

# Urbanization and Changing Settlement Patterns in Peri-urban Bangkok

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## Abstract

This article presents findings from a research on "Urbanization and Changes of Settlement Patterns in the Peri-urban Areas of Bangkok Metropolis" completed in mid 2008. The research objectives were to investigate population dynamics, and changes of economic base and settlement patterns in peri-urban Bangkok; and to obtain an understanding on existing conditions of urbanization. To analyze how the peri-urban areas have transformed over the year 1988 > 2007; statistical data on population and Gross Provincial Products were used together with direct field observations and interpretation of satellite images from Landsat TM 5. The empirical evidences gathered in 2008 highlighted that peri-urban Bangkok has been in "urbanization" stage whereas the metropolitan region as a whole was in the stage of "suburbanization" indicating by the high rate of population growth in peri-urban areas, by transforming economic base to non-farming economy, and by rapid expansion of built-up areas. The expansion of built-up areas reflects the changes of settlement patterns being characterized as "concentration" by increasing density in the eastern side of the Chao Phraya River; and as "de-concentration" to new areas by clustering around provincial centers, along major roads and rivers, and sprawling in agricultural areas. So far, these changes have generated a number of problems in the peri-urban areas of the Bangkok Metropolis. Recommendations were to encourage planning agencies to use urban planning strategies in promoting agglomeration of settlements that would help alleviating problems from insufficient provision of basic services. The need to improve local government staffs' coordination skills regarding urban management and administration was also suggested. Moreover, each province should develop database system for urban development planning so that decisions on the prioritization of problems, problem solving and spatial planning strategies can be made in an efficient way.

**Key words:** urbanization; changing settlement pattern; peri-urban Bangkok