

# **THE TERRITORY OF BELIEVE IN BANGKOK OLD TOWN: CONSERVATIVE NATIONALISM THAT INSTALLED TO CULTURE**

**SIRIPORN DANSAKUN<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Town planning was created for many purpose of the reigning. Bangkok old town itself has 4 layers of town planning overlapped in 2011. All the layers has symbol of believe itself, and the development relate to how they definite “Thainess” as be loyal to “Country-Religious-the King.” But if we look inside to the much more small scale, the town are full decorated with soft “ephemeral ornaments” by people. The hypothesis is this ornaments can tell us how success of the symbolization that the reigning had been dedicated. And in the same time it shown some missed believes that were ignored in the big viewpoint, small but priceless for users. The research focuses on the ephemeral decorated space. Collecting data from public places that have high dense of usage and full of people circulation. The evaluation of this community place is markets in the Bangkok old town, that inherited from generation to generation. From those markets we scope to the town zoning that is fulfilled with hard elements of town landscape that is a symbolic of believe. The purpose is to find the relation ship between permanent symbolic ornaments and ephemeral symbolic ornament, and the meaning of decoration to users. The methodology is snapping Bangkok town activities in the period of 2011-2012. Collecting data of decorated space. Categorize how to decorate. Clarify the structure of believe territory. Matching each category to each area in percentage. Interview about sense of value and users cognitive. Analyze people daily life interaction with spirits and force through decorated ornament. Though this study we find out that Bangkok permanent town symbolic clearly related to the political policy of each period, creating multicore philosophy that is mixed of Nation-Religion –The king. And if we

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figured on percentage of decorating area the Nationalism believe “Thainess” created from the trial of “National Unification” cover area of decoration the most. The distribution of Nationalism believe and folk believe can separated into each level of public and private space. And in if we focus on the different view point of sustainable of meaning for decoration the folk clearly have much more value for the user in the long run. Its use very small area but effects to user daily life, being tools for interact with spirits and forces, and the small things itself created one more layer of town invisible town structure where force and spirits lives and having circulation in the users mind.

## 1. Introduction

Bangkok have 1568.737 square meters, with 6,784,529 population in 2008. 99% of citizen have Thai Nationality. 94.5% is Budhistsm, 4.1% is Islamic, 1.0% is Christian. 35.34% graduated primary school 30.39% graduated from high school and 26.39% graduated from university. The population in eduation generation 6-29 years old is 1,321,800 people.

### 1.1 The 5 layers of town planning overlapped on Bangkok Old Town.

Related to The study of Town mapping in Bangkok old town,Rattanakosin area,we can find four layers of town planning created in each era. Before Bangkok turn to be Main Capital of Thailand the map show only temple random around the area. And their suggest that people who live here was chinese and local people living nearby each temple. When the Rama 1<sup>st</sup> take Bangkok as the Capital their has two planning concepte used for first planning period, The Naga Theory and The diagram of Cosmos Theory. Then in Rama 5<sup>th</sup> the facilities linkage and zoning was adapped into cosmos theory to put the new function architecture into the old town. And the town ins spreading in line by economic growth.

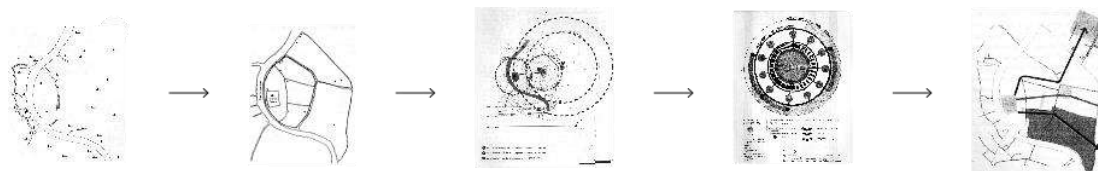


fig1.1.1 5 layers in the bangkok old town.

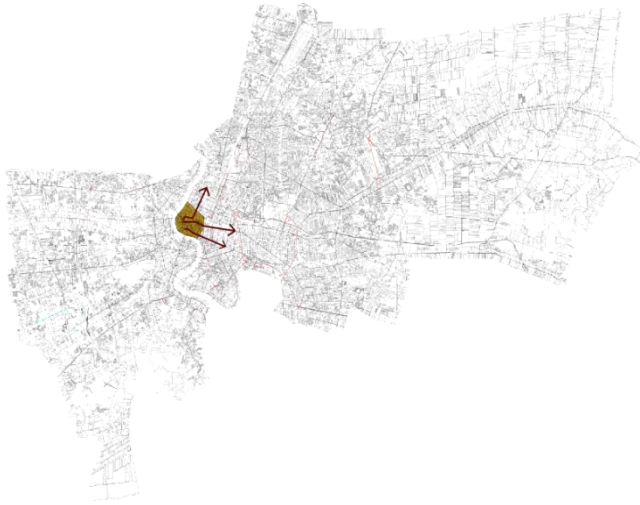


fig1.1.2 Bangkok old town and total area of Bangkok city.

### **1.2 Symbol of Believe in each Town Planning Time line.**

All the layers concept can compared to the changing in flag design, Plitical issue, Cultural and lifestyle management , town symbolic elements, and ephemeral decoration ornaments controled by government. In Rama 1<sup>st</sup> the flag began to use royal monarchy sign. The building and custom was allowed to be well prepared only for Royalfamily and Nobleman. In that period Town planning have the spot only the relation ship between Palace River and Temple. In Rama 5<sup>th</sup> the Flag turn from Royal sign to be white elephant that means to the prosperity of King and Kingdom. People have custom in cross culture the facilities turn to be much more various kind. Almost was trying to make the unity of Thailand together,by bringing some craft from all over Thailand to mix and adapt to each other to make every one feel as in the same nation. Town decoration is crossed culture and using European way to pay respect to adapt for people to express their feeling of paying respect to Thai king. That time town planning concept still have cosmos linkage but input many facility that link people to government into the loop.

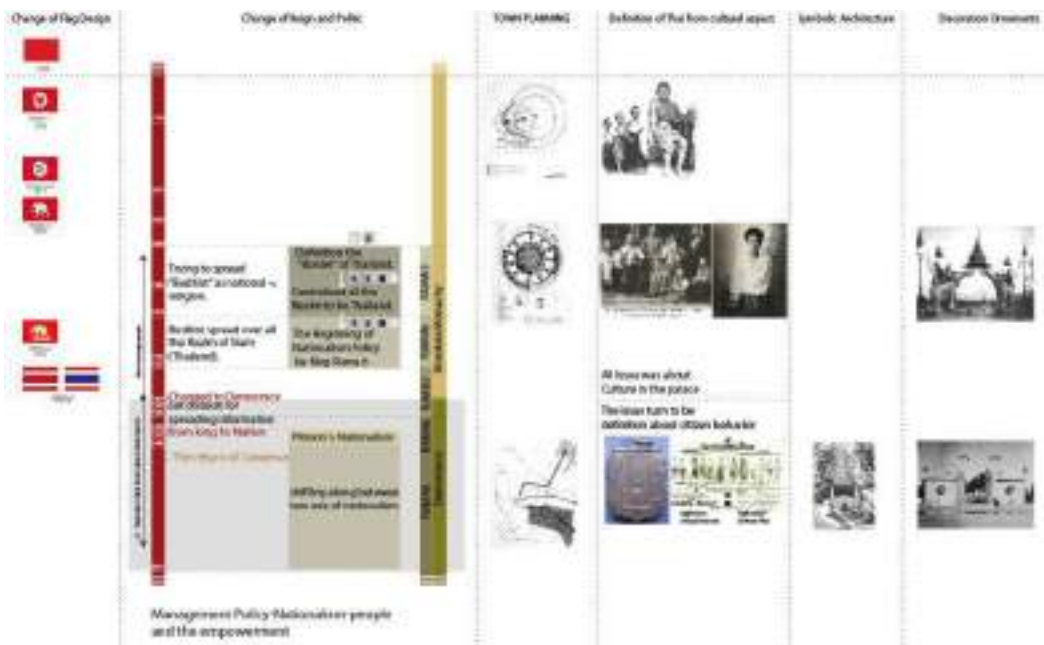


fig1.2.1 comparison timeline of flags design , Political issue , Town planning concept, Cultural written by the reign, Town Symbolic and ephemeral decoration by the reign.

### 1.3 The relation between Symbol of Believe and Thainess.

#### 1.3.1 Definition of Thainess as Folk believe and Thai Nationalism.

This research separate Ornament that express believe into Folk believe that created by common people in their life and cross culture. And the Nationalism ornaments That country tried to install into town scape and the same purpose issue that is installed by people.

#### 1.3.2 Town Symbolic as Folk believe and Thai Nationalism.

Town Symbolic as folk believe usually appear in spirits house, The holy Tree and House of God in Hindu Religious. The other symbolic in Nationalism is almost facilities and monuments that can separate to Royalist+Racist Nationalism and Liberate Nationalism. This expressing way also decorated in the ornaments statue, interior painting and ephemeral decoration densed in Bangkok old town. If we see in the planning concept in each 5 layers we also can find symbol of believe setting in each area too.

#### 1.4 The Ephemeral decoration space.

To find how the political decoration turn to be believe ornaments, This research focus onto the ornaments decorated by citizen themselves. Specify into ephemeral things that they can take it off or set it to space anytime they want to. So we can measure the supply of decoration that support demand easily in town.

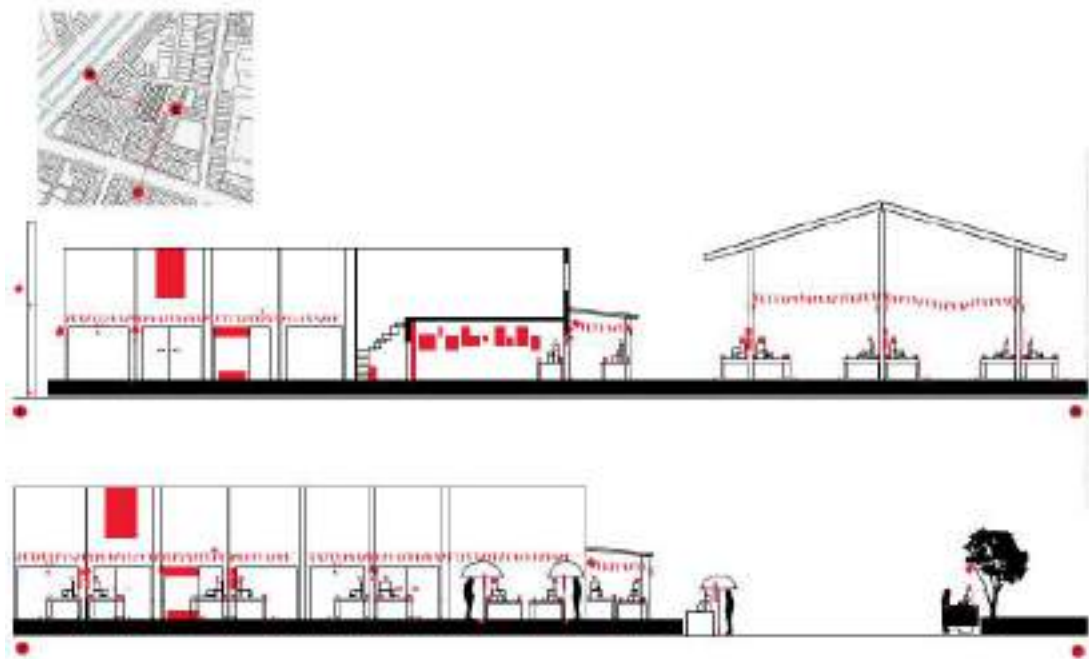


fig1.3.2 Kaset market's ephemeral ornaments decoration.

## 1. Scope of Study

### 1.1 Study Questions

Questions which this study tries to answer are as follow.

How Nationalism take roll as one kind of believe, among mixed culture.

How Nationalism absorb to everyday life.

How it spread into town.

How people take important about Nationalism as believe.

### 1.2 Study Targets and Methods

This study focused on market area of Bangkok Old town, The methodology is snapping Bangkok town activities in the period of 2011-2012. Collecting data of decorated spaces. Categorize how to decorate. Clarify the structure of believe territory. Matching each category to each area in percentage. Interview about sense of value and users cognitive. Analyze people daily life interaction

with spirits and force through decorated ornament.

### 1.3 Literatures Review

After research about Nationalism, Space decoration and folk believe, there are some of research that searching about Ghost Space, Ornaments of Believe in Temple and House Design. Nationalism and New Definition of Thainess. Thainess in Political and Management policy.

## 2. Site Selection

From background study this research focus in the Bangkok old town that have 5 layers of town symbolic and still have common life living from generation to generation. We focus onto the semi public place as market. The place that people can dominate their own territory but sharing it together in the same time. The place that open to all people to visit. The place that have densed circulation almost everyday trough the year.

### 2.1 Market in Old Town

The site selection begin with mapping all market that stay alive for a long run generation to generation. Then select the dense town symbolic zone. And pick up the well circulation place in the symbolic zone for case study.

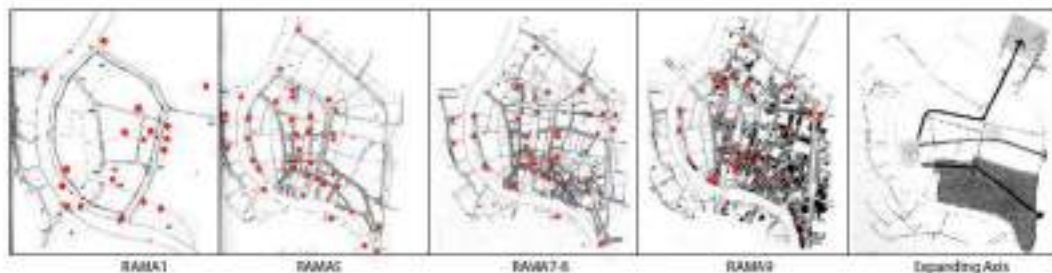


fig2.1 market formed in each era.

### 2.2 The physical Factors

Almost the market located in riversite spreading onto the pedestrian way of the maind road. Most are rental from owner. Someplace ownd by The Crown Property Bureau. Some own by one owner and sometimes change to new owner with some renovation and renewal zoning program.

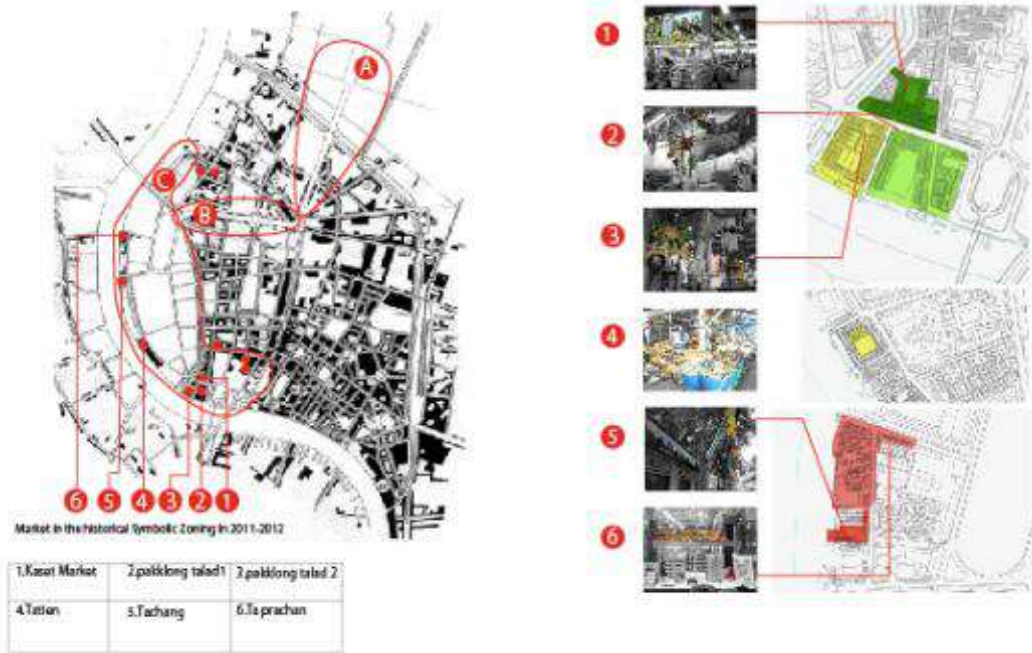


Fig2.2.1 old markets in the symbolic axes of Bangkok old town.



Fig2.2.2 Case study No.1 Kaset Market.

### 3. Definition of Ornaments

#### 3.1 Ornaments in each Scale of Community

from literature review field study research and interview result, The density of ornament on each scale of community will have different percentage. The sharing style and territory creating also happen easier inside the facility. And the way

relate to host is also depend to the shape of place. What is host defined in each scale and how tenant interact with the host, the space the place the land and their customer.

### 3.2 Typical of ornaments separated by purpose of believe.

From interview result we separate the ornaments into Thai Conservatine Nationalism. Democratic Nationalism(messege.) and Folk believe that appear as the figure below.

NATIONALISM	ROYALIST	
	RELIGIOUS	
	NATIONAL FLAG	
MESSAGE		
FOLK believe	MONEY TRAPPING	
	CALL CUSTOMER	
	HOST SPIRITS FOOD	
	TERRITORY PROTECTED BY SPIRIT	

fig.3.2 believe ornaments separated for this research.

### 3.3 Town mapping of decoration.

According to town snapping. The ornaments can be separated in many ways as,

#### 3.3.1 Hard Scape Symbolic

The hard scape symbolic created by town planning concept. History of people relate to that place. And the cultural issue.

### 3.3.2 Ornaments in Town Landscape scale

Almost town landscape ephemeral decoration is about the royal family especially the king. Some is stand alone setting. Some is making as sign in the vista. Some is use for sirsle. Some is decorate as a bridge. And many road sign elements and some turn to be façade of each building especially the building of government, bank facilities and the building in each corner or the town.



fig3.3.2 ephemeral street ornaments.

### 3.3.3 Ornaments in Community Area Scale

#### 3.3.3.1 Ornaments in total view of Market Facility

ephemeral total view of market facility is some stand alone ornaments. Façade decoration flags and flags set that cover the pathway and arcade as a membrane.



#### 3.3.3.1 Ornaments in pedestrian way



in the pedestrian way usually be the private decoration by people, sometimes sharing together. Sometime is using as private. In the private ornaments they have lots interaction meaning in each position.

#### 4. Structure of where to set ornaments.

##### 4.1 defferents of spreading

among all kind of ornaments, there are the decoration of their believe that is their beloved. And the place they set placed for someone they respect have covered more than 70% of the displaying space in the market.

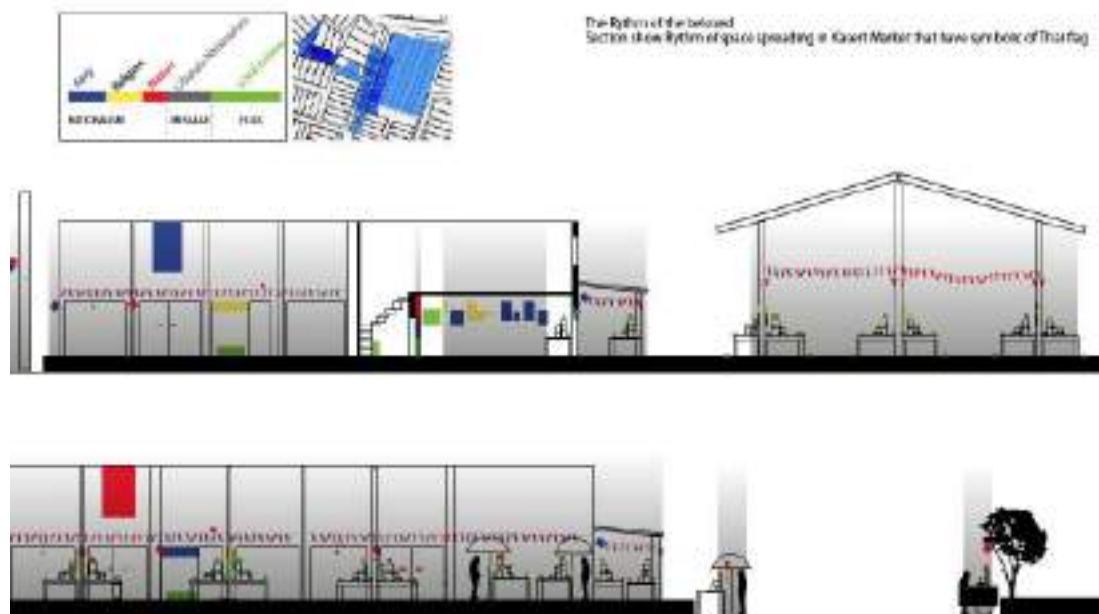


fig 4.1 The rhythm of the believe ornaments that express to someone they respect.

##### 4.2 frequence of changes

The interaction folk believe somekind is changing daily and have the interaction with the tenant user more than twice a day. Not much ornament changed or interact monthly. The religious folk and nationalism all have much of ornaments that will be turn to the new one annually. For anniversary using usually be for the Nationalism ornaments. The fix use keeping along generation usually be for the folk ornaments that sometime they keep the ornament move together and ask the spirits to move to the new place with thwm and the moving believe ornaments. (This kind of ornaments sometime being in the case of stolen. But the most ornament stoled is religious statue. That turn to be one kind of rotation happen case by case.)

##### 4.3 Zoning and the spreading of ornaments

The spreading of Nationalism ornaments can be spread easily because the shape is

easy for amateur decorator to adapting to any design much more than religious and folk believe. But from the designer view folk believe also have many potential to adapt to design in very interesting way. And for the decoration for respect it is upper than 80 cm from floor and will be spread cover wider area, sometimes the ornaments itself got bigger when its going high.

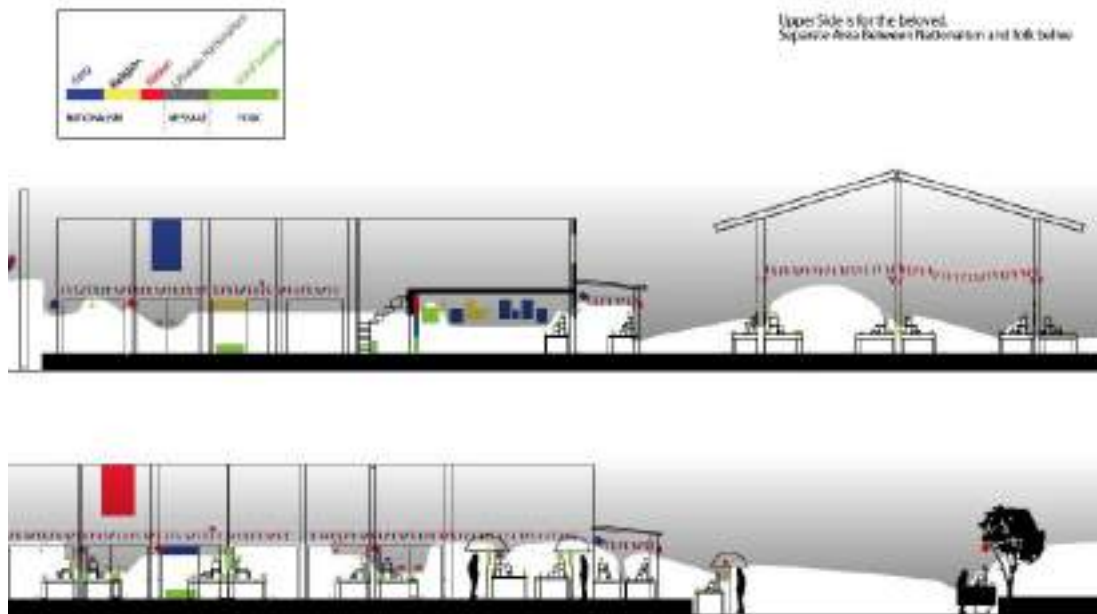


fig 4.3 the zoning and spreading of element expressing respect.

## 5 Category of how to decorate

### 5.1 Territory creation

from measure and activities snapping, can find many way ornaments effects to meaning of territory.

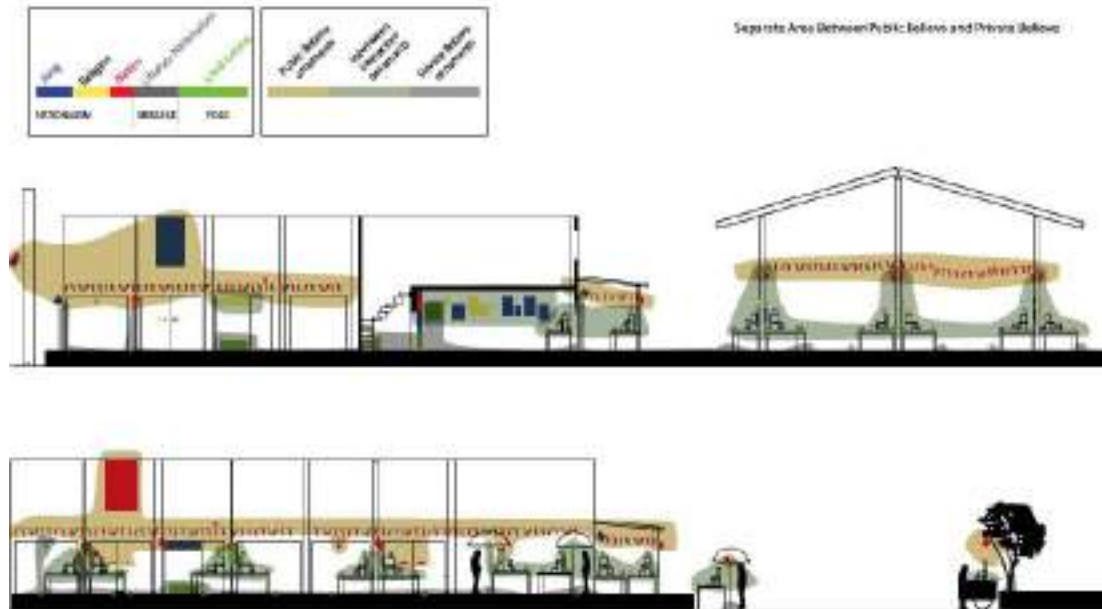
- wrapping volume.
- double layer effect.
- Unity of sharing space.
- Edge emphasis
- extension space
- sharing pattern (sharing believe)
- connect to host

## 6 Territory and perceive trough ornaments

from interview results and activities mapping

### 6.1 Public and Private volume or territory created by ornaments

The zoning of private and public ornaments are interesting in section plan. The more private the more linked to ground. The more public or want to express, the more they set it high.



## 6.2 The Connection to Spiritual Space.

They are many kind of spiritual ornaments. Some connect to the total area. Some cover only the door way. Some linked the house to the tenant. Some link the street vender to the ground or the big tree. Some interact with the spirits keeping circulate trough the town. And the user pecieve each kind of spirits movements and the space the moved in 3D.

## 6.3 Percieved space created by territory

many space created by the territory itself. At the edge or the land mark of each territory they will put some connection ornaments and will perceive some space that can expand their territory or blur it more.

## 7. Ornaments'Interact

**The ornament sometimes interact to the owner itself.**





## 9. Percieve of Value

9.1 as believe



9.2 factor of decorative selection( cultural activity, sense of place ,

9.3 Memorable

## 10.Conclusion

### 10.1 Nationalism is input to ornaments of believe.

Nationalism is input to ornaments of believe decoration by local people. It has a shape to let decorator pin up many idea of use but it still keep it own state in it s area that the other ornaments can not approach better. It keep it s position while turing position to the believe memorial and some kind of folk believe in some case. And in the same time the way of decorating input into people to make them feel as this territory crating style is the old way that feel nostalgic to the culture itself, also.

### 10.2 The Adaptation of ornaments itself

Folk and religious sometimes have interesting locating way. But its never change to design as easy as nationalism. But in the believe meaning nationalism still have no much potential to stick with user to every place as in the modern design. While folk believe can input into the very modern and contemporary interior space much more as the important elements that connect to spirits and spiritual space that user still perceive and want to get connected.

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