

ID 1586 | MAPPING INFORMALITY: THE CASE OF STREET FOOD IN THEWET, BANGKOK

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1 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Street vending are the most primitive form of informal trade which nowadays, continuously plays the important role in economic and social capital in many countries, especially in the developing world. Street vending offers the easy access to get cheap food and commodity as well as job opportunity with low investment. Moreover, street vending vibrates public space and activate urban livelihood through the exchange and trading.

Bangkok is a prime case where street vending play considerable role in many dimensions. According to the previous study on the emergent role of Bangkok street vending in response to the changing urban context due to socio-economic change, technological change, and climate change resulting more frequent and severe urban flood disaster (Sereerat, 2013). The study revealed the informality of street vending is the mechanism driven by 3 performances: flexibility, mobility, and resilience, in providing access to food and necessity to citizen both in everyday life as well as during crises. Street vendors as a result is a resilient urban element that can meet inclusively the basic needs of all citizen. In social aspect, street vendor's informality and inclusiveness also maintain vitality during critical condition through the reciprocal help. This finding could be apply to the more resilient urban design and planning for the future urban Asia.

While the importance of street vending and its potentials is increasingly widely acknowledged through, development studies, socio-economic studies, architecture, planning, urban design and urban studies, there is considerable disparity on how they should be defined and approached as elements in urban study. As the informality of street vending also have negatively driven both socio-economic and environmental problems such as the chaotic growth, out of law, traffic congestion, dirt, pollution, privatization of public space, image of poverty. Street vendor are considered as an unwanted urban element for Bangkok public sector policy makers, urban designer as well as a part of citizen.

Under the supervision of the Bangkok Municipal Administration (MBA). Bangkok is one city trying to fix chronic problems due to the street vending activities for several decades in order to modernization and beautification the city. Which has used several measures such as formalization through licensing, clearance, allocation to new arable, space management, and latest measure was the clearance without correctly public participation process. However, the results in many such cases street vending area in Siam Square, Silom, or Bobea were not successful as expected. Or in some cases the clearance and allocation had done successful only in a short period and not standing still. As can be seen from the return to vending space. Moreover, illegal street vendors are still increase dramatically. The study shows top down management, use of force to suppress or forced allocation without public partition process of understanding together to find solutions together to reflect on the context and the needs of the public, including households with street vendors. The Participatory planning is a tool that has been widely accepted and used in the planning of the development and widespread. Because the process of discussion is important in helping to coordinate incompatibilities, conflicts and work together to find solutions that lead to a common agreement among the stakeholders (government, private and public), however, bringing the discussion to organize street vendors cannot be applied directly. Due to the characteristics of street vendors in Bangkok by a trade system that is linked to the informal network of other related benefits, both directly and indirectly. The structure of the stakeholders are complex and difficult to get cooperation to reveal his identity to contribute to discussions.

2 RESEARCH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of this research is to redefine the research framework on street vending aiming to understand how street vending eventually related to urban system. In order to achieve that goal, the empirical study

would be conducted in urban network perspectives. Accordingly, the objective of the research is to examine the relationship between informal and formal activates occurring thoroughly the process of illegal vending on street.

3 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

According to reviewing literature on street vending, most of studies usually narrow research framework into some specific dimension such as poverty and labour, public space, informal economy, crimes, urban environment, urban sociology and so on. For public sector as well, street vendor is considerate as problem maker on sidewalk and public space, not traders, or other perspective.

In order to understand how street vending really effect to urban system. It would be re-investigate street vending as a whole process and systems that need time and mobility to operate the trade using supply chain analysis approach as a tool. This study will focus on food street vending that have a cooking process but each of activities were operate not in one place or kitchen, in many location within the city. As a consequence street vending would not be study only on street vending area alone, but also the co-related places such as goods resource place, stock place.

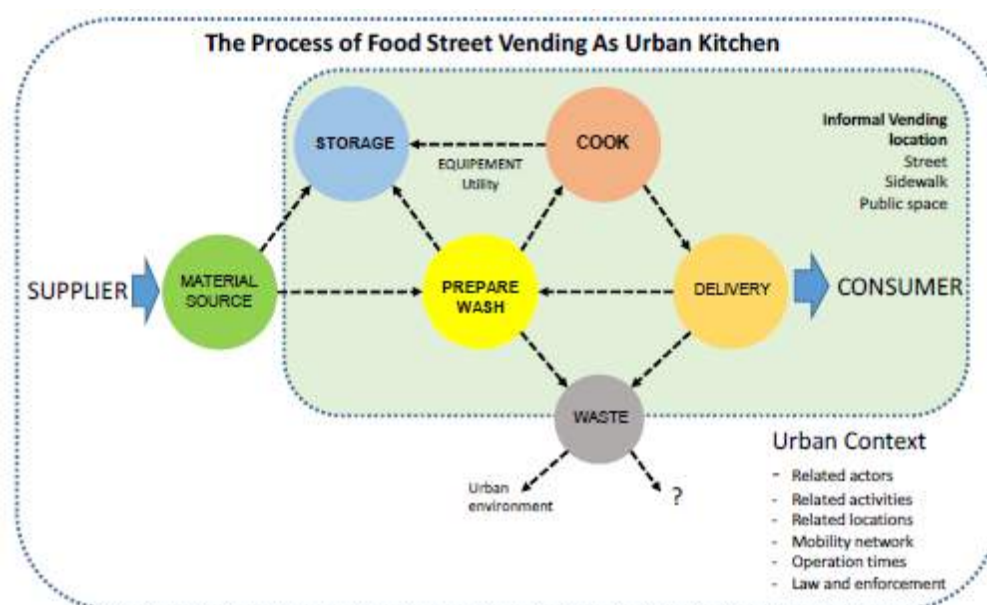


Figure 1 – Research framework

4 FIELDWORK AND MAPPING

This empirical study used food street vending areas around Thewet Market as its case study, and site investigations were conducted in January of 2013 (Sereerat, 2014). Quantitative data was gathered through the spatial surveys and qualitative data was gathered through interviews with street vendors. The data gathered from fieldwork were collected in form of cartography in 2017 presenting the process of street vending in relationship with time and place within urban network.

1. Survey of Street Vendors (previous study)

A preliminary survey was conducted in order to define the nature of street vending activities in this specific context in the time-space dimension. The surveys were conducted at three intervals during the day, according to the uses of the sidewalk by street vendors on weekdays as well as weekends. Notes, drawings, photographs and videos were collected on-site to provide related spatial context data such as the number of street vendors divided by gender, spatial typology, vending mobility, and items sold. The collected information was then mapped together with the surrounding context such as road networks and accessibility, buildings and land-use characteristics.

2. Interviews with Street Vendors (previous study)

A quasi-ethnographic interview approach was used as the research instrument for collecting data from the street vendors. Convenience sampling was used to conduct interviews for gathering information about street vendors in two dimensions: the socio-cultural dimension and the time-space dimension. Questions were formulated on the basis of key questions and the hypothesis derived from the literature review and research objectives. About sixty potential respondents were screened for a controlled distribution of age, gender, mobility and items sold. Potential respondents were then identified and, when the purpose of the study was explained, nearly all those invited to participate were willing to do so and a total of 50 data sets were collected.

Regarding the structure of the questionnaire, the questions were categorized into two main parts. Questions in part one were related to socio-economic data, time of use, type of goods and services provided, form of employment (full-time, part-time, etc.), equipment provided for selling the goods, customer attraction, effected laws and regulations, social behavior, environmental morality, and happiness and well being. In part two, the questions focused on the physical attributes of street vending such as stall type, mobility, selling space dimensions, supplementary equipments, work environment, customer attraction and identity.

3. Mapping street vending activity

According to Laguerre 1994, the mapping and marking the informal activities became a means for exploring the definition of informality. It appeared that the existing activities resisted the formal systems, structures and intentions of the space. Laguerre recognizes this resistance of the informal but states that the informal emerges in two directions, "either through the intentionality of the actor, or through the external construction of 'informality' by the audience". This study as a consequence would apply mapping as a tool for exploring the system of street vending using the street vending in Bangkok as a cases study. Using the data from survey and interview recorded in 2013, there were 27 cases valid for mapping from 50 interviewed cases.

5 STREET VENDING AROUND THEWET MARKET

Thewet is a well-known old commercial district located in the inner city (old city) area. This area was named after the old palaces, Wang (Palace) Thewet and Wang Thewawet, constructed in the Rama V period (BE 2416-2458). Thewet Palace now is being renovated and Thewawet Palace has become a part of the National Bank of Thailand. There are also several important temples around this area such as WatThewarat, Wat (Temple) InthraWihan, WatBenchamabopit and WatNoranatSuthirkaram. Since Thewet has a long history of settlement, there are old communities attached to the fringe of the temples mentioned above. Markets and shophouse rows are situated along the Sam-Sen Road and Phadung Krung Kasem Canal. Before the 1990s, Thewet and Bang Kun Prom (an area well-known as a dress-making district and recently an area for street vending opposite the National Bank of Thailand) abounded with commercial activities. However, after urbanization began to spread outside the old city, the small shops and restaurants along Sam-Sen Road drastically decreased. Only the markets and some of the shops and eating places have remained active until this day.

Street vending in the Thewet District overall presents a strongly local feel. The visible features of street vending in this district produce a very conventional image of street vending, or an image that can be found in other places in Bangkok as well since the 1990s. Vending sets, which include pushcarts or stands with parasols that can be both mobile or stationary, are the prominent element of the Thewet street configuration. This image of street vending is similar to that found along Phahurat Street, which can be defined as parasitic urban elements in a reciprocal social system. However, according to survey, the identities of street vending in Thewet were found to be more diverse than its image suggests.

In terms of the spatial context, there were two main factors related to street vending. First, Thewet Market is an old market located just next to the interchange hub for several important bus routes as well as the ChoaPraya ferries (ThaThewet-Thewet Pier). Second, Thewet Market is surrounded by shop-houses, several governmental offices, state enterprises, places of education, and temples. The mix of land-uses in

this area has resulted in street vending also becoming varied in accordance to the vendors' main customers.



Figure 2 – Thewet district, 2013



Figure 2 – Map shows the distribution of street vending in Thewet district, 2013

6 FINDINGS

Street vending in Thewet is well known for creating a food street hub where local people and workers can come to purchase foods and have meals, especially at dinnertime. Street vending in Thewet generally accumulate near the markets, connecting bus stops and workplaces. Spatial observations revealed the use of traditional forms of intervention, such as pushcarts with parasols, their mobility and the items sold for everyday use. The analysis revealed the contextual influences on street vending identity. They were rich in the sense of locality and reciprocity, but were mostly vulnerable, poor and not very well educated.

The results from interview revealed that most of the street vendors earned incomes higher than minimum wage, more than half earned more than the starting income for employees with a bachelor's degree.

However, their working hours were also relatively longer than that of formal employees. There were also street vendors who earned high incomes; most of them had started their businesses with very low incomes and had emigrated from rural areas.

The typical type of street vending found in Thewet was street vendors selling food in pushcarts or stands with parasols. However, they were mostly static and sold in the same place. Some of them had two to three regular vending locations. They usually lived near their workplaces, in shared rented houses in old communities near the temples or slums. There were also street vendors who lived far from the Thewet district, however they had started off living in the Thewet District and had moved out because their rental places had been destroyed. Stall-type vendors selling non-food items were mostly found in front of workplaces, and the form of vending showed the relationship between income and spatial organization; higher-income vendors tended to be static, making high investments in strategic vending spaces. Interviews with food street vendors revealed the self-organization and reciprocity among them. However self-organization was rarely found in the younger generation of street vendors. Systematic, easy and fast installation allowed the possibility of reuse of urban spaces at multiple intervals during the day. This spatio-temporal identity could be defined as the “overlapping territorial identity” of street vending. The spatio-temporal identity in this area was quite unique, and could be defined as a “weekly cycle of overlapping territorial vending spaces.” Because there was only one vending interval, but there were different vendors in the same vending lot during the week.

Hawkers or mobile street vendors were also found in this area; most of the hawkers were engaged in the hiring system with patrons who provided their job and accommodation. This type of vendor usually worked as a street vendor seasonally, when they had free time from rice farming in another province. It can therefore be concluded that the role of street vending is to form an exchange between the urban and rural cultures.

| Case study | Thewet |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Urban context | Local |
| Spatial context | -Inner city -Old commercial district -Administrative zone -Interchange bus stop, bus terminal |
| Land tenure (sidewalk) | -Public -Bangkok Metropolitan Administrative (BMA) |
| Permit for street vending | -Temporarily Permitted Area (TPA) at specific days, times |
| Street vendors | Conventional |
| Items sold | Street food and low-end product |
| Market awareness | Passive |
| Working hours | Long |
| Employment status | Vulnerable |
| Entering to SV | Come from rural areas |
| Income (Net) | Low income Avg. 20,000 Bth/m Min. 3,800 Bth/m Max. 100,000 Bth/m |
| Education | Low education level |
| Social relationship | Reciprocal system Close relationship |
| Roles of street vending | |
| Economic | -Informal -Local economy -Urban inclusive |
| Employment | -Migrated from rural areas -Automaticity -Seasonal job |
| Market place (Shopping place) | -Local market place -Gathered around market -Food, fruits, groceries, cheap clothes -Cheap price - Orange juice 15 Bth |
| Customers | -Local people -Bank officers, Administration -Military workers, students |
| Social | -Reciprocal system -Urban surveillance |
| Culture | Urban-rural cultural exchange |

| Identities of street vending | | | |
|------------------------------|---|-------|--------|
| Public Space | -Fluid with medium density -Self-made public space | | |
| Defining territory | -Umbra network -Shaded territory | | |
| Spatial occupation | -Push cart 1.2x1.2 sq.m | | |
| Forms/element | -Parasitic element -Push cart + Umbrella | | |
| Mobility | -Movable -Home-workplace-product resource are in close proximity within the community/district -Self-support for mobility | | |
| Distribution | -Gathered around markets -junction, bus stop -Soi entrance | | |
| Penalty | Illegal | 20 | Bth/d |
| | Legal in TPA | 200 | Bth/m |
| | Out of permitted hours | 200 | Bath/m |
| | Illegal night (+resting area) | 3,000 | Bth/m |
| Sublease | 500 Bth/d | | |
| Related business | Rental umbrella+ setup | 600 | Bth/m |
| | Push cart parking lot | 500 | Bth/m |
| | Cleaning | 20 | Bth/d |
| | Electricity | 20 | Bath/d |

Table 1 - Summary of street vending in the Thewet District

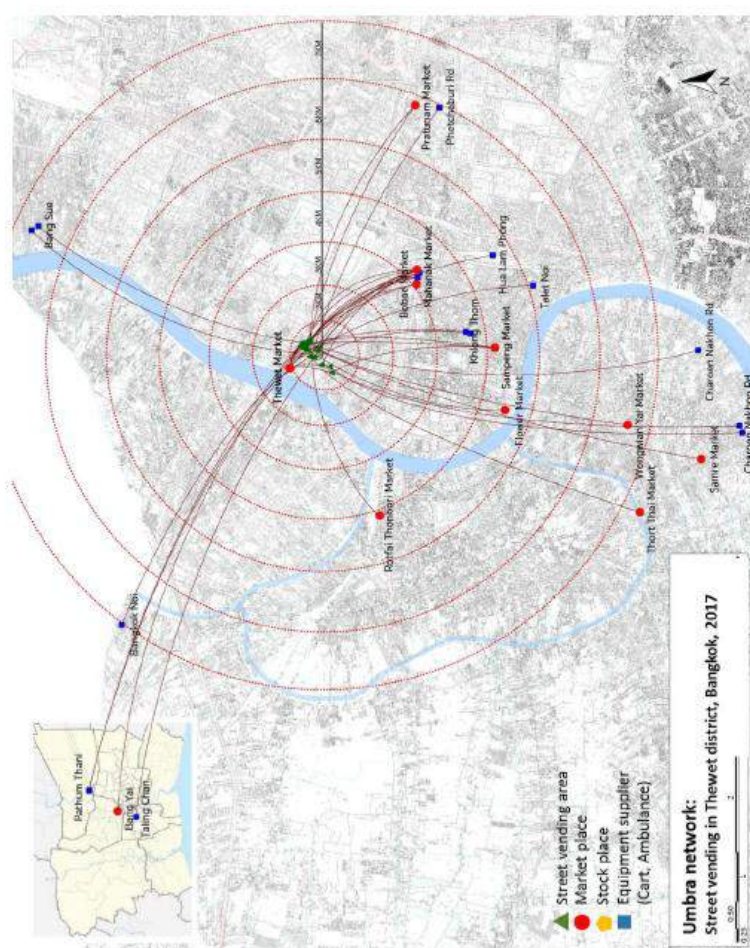


Figure 3 – Map show the umbra network of 27 examples street vedings that connect to other urban network both fomally and informally ways, 2017

7 CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Mapping street vending activities reveal the more clearly that street vending activities performs informally but in a systematic trading process in which connected to urban network.

The use of shading devices such as parasols or plastic sheets was a commonly adopted mechanism in street vending in this area. These shading devices usually overlapped with one another and, side by side together, they unionized all the small vending units into one linear system connected to the building nearby. This could be called the parasitic element. The “umbra network” is a soft urban network line stretched along urban networks temporarily and informally. The term “umbra network” also expresses the living-in-the shadow culture due to local climate and the vendors’ reciprocal social relationship, as well as their shadowy economic features. These umbra networks are an important informal and temporal urban element that should be taken into account in the Asian urban morphology.

In Thewet, “self-made” public spaces also emerged through informal urban elements; this included the flow of users, activities and objects, and included street vending as a key element. These spaces provided a unique feel to the area and could imbue a given public space with liveliness and a spatio-cultural identity. A cross-cultural analysis revealed the complexity of this system as informal elements merged into public space, territories were blurred, public space became the private space of passageways to another shop, and public spaces were occupied by street vendor stalls. These result affirmed that Asian streets are rich in the multi-layering of space and time. They also proved that these kinds of streets have a two-sided characteristic of simplicity and complexity.

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ID 1588 | THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF MODERNIST MASS HOUSING: A TOOL FOR URBAN PLANNERS

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ABSTRACT: Although the modernist failure myth largely descends from Jane Jacobs’ work, many of its advocates abandoned the observational method on which the American author grounded her work. Not only generalizations about the alleged failure of modernist architecture ignored non-environmental factors and disregarded the differences which characterize modernist public housing neighborhoods, but also they were unable of getting direct knowledge of how real life works in them. If we assume that each modernist public housing neighborhood is unique and different from all the others, as it is certainly the case, then we need to get first-hand knowledge of how it works. Starting from the review of anthropological research on modernist mass-housing in different countries this section of the course will discuss the implications of such research for urban planners.