

Abstract

This study has two purposes. The first purpose is to analyse the historical development of the study area. The second purpose is to understand the dynamic of the social relations among the stakeholders, all of whom lay claims on some aspects of the rights to determine the future of the area.

For the first purpose, as far as the historical evidences can be traced back, the historical development of the area falls into three main periods. Each is characterized by the major occupants or the main activities occurred in the area. The first period was in the reign of King Rama V, the land in the area was in the hands of an aristocratic family, who later sold it to the Privy Purse Bureau. The second period began when the Privy Purse Bureau started building rows of shophouses for rent. The majority of the tenants used these shophouses as residences and clothes-making cottage industries. The third period began around 1957 when the above industries move out as the city of Bangkok expanded. There were new groups of people moved in from Sampeng, the famous trading center nearby. The main reasons for moving in were the crowdedness of Sampeng and the physical proximity of this area to Sampeng which had made the continuation of their fabric tradings possible. Fabric trading, then, has become the major activity of the area up until now.

The study area has become the contested space when the Crown Property Bureau has changed their land policy about the year 2003, in order to earn more income for the organization. All of the stakeholders who have involved in the contestation, have their own mode of thinking about the study area, which have been shaped by the practice of their specialization. In order to play their parts, they have constructed their own versions of mental space projecting how the study area should be in the future, or "the representations of space" in Lefebvre's term. These pictures are used as tools for communication and also reflect the dynamic of social relationships among them, which manifest in various social patterns, such as domination, conflict, confrontation, negotiation and cooperation. And up until now, no final solution has been reached yet.