

**IN WHOSE INTEREST? A CRITICAL APPROACH TO
SOUTHEAST ASIA'S URBAN TRANSPORT DYNAMICS**

Craig Townsend

MEDes (Planning), University of Calgary
BA, University of British Columbia

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I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

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Craig Townsend

ABSTRACT

During recent decades, urban transport systems in Southeast Asia's industrialising high growth economies were transformed. The ownership and use of privately-owned cars and motorcycles grew in all cities, simultaneous to the introduction of new forms of public transportation including rail rapid transit in the larger metropolises. While these cities all experienced dynamic change, the relative rate and direction of the changes to urban transport systems varied greatly as did levels of success. Singapore emerged as a highly efficient transit metropolis whilst Bangkok and other cities gained notoriety as some of the world's great traffic disasters. Why these differences emerged, particularly given a regional and global context of increasing interaction and exchange of ideas and of capital flows, presents a compelling question largely unanswered by previous research. A review of the general state of knowledge about urban transport worldwide reveals fundamental disagreements over basic questions such as the social value of motorisation, the relative merits of specific modes and technologies, and prescriptions for change. However, there is a general consensus that interest groups or rent-seekers influence urban transport, which can not be understood in solely technical or value-free terms. A literature review focused on Southeast Asian cities finds that in contrast to theoretical perspectives on cities of the industrialised world, there is less acknowledgement of interests and values and more emphasis on instrumental knowledge which can be used to address immediate problems such as rapid growth in motorisation, traffic congestion, and pollution. Questions such as who wins and who loses from changes to urban transport systems are not systematically examined in the existing literature on Southeast Asian cities. In order to address this gap, a case study analysis of three key cities, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, and Singapore is undertaken. This analysis utilises policy and planning documents, monographs and academic works, newspapers and archival materials, discussions with key informants, and participant observation, to reveal the significant actors and processes which shape urban transport. The study finds that the presence or absence of actors and complexions of interests in the development of urban land, urban transport equipment, infrastructure construction and operation, and local environmental improvements are linked to specific urban transport outcomes. The findings provide a basis for future research, particularly in cities of the developing world characterised by economic growth, rapid motorisation of urban transport systems, and substantial inequalities of wealth and power.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Asian Development Bank	ADB
Area Licensing Scheme	ALS
Area Traffic Control	ATC
Bangkok Expressway Company Limited	BECL
Bangkok International Banking Facility	BIBF
Bangkok Metropolitan Administration	BMA
Bangkok Traffic Management Program	BTMP
Bangkok Transit System Corporation	BTSC
Build-Operate-Transfer	BOT
Central Business District	CBD
Central Intelligence Agency	CIA
Central Provident Fund	CPF
Certificate of Entitlement	COE
Corporate Debt Restructuring Committee	CDRC
Crown Property Bureau	CPB
Dewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur (Kuala Lumpur City Hall)	DBKL
Economic Planning Unit	EPU
Electronic Road Pricing	ERP
Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority	ETA
General Motors	GM
Gross Domestic Product	GDP
Gross Regional Product	GRP
Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia	HICOM
Housing Development Board	HDB
International Monetary Fund	IMF
Industrial Estate Authority of Thailand	IEAT
Institute for Transport and Development Policy	ITDP
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	IBRD
International Monetary Fund	IMF
Japan Bank for International Cooperation	JBIC
Japan International Cooperation Agency	JICA
Kampung Improvement Project	KIP
Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau	KfW
Keretapi Tanah Melayu Berhad (Malaysian National Railways)	KTMB
Kuala Lumpur City Centre	KLCC
Kuala Lumpur Second International Airport	KLIA
Land Transport Authority	LTA
Light Rail Transit	LRT
Mass Rapid Transit (Singapore)	MRT
Mass Rapid Transit Corporation (Singapore)	MRTC
Metropolitan Rapid Transit Authority (Bangkok)	MRTA

Multimedia Development Corporation	MDC
Multimedia Super-Corridor	MSC
Newly Industrialised Country	NIC
National Economic and Social Development Board	NESDB
National Housing Authority	NHA
New Economic Policy	NEP
North-South Expressway	NSE
Office of the Commission for the Management of Road Traffic	OCMRT
Overseas Development Assistance	ODA
Overseas Development Authority (UK)	ODA
Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund	OECF
People's Action Party	PAP
Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional	PROTON
Privy Purse Bureau	PPB
Projek Leburaya Raya Utara-Seletan Berhad	PLUS
Projek Usahasama Transit Ringan Automatik (LRT System II)	PUTRA
Ringgit (Malaysian currency)	RM
Singapore Improvement Trust	SIT
Singapore Mass Rapid Transit	SMRT
Sistem Transit Aliran Ringan Sdn Bhd (LRT System I)	STAR
State Railway of Thailand	SRT
Standing Advisory Committee on Trunk Road Assessment	SACTRA
United Engineers (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd	UEM
United Malays National Organisation	UMNO
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Environment Programme	UNEP
Urban Transport Planning	UTP
Vehicle Kilometres Travelled	VKT
Vehicle Quota System	VQS

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NOTES ON CURRENCIES, THAI TRANSLITERATION, AND NAMES

Monetary figures cited in the thesis have been left in the local currencies, rather than converted into a common currency. During the regional economic crisis of 1997-8, all of the Southeast Asian currencies cited in this thesis lost substantial value in a short period of time, but have remained stable for the last few years. As a general reference, against the US dollar the pre-crisis, 1995 values of the Thai Baht, Malaysia Ringgit, and Singapore Dollar were 25 Baht, 2.5 Ringgit, and 1.4 Dollars. In 2002 the values were approximately 44 Baht, 3.8 Ringgit, and 1.8 Dollars.

I have attempted to use the most common transliterations of Thai names and places, rather than adhering to one of the formal transliteration schemes.

Thais and Malaysians are commonly identified by their first names, and I have therefore followed this practice in the text. However, I have not adhered to Thai referencing convention because I have listed Thai authors alphabetically by their last names in the bibliography. This was done in order to preserve consistency with the referencing of sources from Malaysia and Singapore.