

The Social Area Disclosure to Reduce Conflicts between Community and the State: A Case of Mahakan Fortress, Bangkok

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Abstract : The purposes of this study are 1) to study the over 20-year attempt of Mahakan fort community to negotiate with Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) to remain in their residential area belonging to the state, and 2) to apply the new social and cultural dimension between the state and the community as an alternative for local participation in keeping their residential area. This is a qualitative research, and the findings reveal that the community claimed their ancestors' right as owners of this piece of land for over 200 years. The community, therefore, requested to take part in the preservation of land, culture and local intellect and the area management in terms of being a learning resource on the cultural road in Rattanakosin Island. However, BMA imposed the law concerning the community area relocation in Rattanakosin Island. The result of law enforcement led to the failure of the area relocation, and the hard hit on physical structure of the area including the overall deterioration of the cultural road renovated in the year 1982, the 200 years' celebration of Bangkok. The enforcement of law by the state required the move of the community, and the landscape improvement based on the capital city plan. However, this enforcement resulted in the unending conflicts between the community and the state, and the solution of this problem was unclear. At the same time the community has spent a long time opposing the state's action, and preparing themselves by administrating the community behind Mahakan fortress with community administrative committee under the suggestion of external organization by registering all community members, providing funds for community administration. At the meantime the state lacked the continuation of the enforcement due to political problem and BMA's administration problem. It is, therefore, suggested that an alternative solution to this problem lie at the negotiation between the state and the community with the purpose of the collaboration between the two to develop the area under the protective law of each side.

Keywords : Pom-Mahakan community, reduction of conflicts, social area disclosure, residential area

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