

PERSISTENCE AND GENTRIFICATION IN RATTANAKOSIN, BANGKOK

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the changing use patterns of public space and the perceptual difference between the two urban situations: 'persistence' and 'gentrification'. The chosen locations of the case studies are in Saochingcha and Banglamphu (particularly its now-famous Khaosan Road) districts, where living connections within the past coexist with practices of the urban transformation. Here, the paper discusses the historical background of Rattanakosin, its transformation since 1782 with an emphasis on the recent changes (after 1982) by focusing upon the relationship between use patterns of public space and the pace of urban form. It presents an observation on the use (or practice) of public spaces driven by global forces and the associate values system which enhances everyday life within the two distinct examples of persistence and gentrification in Rattanakosin. The spatial and social conditions in both districts are also examined as well as the pace, the boundary and the spatial practice of the urban transformation are discussed in this paper. As a result, the comparative study of these two examples not only led us to confirm the factors which contribute to these differences, but also led us to define the differences of use patterns and the associate values within those public spaces.

INTRODUCTION

Through the 1980s rapid economic growth, regional and urban planners were compelled to reconceptualise the metropolis to acknowledge the spatial dynamics of the economy, labour force activity and land-use change (Askew, 2002). Since 1982, just after Rattanakosin bicentenary celebration, it has been confronting significant transformations. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Thailand Authority Tourism (TAT) projected Rattanakosin as the main tourist destination, which led to the establishment of several state investments. The architectural heritage such as palaces and temples of Rattanakosin is also an important factor that appealed and contributed to the tourists come to Bangkok to visit the famous monuments. These aspects added to the prominent image of Rattanakosin. Apart from this, intensive tourist industry directly effected rapid urban transformation of Bangkok in the past three decades. In this context, urbanization and the new notion of globalization heavily influenced Bangkok that is clearly indicated by the sense of urban transformation. Its consequences generated the new emerging forms of contemporary communities in Thailand and the new urban phenomena.

This paper presents and discusses the changing use patterns of public space by comparing the perceptual difference between the two urban situations: 'persistence' and 'gentrification'. The chosen locations of the case studies are in Saochingcha and Banglamphu (particularly its now-famous Khaosan Road) districts, where living connections within the past coexist with practices of the urban transformation. These two case studies are obviously different examples to identify the relationship between public spaces and their practices within the context of Rattanakosin old town. The two districts are separated by Rachadamnoen Avenue (the most prominent axis in Rattanakosin). However, the two districts experienced different transformations, the changing use patterns of public space in Saochingcha district is driven by local practices, whereas that in Banglamphu district was driven by globalization. What actually is the striking difference of socio-spatial patterns

between Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts? By choice, that investigation did not indicated the problems or seek the solutions. Rather, it engaged directly and openly with many ways of thinking forms of their practices, encouraging a more expansive vision of socio-spatial patterns within the new emerging forms of contemporary communities in Thailand. As a result, the comparative study of these two examples not only led us to confirm the factors which contribute to these differences, but also led us to define the differences of use patterns and the associate value within those public spaces.

The main body of the paper consists of four sections. The first section explains a brief review of theoretical frameworks regarding the urban transformation that related the globalization and localization systems. Its reflections contributed to the emerging of urban phenomena, 'persistence' and 'gentrification'. The second section describes the historical background of Rattanakosin and its transformations since 1782 with an emphasis on the recent changes (after 1982), by focusing upon the relationship between the use patterns of public space and their practices within the case studies. The implications of persistence and gentrification on changing use patterns of public space in Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts as revealed in the actual socio-spatial patterns are discussed in the third section, and finally conclusions are drawn in the fourth section.

Global and Local

In order to understand the changing use patterns of public space in Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts, first I will be necessary to look at the urban development and the transformation of cities. A good account can be found in *The Transformation of Cities: Urban Theory and Urban Life* by David C. Thorns (2002), which describes about globalization that has been a key to transformation in the last three decades. Globalization is not a product, something that has now happened but an interrelated set of processes, economic, social, political, cultural and ecological, that are continuing to shape the world in which we live. For some, global processes have impacted upon the local in ways that have reduced our ability as individuals, families and communities to shape our lives. For others, resistance is still possible and in fact a very significant part of the global world (David, 2002). After considering the point argued by David, it can be said that the urban transformation works within the two systems - globalization and localization system. I would argue that these systems contributed to the emergence of the urban phenomena in Rattanakosin that consists of the two current situations - persistence and gentrification.

Viewing the current academic and broader discourse on cities, term *gentrification* has become a valuable lens through which to examine a variety of intersecting phenomena in a city and/or neighborhood context. In *Gentrification* by Loretta, Tom, and Elvin (2008) describe stage models of gentrification. In their book, the authors found the asserted that one of the reasons due to which stage models of gentrification were developed to cope with the temporal variations in gentrification that were already apparent in the 1970s. Gentrification stage models were designed to represent gentrification in an orderly, temporal, sequential progression. Risk is the center stage in these models, for in the first stage or pioneer stage, risk-oblivious households are seen to move into risky neighborhoods. The pioneer gentrifier works in cultural professions, is risk oblivious, wants to pursue a non-conformist lifestyle, wants a socially mixed environment, and rehabilitates his or her property using sweat equity. Then more risk-conscious mainstream professionals move in, some with young families. Realtors and developers start to show an interest, and as property prices increase the original residents might be pushed out. Over time, older and more affluent and conservative households move in, attracted to what is now safe investment. Eventually, gentrification is seen to stabilize at an endpoint of mature gentrification. In addition, Loretta, Tom, and Elvin point out that gentrification is seen as a positive result of a healthy real estate market, and 'the market' is always understood as the solutions, not a problem. In short, the interurban scale to which the expansion of gentrification worldwide, is directly related to the rise of service-based economies and the shifting functions of central cities.

Although urban is usually a dynamic system that can be seen in term of gentrification, but the term of persistence also occurred parallel into the gentrification context. David (2002) describes that the urban resistance in many cities has formed around the conflict between global and local agendas. The incorporation of cities into the global economy exerts new pressure upon land values and uses and may thus force locals out of these areas, as we know in term of gentrification. This forced displacement has led to various struggles. However, David suggests that the strength of the local communities and neighbourhoods builds a social cohesion and a clear strategy. This would further alter the outcome of urban development successfully and create more acceptable solutions for the present residents, thus modifying the impact of globalization upon their locality and the social movements as the route to political power. In this paper I would use the persistence conceptual opposition of gentrification within the localization and globalization systems that is reflected on the representations of place as a framework for understanding the changing use patterns and meaning of public space in Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts (see Figure 1).

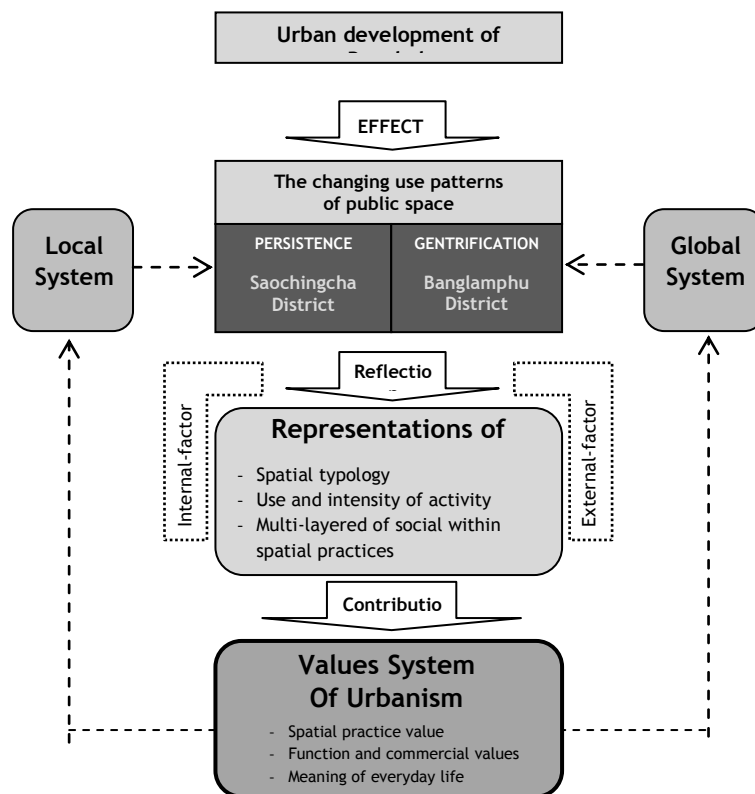


Figure 1 A conceptual framework for understanding the changing use patterns and meaning of public space in Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts of Rattanakosin

The Changing Use Patterns of Public Space and Representations of Place

The changing use patterns of public space in Rattanakosin can be described through the urban development which involves the two different force systems: the local and global systems. Both systems have influenced the representations of place and social practices in which the communities in Rattanakosin have been structured. These different use pattern systems contributed to in part shaping and transforming the urban morphology of Bangkok that can also be a new emerging form of socio-spatial patterns. The result of which generated the current urban situations in Rattanakosin: the persistence and gentrification situations.

The evolution of urban development of Bangkok can be generally divided into four stages chronologically; however, each stage overlaps, and none of them has completely superseded the previous one (Cohen 1985; Kasama 2004). Kasama and Davisi (2008: 176) describe that “the first stage began in 1782 when Bangkok, a village along a waterway, was established to be the capital city of Siam (the former name of Thailand). The beginning of the second stage was marked by the shift from water-based settlement to land-based developments in 1857, when a new urban element, the “Western Street”, was first introduced, and was subsequently followed by tramways and railway lines. The third stage began after WWII and accelerated in the 1960s when Bangkok primarily developed industrial activities and modern ways of living. The fourth stage has been unfolding since the 1980s, when capitalism and globalization began to saturate the capital city”.

Further in this paper, I draw on the above-mentioned four stages to examine the use patterns of public space in Rattanakosin by focusing on Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts in order to understand its transformation. I will further look at the type of spatial activities and the hierarchy of socio-spatial uses that are associated with local practices in each stage. The three distinct categories of spatial activities can be defined into three main types: necessary activities (transport & commercial activities); optional activities (recreational activities); and social activities (Gehl, 1998). The hierarchical use of public space could be defined into three main types: the community level; the city level; and the international level.

1782, Bangkok as Water-based Settlement

Rattanakosin was founded by King Rama I of the Chakkri Dynasty in 1782 and always a centre with rich culture heritage. It has been located at the eastern bank of the Chao Phraya River and surrounded by Banglamphu and Ong Ang canals which had already been dug in the Thon Buri Dynasty (Takashi, 1993). Rattanakosin started as an aquatic area of life that was named as the Venice of the East. Most of residents lived an agrarian lifestyle along intricate networks of waterways. Water was their source of life. The waterways not only facilitated everyday life, agricultural activities, trading activities, and cultural and spiritual beliefs, but they also provided the primary means of transportation and communication, lacing many local communities together (Kasama and Davisi, 2008: 177). Generally, these settlements were laid out densely along the waterways with their practices.

By the early period of Rattanakosin, the use patterns of public space between the two area studies: Saochingcha and Banglamphu could be divided into two distinct main types of activities, the necessary activities (transport & commercial activities) and social activities. The local used marketplaces for trading and exchange of goods and these commercial activities played an important role of necessary activities in agrarian village life. The marketplaces during this period were land markets and floating markets (Kiat et al., 1982). The floating markets were generally located at the junctions of the crisscrossed waterways such as Khlong Banglamphu Floating Market. The canal vendors used boats as mobile commercial spaces, and carried and sold everyday household goods and agricultural products along water circuitry. “When many of them gathered together at a specified time, usually very early in the morning, they transformed a waterway, which was normally used for transportation into a transitory floating market” (Kasama and Davisi, 2008: 177). Furthermore, because of the land marketplaces relied on the waterways for conveying and loading goods, they were often arranged in the areas close to the piers and boat-landings, where the land system met the waterways (Kasama and Davisi, 2008). Hence, the river and canals played an important role in necessary activities with local practices.

There were several religious institutes such as Buddhist temples, a Hindu temple, Thai Muslim mosques and Chinese shrines constructed within Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts, which were used as active community centers for vibrant social practices and traditions. In addition, the temple grounds and the village grounds were also used as periodic land marketplaces where temporary stalls were assembled and mobile vendors gathered temporarily transforming the ground and pathways into commercial space (Kasama and Davisi, 2008). Hence, it can be suggested that the relationship between the use patterns of public space and local practices during this period were closely with the waterways and the religious

institutes. These places served the two hierarchical of use of the public space, i.e. the city and community levels.

1857, Bangkok as a Civilized City: From Water-based Settlement to Land-based Development

From 1782 until the reign of Rama IV (r.1851-1868), the traditional canal and river-based transport infrastructure of Bangkok supported the commercial expansion of the post-Bowring period, serving to link the provinces to the capital and the various districts of the city (Askew, 2002). The Choa Phraya River played a vital role as a gateway for maritime trade. The river strengthened the role of the capital city as a center of international and regional markets (Kasama and Davisi, 2008). In 1857, as a consequence of the British Bowring Treaty in 1855, the first sign of a formal land-based development had been introduced in Bangkok. This new development was based on Western idea of street, wide enough for vehicles and appropriate for international commercial patterns under the colonial influences, connecting the port with the city (Nid, 1982), which soon followed by the construction of railway lines and tramways (Kasama and Davisi, 2008). This rapid development resulted in the new settlements along the newly constructed road networks. Hence, it can be argued that the road was an important factor for urban transformation and morphology of Bangkok.

Since the land-based development began in 1857, the function of waterways as the main arteries for communication and transportation was gradually replaced by road (Korff, 1992). As part of the Ratchadamnoen Road construction, the wide avenue of Ratchadamnoen Klang separated the Saochingcha district from Banglamphu district. Thus, the relationship between the use patterns of public space and local practices were also gradually transformed. This also affected the use patterns of transport activities from the water-ways to the land-ways. Nevertheless, Kasama and Davisi (2008) argue that although many new roads were constructed, the everyday life of the commoners was still based largely on water transport and local trade, mobile street and canal vendors, and traditional marketplaces. Horse carriages were used mainly by the elites, rich merchants, and Westerners whose lifestyles were based more on international trade culture than on local tradition.



Figure 2 A water-based settlement and Land-based development that brought up Bangkok to a modern city.

Source: Chanin Visessittikul, 2004.

By the early twentieth century, physical boundaries of local neighborhoods became more clearly defined by the cutting of the new roads, which began to encircle the old settlements (Askew 1993a). In 1861, the first generation of shop-houses in Bangkok was constructed in a reinterpreted style derived from Penang and Singapore (Naengnoi 1996; Nid 1982). The acceleration of shop-houses development in the reign of Rama V (r.1868-1910) brought up to urban expansion and became a symbol of urban development and have characterized the urban environment of Bangkok ever since (Naengnoi et al., 1991; Santi 1978).

Apart from this transformation at the end of the 1920s, the use patterns of public space in the way of local marketplaces started to move from floating along

the waterways to being more stabilized on land, and movable stalls become more sedentary such as Saochingcha market at Saochincha district and Yot market at Banglamphu district. During 1940s, some shop-houses combined with local marketplaces and other kinds of entertainment activities such as theatres, thus producing the first generation of commercial places in Bangkok (Davisi, 2001) and generated the new forms of socio-spatial patterns ever since. For instance, Saochingcha Market was prospered in the time of Rama V. The market dealt in even metal decorations besides various food articles for everyday life. A gambling house (*rong bon*) was also set up around this market for gatherings. In addition, the owner of the gambling house asked another person to build a theatre to play a Thai opera (*lakhon*) in order to invite more people to the house (Takashi, 1993). During the reign of Rama VI (1910-1925), Khaosan Road in Banglamphu district was the major rice market in Bangkok. Chaloe Krung Theatre adjacent to Saochingcha district was famous for the introduction of new American cinemas during the early twentieth century. Hence, it can be stated that the relationship between the use patterns of public space and local practices during this period not only consisted of the necessary activities (transport & commercial activities) and social activities, but also consisted of the optional activities (recreational activities) that enhanced the quality of life during those times. The hierarchical of use of public space in this period included the community level, city level, and it had also been gradually served to international level.



Figure 3 Left: Rattanakosin c. 1820, showing principal settlement areas; Right: Rattanakosin c. 1910, showing road networks and shop-houses development.
Source: Askew (2002: p.21, 32)

1945, Post-WWII: Bangkok as a Modern City

Rapid urbanization of Bangkok started after the second world war. During 1950s, the waterway networks and agrarian lifestyles were increasingly perceived as something out of date, whereas roads and land-based development presented an image of modernity and progress, introducing a modern automobile-oriented way of life (Kasama and Davisi, 2008). During 1960s, the government policy of modernization was generally tied to large-scale development, thus cooperating with overseas capital and private funds as a powerful mechanism for 'growth' (O'Connor 1989). As the result of rapid urbanization, it led to a depopulation of the inner city area. The nobels also moved their residences from the central part of Rattanakosin to the outlying areas such as Sukhumvit, Phya Thai, Dusit, etc. The old inner city area became readily available for either public buildings or immigrants from both rural areas and abroad. The transition from the 1960s to the

1970s was also seen in the change from a relatively compact city confined in a settled area, to an automobile and road-based city, displacing the former canal-based infrastructure (Askew, 1993b), along with a substantial increase in the number of private cars (Sternstein, 1982). Modern housing estates and department stores, affordable to the middle class, became a signifier of the modern lifestyle in Bangkok. As a sequence the most of use patterns of public space had been changed by modernization concept. For instance, Saochingcha Market was abolished in 1954-5 by BMA and then the site of it was turned to vast space for sports (Takashi, 1993) and it changed again to the city hall plaza in 2002. Likewise, Banglamphu district has increased the level of trading activity and it has also taken on new functions in response to the changing relations of Bangkok with the outside world, notably through international tourism (Askew, 2002). Hence, it would claim that various use of public space during this period not only served to the community level and city level, but also served to international level. The relationship between the use patterns of public space and social practices consisted into three main types of activities, the necessary activities (transport & commercial activities), social activities, and optional activities (recreational activities) in which these activities had been driven by economic competition.

1980s, Bangkok as a Global City

The dimensions of Bangkok transformation from the modern city to the global city started in the 1980s when globalization, marked by the influx of footloose overseas investment, saturated the capital city. Kasama and Davisi (2008) suggest that this period could be seen as a continuation of the third stage, but in a more explosive and massive way. An attempt to become a successful Newly Industrialized Country (NIC) in the early 1990s, which focused on drawing overseas capital into the country, led Bangkok to present itself in such a way as to attract foreign investment.

During this period, an important characteristics of the urban development of Thailand is that 'national integration is based on a center which itself is increasingly integrated into a global network' (Korff, 1996). Since 1982, just after Rattanakosin bicentenary celebration, it has been confronting significant transformations. The BMA and TAT projected Rattanakosin as the main tourist destination, which led to the establishment of several state investments. The architectural heritage such as palaces and temples of Rattanakosin is also an important factor that appealed and contributed to the tourists come to Bangkok to visit the famous monuments. Its results contributed to the rapid urban transformation within the local and global forces systems in which generated the economic boom in Thailand at the end of the 1980s.

It is important to note that the relationship of socio-spatial patterns in Bangkok was not only associated with local system, but also related with global system. Although the present-day public spaces of Rattanakosin can be seen in co-existence with overlapping layers of different stages of urban development, but as described earlier in this paper, the post world war II: Bangkok as a modernization influenced the changing use patterns of public space as we see them now. Hence, I would argue that the use patterns of public space in Rattanakosin consisted of two main types: persistence and gentrification. As a consequence, the present-day use patterns of public space are composed of diverse spaces and activities of various scales, which are driven by local practices and globalization. In the next section, I will investigate and illustrate changing use patterns of public space that found in the everyday life of Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts in the particular ways of persistence and gentrification.

Persistence and Gentrification of Socio-spatial Patterns

To understand how use patterns of public space reflected the representation of places with their practices into the terms of persistence and gentrification within Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts, I used field observation and secondary data. Utilizing thematic analysis to search for distinct use patterns of public space, three major attributes were identified: spatial typology, use and intensity of activity,

and multi-layered of Social within Spatial Practices. These three characteristics can also be reflected to the values system of urbanism in contemporary communities of Thailand.

Spatial typology

Saochingcha district (the area of the old Shiva swing) lies in the eastern section of *Khet* (Districts) Phranakhon, the old commercial center in the reign of Rama V. In administrative terms this settlement area comprises the three subdistricts (*khwaeng*) of Khet Phranakhon named San Chao Pho Sue, Racha Bophit, and Samran Rat. This area was wedged between Rachadamneon Klang Avenue, Ongang Canal, Klong (canal) Lot Racha Bophit, and Khumuengderm Canal. On the other hand, Banglamphu (particularly its now-famous Khaosan Road) lie in the northern section of *Khet* (Districts) Phranakhon, the boundaries of which encompass the old heart of Bangkok. In administrative terms this settlement area comprises the four subdistricts (*khwaeng*) of Khet Phranakhon named Talat Yot, Bowoniwet, Chana Songkhram and Ban Panthom (Askew, 2002). This area was wedged between Banglamphu Canal, Rachadamnoen Klang Avenue, Chaophar Road, and Chaophraya River.

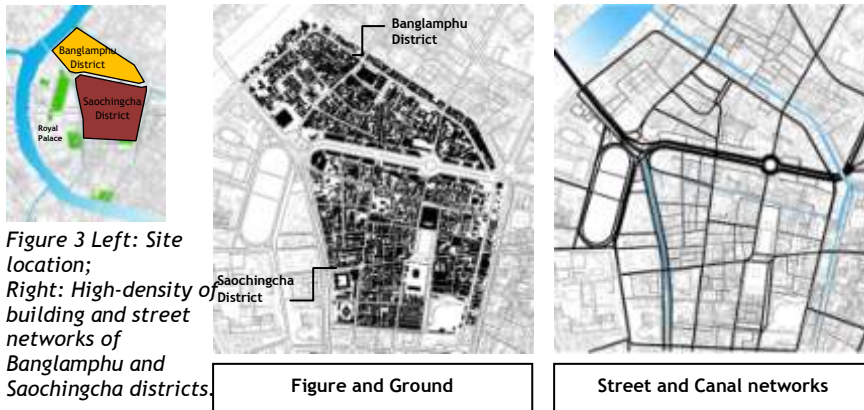


Figure 3 Left: Site location;
Right: High-density of building and street networks of Banglamphu and Saochingcha districts.

Rachadamneon Avenue, a magnificent road was constructed in these areas in 1899-1905, and the wide avenue separated the Banglamphu district from Saochingcha district as well. Nonetheless, these districts had been connected with one main road that runs along the north-south direction between these areas, thus, it consists of three roads: Tanao Road, Fuang Nakhon Road, and Ban Mo Road¹ (Takashi, 1993). Urban blocks in these areas enclosed by the main roads were generally laced by the network of sub-systems, laneways (*Soi*), and alleyways (*Trok*). Some laneways were built by the state, branching out from the main roads; others were initiated by private developments and connected with public streets. Generally, these laneways were straight and wider than the snake-like pedestrian paths as they were developed when automobiles became a part of everyday city life (Kasama and Davisi, 2008). Within these areas, local systems such as Tuk Tuk and motorbike taxi operated, linking the places within the block itself and connecting them with the main streets (Cohen, 1985). Along the lines and at the junctions of the roads in Saochingcha was found a 'neighborhood business strip' in which consisting of small shops, retail shops, a few old restaurants, medical services, catering to the basic needs of the local livelihood. While Banglamphu was often found both a 'neighborhood business strip' and a 'city business strip' which consisting of internet cafés, tourism agencies, pubs and restaurants, convenient stores, etc. These businesses in Banglamphu not only emerged along the side with roads, but also sprawled into the sub-system of the inner block in this area.

Thus by analyzing the above-mentioned processes, I would argue that the public spaces in Banglamphu are composed of diverse spaces of various scales, rather than Saochingcha. For instance, Santichaiprakan Park was founded BMA in order to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the Rama IX in 1999. It is located in the north of Banglamphu district, along the side with Chao Phraya River. In addition,

¹ At that time of the construction the road (1863) was called Fuang Nakhon Raod. But, at present, the road are divided into three sections, named respectively according to the place-names of each section, that is, Tanao or Ban Tanao, Fuang Nakhon, and Ban Mo (Takashi, 1993).

there is also included Phra Sumeru Fortress that was recently renovated to a part of this park and became to a landmark in this area. Khaosan Road also played on the major public space of this area that consisted multi-function along the road. On the other hand, public spaces in Saochingcha are not composed the diverse space as found in Banglamphu, rather it consists of obvious spaces such as the City hall plaza, Saranrom Park, temples, and San Chao Phor Sua (the Chinese shrine). Here, it would claim that in Banglamphu district not only uses the Santichaiprakan Park is a public space but also uses Khaosan Road and many alleyways as a public space with their practices. In short, the spatial typology of Banglamphu associated with their practices into various scales, rather than Saochingcha. Likewise, the network of sub-systems especially the alleyways that have been gentrifying upon the commercial value were also found in Banglamphu, rather than Saochingcha.

Use and intensity of activity

Banglamphu was famous for its market and a number of key products and specialist shops such as the traditional medicines, silverware, etc. By the late 1980s Banglamphu was described by the Lonely Planet guide as a 'World Traveler Centre' (Cummings, 1987). Viewed from tourist web sites, Banglamphu today is widely represented as an international space, a gathering place for young budget travelers with all the facilities they need: restaurants, internet cafés, travel agencies, trinkets and accommodation (Askew, 2002). These activities bring the change and gentrification of Banglamphu to support these demands. The guesthouses that once confined to Khaosan Road, expanded further north across Banglamphu Canal, as well as eastward behind Rachadamnoen Avenue and west around Wat (Temple) Chana Songkhram to encompass the area of Trok Kaichae and Trok Khieniwat. In addition, as a leisure precinct Banglamphu has undergone considerable change towards commercialization, with specialist pubs and music bars emerging on Khaosan Road and also sprawled to the network of sub-systems in this area. The mobile vendors usually used laneways as the wall between alleyways for hanging the goods. The use of public space along the Khaosan Road not only by several mobile/street vendors. The use of public space were found on the main type of social activities along Rachadamnoen Avenue, the wide footpath that they used the area into various functions along the boulevard, and so on. The mobile vendors in Saochingcha was found around the BMA gate. They can be seen them as dispersed through the transport network systems. Several mobile/street vendors have been using footpath along other street networks in Banglamphu area for their daily trading activities.



It is interesting to highlight here that there are many interesting activities take place on Banglamphu district. The function of the community in that area is in continuous thus, continuously and rapidly changing its objective through time, while Saochingcha has gradually changed. Here, I would found that Banglamphu district as the symbolic dimensions of consumption in Rattanakosin, while Saochingcha as the symbolic dimensions of reminiscence of old Bangkok.



Khaosan Road at Banglamphu district

Bamrung-Mueng Road at Saochingcha district

Figure 4 the use patterns of public space in Banglamphu and Saochingcha districts

Multilayered of Social within Spatial Practices

After the post-WWII marked a turning point in the history of the Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts, as it did for many settlements and immigrants in Bangkok. After the war the population rose dramatically, while wealthier people moved away from the area (Askew, 2002). This moment of original inhabitants generated various groups of people within Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts. The intensive of tourist industry also played on a major key of increasing a number of tourists especially the young foreign backpacker tourists that they as an important role of changing use patterns of public space in Banglamphu district.

Saochingcha was much crowded with new immigrants from rural areas and others that the amenity of residences in this area remarkably deteriorated. The area from San Chao Pho Sua to Soachingcha intersection on the west side of the road were reserved for the palaces² in olden days, and then was turned to be the laneways and the tenements in the course of time, which showed a vital aspect of urbanization, that is, from a palace to common houses. It has been argued by served studies earlier that multi-groups of people contribute to multi-uses of public spaces. Here, by using the two cases—Saochingcha and Banglamphu districts. I have tried to demonstrate that in Banglamphu area, the old palaces are now converted to shops/cafés serving its new urbanized users but still have physical connection with the past. Whereas, in Saochingcha area the earlier royal residences are now demolished and gave way to the tenements area for the middle-class population. The realtors on realizing the increased potential in financial terms of these old palaces in Banglamphu area, gentrified them as the contemporary concept of living/rising the built heritage. This place later became a sought after area with a perfect mix of the old city and modern lifestyle with several pubs and restaurants, several cafés and restaurants also. Hold art exhibitions, thus making them plus of major appeal to several people. This being another example of multi-layered of social activities, multi-layered of spaces, and multi-layered of times within contemporary communities of Thailand.

Conclusions

After considering the theoretical reviews and the two distinct case studies of the use patterns of public space within urban transformation, I would argue that the set of processes, economic, social, political, cultural, and ecological have been a key to urban transformation of Thailand. It can also be said that globalization is one of the most effective system to accelerated urban gentrification. Likewise, the tourism industry has a significant part in economy reinforcement and urban transformation of Bangkok. Since 1982, Bangkok has developed as a global city in which tourism played an important role, which resulted in rapid economic growth of Thailand. The intensive tourism industry bring the change and gentrification of Banglamphu district. Here, I would extend this concern with how people make space for themselves through everyday practice and imaginative spatial tactics. The changing use patterns of public space in Banglamphu contributed to emergence of new values system effects associated with their places. Thus, public spaces and urban form of Banglamphu became valuable not only in the economic and functional values, but also as symbolic and sign of place-making for backpackers. It is interesting to note that those spaces in the alleyways of Banglamphu became more meaningful in different ways in which they have a new use with their practices. Nonetheless, although gentrification has positive in their example but at the same time Banglamphu lost its original population and was replaced by new users uses. The local character of Saochingcha district shows ‘persistence’ as represented into use patterns of public space that are associated with their practices as an everyday life.

The investigations reveal that new forms of local identity are emerging, based on a complex alchemy resulting from the reaction between the culture of each locale, and the challenges with which contemporary urbanization presents it. It is interesting to highlight here that are many interesting activities take place on Banglamphu district. It shows the existing spatial systems have demonstrated the capacity to adapt and integrate new forms and functions. While Saochingcha shows the use patterns of public space with their practices gradually changed. Here, it

² The palaces in Saochingcha consisted of Prince Sapsat Suphakit’s Palace, Prince Narathip Praphan’s Palace, and Prince Phutharat Thamrongsak’s Palace.

would argue that such changes in Banglamphu have been driven by globalization, while such changes in Saochingcha have been driven by local system. Their common distinctive use patterns of public space can be seen in its spatial typology, use and intensity of activity, and multi-layered of social activities, all of which are reflected on representations of place in which driven by local system and globalization. These processes contributed to values system of urbanism. It would be claimed that the values system of urbanism consists of the functions and commercial values that reflected on the representations of place within global city and became the meaning of everyday life.

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