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Land Use Transformation Process in Chachoengsao Province, Thailand

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Abstract

Chachoengsao province is to the east of Bangkok Metropolitan where has been promoted to be a new core industrial space according to the 5th National Economic and Social Development Plan. This province has been a significant area where supplied food resources for surrounded areas. The objectives of this research are to study the land use transformation process of Chachoengsao province and the impact of the transformations. Nowadays, it is becoming a successful location regarding the increasing of industrial investments. Consequently, the economic structure of Chachoengsao has been shifted from agriculture to industrial. Land use also has been changed rapidly.

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Keywords: Land use; transformation; industrial; agriculture

1. Introduction

Bangkok, which is a primate city, was expanding along the main transportation routes linking its environ and became Bangkok Metropolitan Region (BMR). BMR facilitated the growth of trading, services and industries;

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consequently, economic activities concentrated in this region.

The rapid population growth led to the allocation of limited land for economic activities and residential areas. Therefore, land prices rocketed and immigrant workers had to bear high cost of living. A crowded area gave rise to environmental and health care problems. Entrepreneurs were looking for new locations close to main transportation routes and deep-sea ports. According to the 3rd National Economic and Social Development Plan, the government promoted new kinds of industry such as natural gas. However, the rapid growth of Bangkok caused inequality in terms of economy and social development because main industries and services are clustered in this city while main activities of other provinces related to agriculture.

Based on the 5th National Economic and Social Development Plan (1982-1986), the government aimed to develop other regions so that they would be developed as equally as Bangkok. The government designed a specific development plan for each region depending on its potential. One of these regions was three provinces on the east coasts. Chonburi, Rayong and Chachoengsao covered about 8.3 million rai. The government planned to 1) specify the use of land, 2) offer incentives to entrepreneurs to invest in major industries, 3) provide infrastructure to encourage investment, 4) provide training on skill development and public health services, 5) set up measures for environmental control and 6) map out a master plan to develop areas on the east coast (NESDB, 1981).

These three provinces or the Eastern Seaboard Region could attract both local and foreign investors because of its strategic location. This region is only 75-170 kilometers away from Bangkok, borders the Northeast, which can supply labor and raw materials and equipped with a deep-sea port, Laem Chabang Port. Plus, it is not far from an international airport, Suvarnabhumi Airport. And it is directly linked to the Motorway (Bangkok-Chonburi), the Bang Na-Bang Phli- Bang Pakong Expressway, Hi-speed Train (Bangkok-Rayong) and Bi-rail project. According to the Eastern Seaboard Plan, Laem Chabang is designated for medium and small industries while the area between Sattahip and Rayong is for major industries such as petrochemical industry, gas refinery and steel. Since, this area is adjacent to Sattahip Port, which can facilitate the import of raw materials and the seaport of products. Industrial development needs accessibility advantages both time and cost of industrial linkages on Bangkok Metropolitan Eastern corridor (Panitchapakdi, 2001), see Fig. 1.

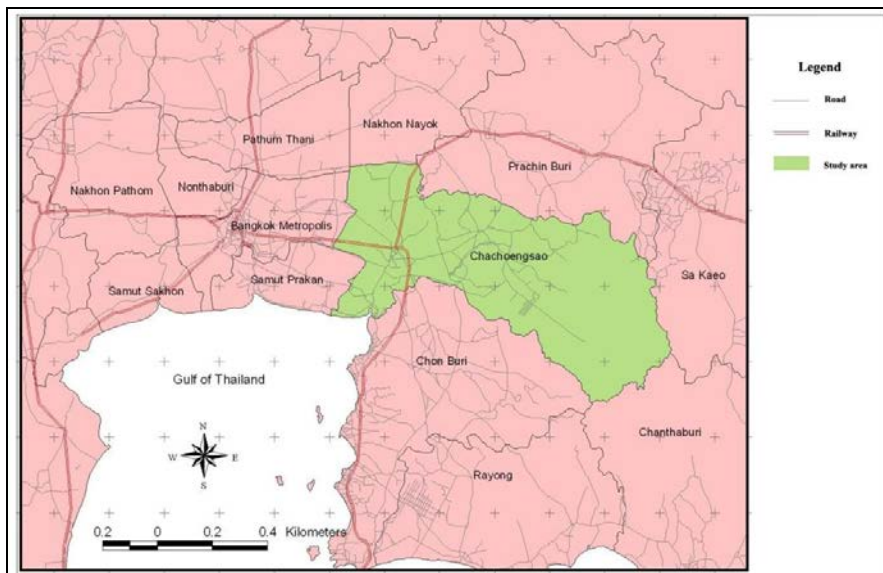


Fig. 1. Location of Chachoengsao Province

After the implementation of the plan, the Eastern Seaboard Region is the second largest industrial area of the country after Bangkok Metropolitan Region. The registered investment of the East including the Eastern Seaboard

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