

**ASSEMBLER-SUPPLIER RELATIONS IN THE KOREAN AUTO INDUSTRY:
AN ECONOMIC SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**

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I. INTRODUCTION

The automobile industry is strategically significant in the manufacturing sectors of several advanced and newly industrialised nations. The industry's growth stages usually represent the general level of industrial competitiveness since one assembled auto represents the growth of several relevant industries supplying its parts. At the same time, the industry also accounts for a significant portion of the employment in a nation. Thus, as fears of declining industrial competitiveness in the U.S. were raised in the 1980s in contrast to the opposite phenomenon in Japan, many studies paid primary attention to the contrasting performances of the automobile industries in both nations (Cusumano, 1985; Dertouzos *et.al.*, 1989; Womack *et.al.*, 1990). According to those studies, assembler-supplier relations is considered as one crucial determinant in shaping the growth of the industry.