Waseda Institute Of Asia-Pacific Studies Colloquium Series
Series on Economy and Social Change in Asian Cities

Middle-Class City-Making:
Rail Megaprojects and Uneven Urban Development in Bangkok

ABSTRACT

Rail megaprojects are central to Bangkok's urban transformation, yet their relationship with middle-class city-making remains contested. Focusing on the BTS SkyTrain, this presentation examines how infrastructure investment reconfigures mobility, residential development and consumption spaces. Drawing on qualitative interviews, it demonstrates how differentiated access and divergent aspirations among lower and upper middle-class residents complicate assumptions of a coherent middle-class urban agenda. Situated within Thailand's unstable political landscape, the analysis reveals the tensions between planning ambitions and everyday experiences. It argues that rail-led urban development produces selective connectivity and reinforces socio-spatial divisions, exposing the contradictions underpinning the making of a middle-class city.



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