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Abstract

“Recent Tendencies in Thai Social Structure”

The recent political crisis is an indication of deep changes in Thai social structure. While the rural population has advanced from subsistence agriculture to farming and agribusiness, large migrant populations have invaded the cities, a lower and an upper middle class have emerged, new entrepreneurs have risen into the elites, and the role of the old establishment has changed. These changes were partly driven by the integration of Thailand into the global economy and transnational formations. Current Thai social structure has to be understood against the background of historically earlier structures and within the framework of the globalizing world. From this double perspective, the research project presented here enquires into the transformation of ranks and classes in Thai society into local, national and transnational milieus. The project applies a qualitative method aiming at people's habitus in different settings and regions of Thailand.