries. He uses the concept of “compulsion to maintain”—meaning herein a constant need for maintaining infrastructure (i.e., irrigation system) to secure stable and long-term access to water resources—to explain the reasons behind the long-term involvement of the state and local people in managing large-scale irrigation facilities “regardless of their will” (p. 105). Specifically, Sato points out that “communities invite the state into the locale as mediators of resource conflicts, which have become difficult to resolve locally” (p. 119), and once irrigation facilities are installed by the state, “local communities continuously rely on the state for preventative, productive, and protective water works” (p. 119) due to the technical necessity to maintain the facilities. Such interdependent state—society relations in water management provide a contrast to the cases of forests and mines where local communities often stood against the state over the resources.

The volume’s empirical and in-depth view on environmental policy formation is the result of several decades of field research and the accumulation of intensive discussions among Japanese scholars over a long period. Although the volume only shows two cases of Southeast Asia, the concepts and ideas particularly those presented in Chapters 1 and 2 will be useful and applicable to many other cases in Southeast Asian countries. Furthermore, the cases of China, the United States, and Germany tell us how great powers—the investing and donor countries to Southeast Asia—have formulated and developed environmental policy in their own countries. Through these chapters, the readers can anticipate how the views of the donor governments on environmental policy at home may affect Southeast Asia’s environment and society through their investment and development assistance projects. In this sense, the volume could have included the Japan case.

This book does provide meaningful insights into how environment policy has emerged and evolved. However, what appears to be lacking is sufficient explanation of previous literatures, based on which the framework and ideas in this volume have been developed. In Chapter 2, Terao refers to some theoretical arguments in development and environmental studies, but that alone will not be enough to grasp the whole picture of how the concept of “latecomer public policy” and other ideas were formulated based on a wide variety of scholarly works. One reason for the insufficiency in literature review could be due to ideas constructed largely based on previous research and other Japanese scholars’ works, which are yet to be published in English (e.g., Terao 2013; 2015). To make the volume’s arguments more persuasive, the introductory chapters could have

listed more in-depth details on Japanese scholarly works on environmental studies. Although such details may be lengthy, it will help readers to fully comprehend the basis of the volume's insightful viewpoint.

Morishita Akiko 森下明子

College of International Relations, Ritsumeikan University

References

- Hall, Derek; Hirsch, Philip; and Li, Tania Murray. 2011. *Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Hirsch, Philip; and Warren, Carol, eds. 1998. *The Politics of Environment in Southeast Asia: Resources and Resistance*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Ross, Michael L. 2001. *Timber Booms and Institutional Breakdown in Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Terao Tadayoshi 寺尾忠能, ed. 2013. *Kankyo seisaku no keisei katei: "Kaihatsu to kankyo" no shiten kara 環境政策の形成過程——「開発と環境」の視点から* [The formation of environmental policies in the process of economic development: From the viewpoint of "development and the environment"]. Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO.
- , ed. 2015. *"Kohatsusei" no poritikusu: Shigen kankyo seisaku no keisei katei 「後発性」のポリテイクス——資源・環境政策の形成過程* [Politics of "latecomer": Policy formation of resource and environmental policy]. Chiba: Institute of Developing Economies, JETRO.