

DEVELOPMENT OF WATERFRONT COMMUNITY SUSTAINABLE TOURISM PROGRAM IN BANGKOK SUBURBAN AREA: PARTICIPATION PROCESS, PLACE IDENTITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

Research Report



RESEARCHERS

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ABSTRACT

Economic and social changes have happened in Bangkok's suburban areas. Expansion of urban communities have affected environment and people's life in local communities in that the people in the local communities and those in urban communities have become estranged. Once people have become estranged, the relationship is distant. In other words, people in Bangkok suburb live separately with less empathy. Empathy in preserving local environment has vaporized. Therefore, it is not strange that environment in Bangkok suburb has been extremely polluted, and such pollution has negatively affected local people in local communities.

Bang Phai waterfront community on Khlong Om Non at Nonthaburi province is the example of local communities in Bangkok suburb which represents changes in community settlement and fuzzy memories on local culture due to economic and social development. Previously, waterfront communities were significant as rice paddy field and fertile fruit gardens having produced food for Bangkok markets. Waterfront communities were significant as the transportation route transiting local people and commodities to outside world. Currently, waterfront communities have been structurally and socially shrunk while local people have tried to adjust themselves to changing economic and social development with limited agricultural capitals which are agricultural product processing and local sightseeing tour delivery.

This research project wants to connect local and urban with local communities by exploring community identity for waterfront communities in suburban areas in order to support public space for meaningful local recreation based on local participation. It proposes that building relationship and bond between local and urban people needs to understand the identity of waterfront communities in terms of physicality and culture and understanding dynamic of waterfront communities under changing contexts. Therefore, local community development needs to depend upon understanding community identity, changes in people, and local participation.

Researchers analyze Khlong Bang Phai waterfront community at Khlong Om Non. The scope of area study ranges from Wat (temple) Mo Lee to Khlong Bang Phai and from Wat Bang Praek to Bang Rak Yai Municipality Administration. For collecting data, the researchers use surveying the community by car and boat, talking to local people, investigating previous research on local community history, architecture, waterfront community development in Bangkok suburb, and photo analyses, participant observation as tourists, and non-participant observation. For analyzing data, Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) is employed. It is found that the community is strong at multi-cultural heritages, closeness to waterfront, and fruit gardens that several fruits are registered as geographical indicator (GI). However, the community's weakness includes elderly community, difficulty to access to community due to devious road, unclean and polluted environment and canal at tourist spots, and unattractive sight-seeing program. For opportunity, the community could be benefited from local tourism trend among Thai and foreign tourists and trend of consuming organic fruit. However, expansion of urban communities such as residence divisions and condominium and migration of local people according to selling land property can affect the local community to shrink in the long run.

The researchers propose that local tourist program for Khlong Bang Phai community extend tourist spots beyond the community's tourist spots in order to make tourists more understanding about the community's identity connecting to economic and social contexts. The proposed local tourist program starts from Khlong Om Non's entrance to old Bang Yai market. The program proposes the activities for local tourists along the way to the market such as visiting temples and organic fruit gardens. Furthermore, the research proposes to develop public space at Wat Mo Lee which helps supporting the local tourist program, building recreation area for local people, tourists, and urban residents, and facilitating social bonds among local people, tourists, and urban residents.

Water Tourism as the Opportunity for Sustainable Tourism Program for Local Waterfront Community

I. SWOT Analysis

The researchers used the SWOT analysis in order to analyze the strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats of the Bang Phai community. The strength of the community includes: 1) its waterfront location which can connect to Bangkok and Chaopraya River, 2) its fruit garden which local people still grow and harvest fruits such as durian or mango, and 3) temples and public spaces that tourists can park their cars and take boat trip.

However, the community has some weaknesses which include 1) containment of urban subdivisions and residence which make tourists more difficult to access to the community, 2) narrow local roads which make drivers uncomfortable to drive, 3) unpleasant scenes on sideways due to abandoned land and construction wastes, and 4) dirty space around temples. The opportunities for Bang Phai community include 1) easy access to electric train (Purple line) and 2) popular trend of local tourism and organic fruits. However, the community faces with threats from 1) urbanization which leads to water pollution and construction waste, 2) possible outbreaks or pandemic such as COVID-19 which leads to community shutdown, and 3) aging community which make elderly people hesitate to welcome tourists.

Water Tourism as Sustainable Tourism Program for Local Waterfront Community

We believe that water tourism program is more suitable for promoting sustainable tourism program for local waterfront communities such as Bang Phai. Water tourism have 3 advantages. First, Khlong Om Non can tell the social and cultural history of Nonthaburi province and Bangkok. Tourists can see and understand the community from travelling via waterway rather than driving on road. Second, sight-seeing by boat is more pleasant than driving cars. Although Khlong Om Non is curvy according to the Google Map, it is actually straight-line canal. Taking a boat does not make tourists dizzy compared to taking cars or motorcycles. Taking a boat in Khlong Om Non is not busy since Om Non is the major canal such as Khlong San Sab or Bangkok Noi which have heavy traffic. Third, water tourism has more attractive scenery than roadside. Although there is some weed and water hyacinth along the canal, those weed do not bother or disturb tourists. There are temples, fruit gardens, and old wooden houses along the canal.

However, boat trips have some limitations. First, boat trips cannot stop by some interesting sights or places. Even though some temples and fruit gardens own docks, getting on and off the boats is inconvenient since some docks are not properly maintained. Second, boat trips may not be suitable for sightseeing trip with many tourists. According to researchers' experience, if sightseeing providers want to make boat trips not too crowded and more comfortable for tourists, especially suitable for new normal ways of tourism, numbers of tourists per one boat trip should not exceed 10 persons. Third, boat trips have loud noise

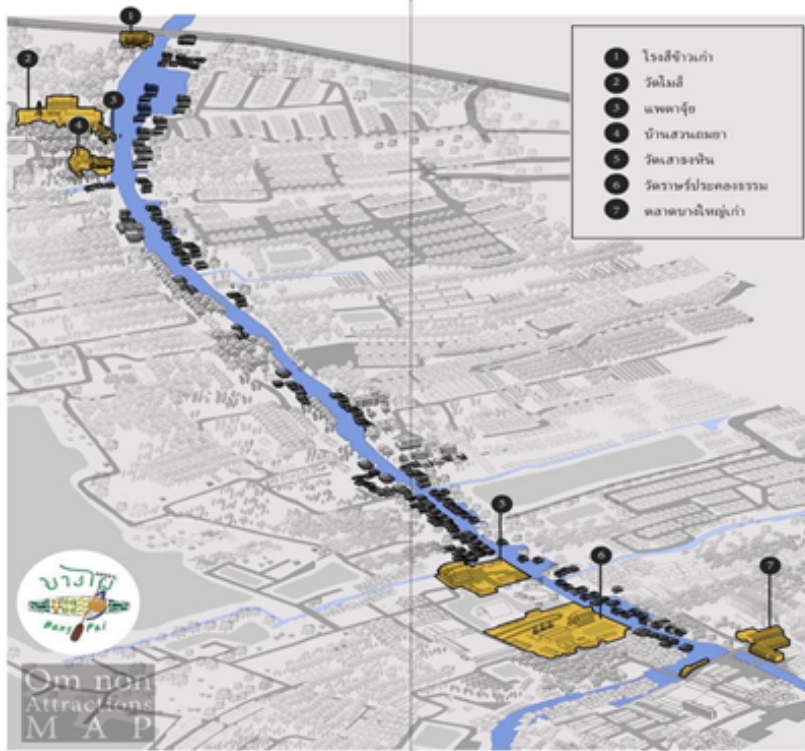
from boat engines, which makes it hard for guide persons or local liaisons to explain the history of temples and interesting sights.

From participant and non-participant observations, interviews with local people, and photo analysis, the researchers created a sightseeing program for Khlong Bang Phai via a boat trip. The program is mixed with the community's existing program and the researchers' recommendation according to archival searches, the researchers' observation and interviews with local people. The proposed program includes 7 spots for a sightseeing trip. The trip ranges from an old rice mill located at the north side of Khlong Om Non to Old Bang Yai market. The reason is to encourage tourists to understand the economy, society and culture of the waterfront community. More important, the proposed program wants tourists to understand the relation between political economy and trade which connected local people to national and international economy via canal. All 7 spots are below:

1. Old Rice Mill: It was previously the biggest rice milling house in the community, which indicates the relationship between local farmers, local businesses, national capitals, and global economy.
2. Baan Suan Tom Ya Organic Agricultural Center: This is the example of local people making effort to revive farmland and fruit gardens with new trend of consumption (i.e. organic farming)
3. Trading Raft House: This raft house was previously trading center owned by Sino-Thai people who came to run commercial businesses for generations. This place illustrates the multicultural society.
4. Wat Molee (Molee Temple): This temple represents the relationship between temple and community during early Bangkok.
5. Wat Sao Thong Hin (Sao Thong Hin Temple): This temple was one of important places in Siamese history after Ayutthaya kingdom. King Taksin stopped by temple to rest his infantry before taking back Ayutthaya from Burmese army.
6. Wat Ratch Pra Khlong Tham (Ratch Pra Khlong Tham Temple): This temple represents how local temples adapt in accordance with current trend of worshipping.
7. Old Bang Yai Market: This market was the most important market for people who lived along the canal. It was the center of agricultural commodity market before the age of urbanization.

The program starts at visiting at Wat Molee which was the center of Bang Phai community. We will worship luang poo Peuk (i.e., reverend grandfather Peuk), who was the abbot of Wat Molee. He was very active in encouraging local people to build local primary and Buddhist schools. Then, we will stop by a trading raft house which was the biggest grocery shop and farm inputs of the community. It was also an agricultural commodity trading house and gasoline station for boats. The owner keeps the gasoline pumping machine. Then, we will stop by Baan Suan Thom Ya Organic center for doing some activities such as picking fruits or waving basket. We will eat lunch at a local restaurant with local food such as kang moo hong (i.e., pork stewed with bamboo and dried fish). Then, we will take a boat trip up North to an old rice mil for revisiting Om Non's rice trade route. On the way to Wat Sao Thong Hin, we will see different types of wooden houses along the canal's side. We will stop by Wat Sao Thong Hin for visiting King Taksin's military camp and the stone base which he used for putting his army's flag. And we will walk to Wat Ratch Pra Khlong Tham for worshipping reclining Buddha which is the biggest reclining Buddha in Nonthaburi province. Finally, we will stop by the Old Bang Yai market which was the center of Khlong Om Non. We will walk to visit Bang Yai's Chinese shrine, old police station, and Wat Pi Kul Ngeun. We will provide a pamphlet or

brochure explaining the sightseeing program for their information and souvenir. We believe that this proposed sightseeing program is suitable for the local community, and it is knowledgeable for tourists. More importantly, the proposed program is sustainable for local people since it does not use outside people for providing sightseeing program. It does not much pollute the community for providing a sightseeing program. It helps preserving community's history in that local community can use local people from all generations to provide sightseeing service.



- 1 โรงสีข้าวเก่า
- 2 วัดโมลี
- 3 แพพายู๊ต
- 4 บ้านสวนมอธา
- 5 วัดเสาชองหิน
- 6 วัดราชบุรีประต่องธรรม
- 7 ตลาดบางยี่หวุ่นเก่า



Map of Sightseeing Tour of Bang Phai Community Khlong Om Non



ชุมชนคลองบางไผ่ ตลอดจนถนนที่สายโคกไม้โคกเป็นถึงสภาพแวดล้อมทางวัฒนธรรมของชุมชนความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างวัฒนธรรมไทยกับชาวจีนมาช้านานตั้งแต่อดีตเป็นการรวมตัวของกลุ่มผู้คนจากหลากหลายเชื้อชาติที่พัฒนาเป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยววัฒนธรรมผสมผสานการตั้งถิ่นฐานตามริมน้ำของชุมชนความแตกต่างทางประเพณีวัฒนธรรมและวิถีชีวิตได้เข้ามาบูรณาการของทางฝั่งทอและฝั่งเรือคู่ขนานกันไป

Bang Phai Community Khlong Om Non illustrates the cultural environment of community and canal relation. The waterfront community derived from the assimilation of multiple ethnicities which contributed to blending cultures. The settlement of multiple ethnic people with different traditions, cultures and way of life along the Khlong Om Non led to culture of interdependency.

โรงสีข้าวเก่า
โรงสีข้าวเก่าเคยเป็นศูนย์กลางชุมชนและเป็นที่พบปะระหว่างคนไทยและชาวจีน

Old Rice Milling House
The milling house which was previously the center of rice trade and the center of relationship between Thai and Sino-Thai in the community

วัดโมลี
วัดโมลีเป็นศูนย์กลางของชุมชนและเป็นศูนย์รวมทางวัฒนธรรมของคนไทยและชาวจีน

Wat Molee
The temple which has been the center and assimilation of traditions, culture, generosity, and support of the Bang Phai Community members from then to now

แพพายู๊ต
แพพายู๊ตเป็นศูนย์กลางการค้าและการแลกเปลี่ยนระหว่างคนไทยและชาวจีน

Ta Jui Raft
Previously floating store on Khlong Om Non which was the trade, exchange, and commuting center of Bang Phai community and generosity and bonding between Thai and Sino-Thai



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- 6 วัดราชบุรีประต่องธรรม
- 7 ตลาดบางยี่หวุ่นเก่า

บ้านสวนมอธา
สวนผลไม้ที่สืบทอดมาหลายชั่วอายุคนและเป็นแหล่งท่องเที่ยวเชิงนิเวศ

Baan Suan Thom Ya Organic Garden
Organic fruit garden for three generations which has preserved Nonthaburi fruit garden cultivation and mixed with modern organic farming to sustain identity of Suan Mueang Non or Nonthaburi Garden

วัดราชบุรีประต่องธรรม
วัดราชบุรีประต่องธรรมเป็นวัดที่มีพระพุทธรูปและพระพิมพ์จำนวนมาก

Wat Rach Pra Khlong Tham
Ayutthaya temple which the big principle and reclining Buddha images which are the biggest Buddha images in Nonthaburi

วัดเสาชองหิน
วัดเสาชองหินเป็นวัดที่มีความสำคัญในการตั้งบ้านเมืองของสมเด็จพระเจ้าตากสินมหาราช

Wat Sao Thong Hin
Old temple in Ayutthaya regime which was one of significant milestones of King Takien the Great liberating and uniting the Siamese kingdom

ตลาดบางยี่หวุ่นเก่า
ตลาดบางยี่หวุ่นเก่าเป็นแหล่งค้าขายของชุมชนไทยและชาวจีน

Old Bang Yai Market
the previously central agricultural commodity market of Om Non and Bang Yai area which significantly connected Nonthaburi's fruit and vegetables with Trading markets in Bangkok

