

Abstract

The paper has been intended to focus on 'decision making process', there have been many 'controversies' from both sides of inputs and outputs. Conflict resolution has been the issue discussed not only among all levels of policy makers, politicians, physical planners but also from the input side which is their citizens and private entrepreneurs in order to reach the most acceptable solution. Directions of the solutions are occasionally diverse, included the economic and commercial approach, social benefit approach, esthetic and city green , etc.

The complication of factors in urban land redevelopment policy has been found in many stages of decision-makings. Many of the decisions on land utilization were not from the essential demands; in fact it usually is instantaneous and not indicated clearly in the policy level. Several projects can be found that the involved actors have changed the prior decision-makings from time-to-time without convincing reasons. This has led to the improper and inefficient land use, delayed the proposal and created vacant space. Then finally it is ended without proper facility accommodated on the land.

An amount of publicly owned land in the case of Bangkok-Thailand, it has been found vacant or some of them have not been utilized as the proposed plan. The citizens who will be affected from the plan usually be disregarded by policy-makers, just in order to expedite the plan. The paper will select three important public land owner organizations; Treasury Department (TRD), State Railway of Thailand (SRT) and Expressway and Rapid Transit Authority (ETA). But in this case, the main organization actors; unfortunately, the complexity nature of these under-utilized space confronts many involved stakeholders, not only the land owner but also the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the surround communities. Urban land redevelopment policy decision-making process should not rely on only one actor and there should not be only one final solution.

Key word : Urban Void, Vacant land, Land Management, Under-utilized, Land Utilization, controversy, Conflict resolution, policy, Decision Making

DEFINING VACANT LAND AND ANY OTHER TERMS

There have been a number of literatures discuss on the issue of vacant land. The terms are included *under-utilized land, urban void, urban wastelands, abandoned property, remnant parcel, derelict zone, dead space*, or even new definitions in some books like *TOAD, in rem foreclosure property, 'terra incognita'*, and a similar meaning like *'lost space'* those are usually negatively identified as the problems of city beautification, deteriorated environment, poor visual quality, undesirable and untidy condition, the cause of violation and public safety problems, and even produce more severe negative effects to environment like *'Brownfield'*. In common, this type of land has been recognized as a significant barrier to the revitalization of central cities and it is one of the most visible and demoralizing signs of inner city decline (Accordino & Johnson 2000).

By assessing of these literatures, the terms can be categorized into these followings:

a) Vacant land - it has been the most common term recently used. 'Vacancy of the land' can be related to the legally identification, usages, occupancy, and environment related reclamation.

Pagano and Bowman (2000) gave the definition of vacant land in their questionnaires used in survey examining of vacant land and abandoned structures in 70 cities as the following which was focused on the usage of the land:

"Vacant land includes not only publicly-owned and privately-owned unused or abandoned land or land that once had structures on it, but also the land that supports structures that have been abandoned, derelict, boarded up, partially destroyed, or razed"

b) Voids

1. As the low quality of physical urban space - as indicated in Parole - a project of gruppo a12 :

"The voids of the city are spaces which disrupt the urban tissue, leaving it incomplete and throw into question the use of those spaces. Sometimes called urban ruins, they are at the limit between private and public space, without belonging either to the one or to the other. Urban voids are containers of memory, fragments of the built city and the 'natural' environment; memories of the city which constitute a random, unplanned garden." (Parole - a project of gruppo a12, udo noll & peter scupelli)

2. As as the 'lacking' phenomenon - as in Bo Gr?nlund's article ; "Filling the voids of urbanity" ; which they emphasized the meaning of the voids in term of urban concept and the characteristic of 'lacking function', 'lack of aesthetic experiences', and 'lack of difference':

"Voids - the word can refer to many different kind of phenomena, as we are not talking about voids in an absolute sense. 1) Lacking function. 2) Lacking people. 3) Lack of aesthetic experiences. 4) Lack of difference

3. As the effects of the economic, politic, and culture - In addition, Gr?nlund also found out the root of the problem. The mechanisms, which create the urban voids, are listed in 3 sources ; economics, politics and culture.

It is interesting that the origin of the urban void problem is from the other issues not only from the urbanization itself. Even the culture of a society is also assessed as one of the mechanisms that create voids.

c) Lost/dead space - the leftover unstructured piece of land or lost space - Trancik (1986) defined that are no-man's land, abandoned sites.

d) Terra Incognita - Bowman and Pagano (2004) named their book on Vacant land as "Terra Incognita : Vacant land and Urban Strategies". The authors have not given the meaning of terra (land) + incognita (concealed, unknown) directly but the book discussed on the issue of vacant land and other similar terms extensively. They explored the various meanings including

conceptualizations of vacant land as both "good" and "bad". They gave some examples of both opposite directions by these following partners; opportunity/problem and positive/negative.

e) In rem (foreclosure) property /In rem status - City ownership for nonpayment of taxes has been called an "in rem" status as described by Saving Affordable Housing (SAH, Cooperative Housing in Harlem) in the case of New York city. It was because of a result of widespread disinvestment and abandonment in the 1960s and 1970s, a large stock of buildings fell into this situation

f) Abandoned/Absentee property - It is included not only land but also the un-used structure. As City of Albany, New York has focused in their policies on Abandoned Properties Statement [July 2003] .

g) Derelict land - The UK Environment Agency listed the derelict land as one of the environmental indicator, and defined it as the following:

Derelict land is defined as 'land so damaged by industrial or other development as to be incapable of beneficial use without treatment'. It is often associated with redundant coal mining areas and railways. ...

The stock of land and buildings available for recycling is continually changing as new sites appear and old sites are developed. Of the derelict land reclaimed between 1988 and 1993, the most common use was for sport and recreation (37%); the next most significant uses were for industry and commerce, and agriculture and forestry.

- Categories of land not covered by the surveys include:

- sites regarded as derelict from natural causes
- land damaged by development that is subject to enforceable planning conditions
- land still in industrial or other recognised use
- land damaged by development which has blended into the landscape in the process of time
- vacant land including sites awaiting development
- abandoned buildings awaiting demolition as part of a development scheme
- neglected or unsightly land

h) TOADs or **Temporarily Obsolete Abandoned Derelict site** - which greatly complicates brownfields redevelopment. (Greenburg at el, 1990, 1996, 2000).

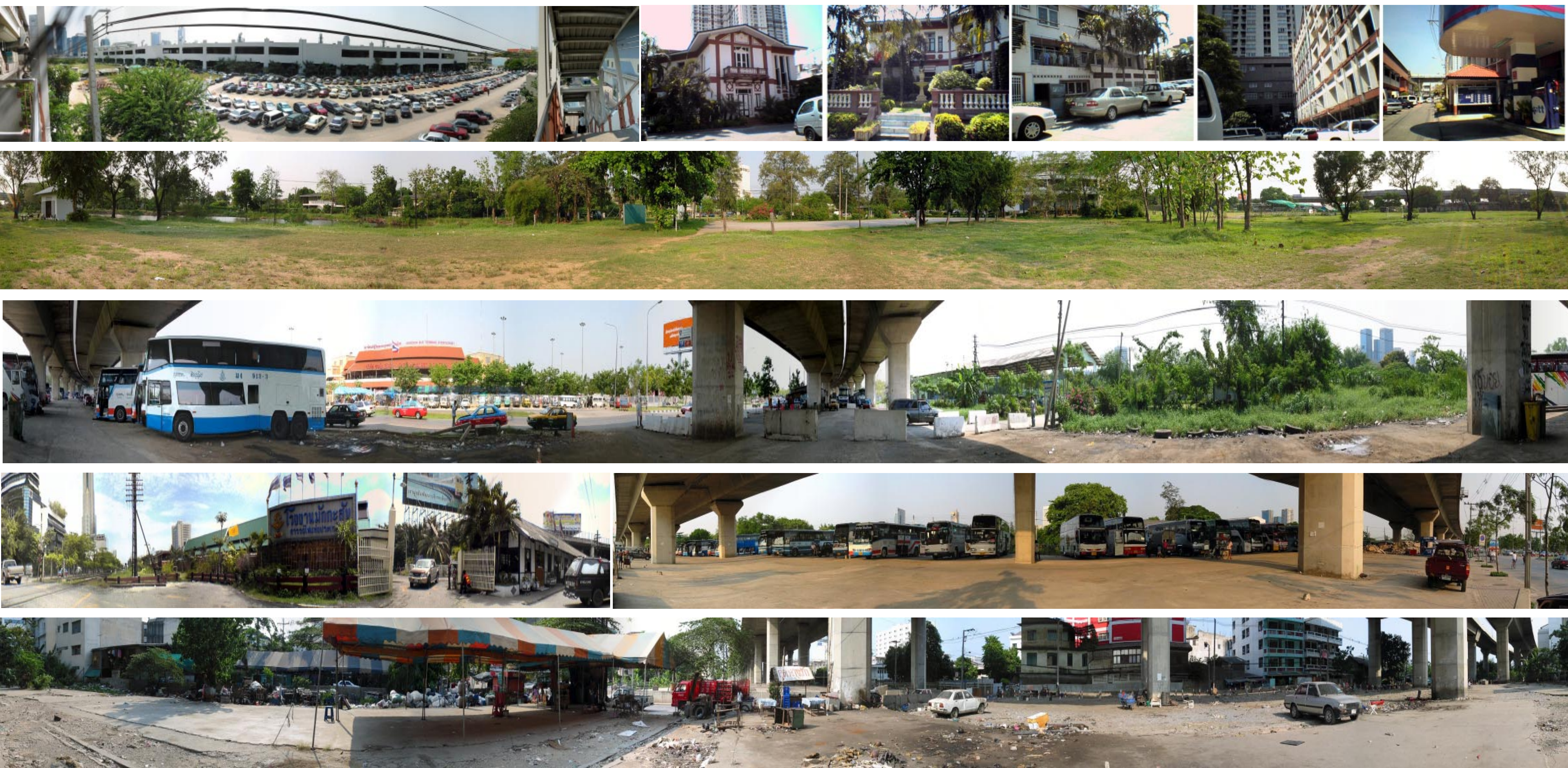
i) Brownfield - It is a special term on the usage of the land that is mostly related to the prior uses which environmentally contaminated the site. It causes the land to vacant in a certain period of time in order to be reclaimed for further uses in a proper manner. As from the UK Environmental protection Act 1990

Brownfield land is the common term for "Previously Developed Land". Previously developed land is defined as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure.



MANAGING PUBLICLY OWNED URBAN VACANT LAND REDEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN BANGKOK.

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SITUATION IN THAILAND

In Thailand, there are also some definitions on the vacant land. As being described in report done by M.I.T. Consultants Team (1994), there are varieties of convertible vacant lands. It will be clarified and analyzed to find out the characteristic of the voids, their locations, the physical characteristic and the relationship to the uses in the study. Since the under-utilized land is a ready-to-be developed piece of land, the M.I.T. Consultants Team (1994) also listed of the sources of convertible land for the public parks development of Bangkok. The study had looked to the potential and opportunity of the vacant lands in different ownership and gave some examples of the potential land as these followings;

- Disused housing and factories
- Storage facilities and waste disposal areas
- Interstitial spaces in industrial sites or new development not suitable for housing
- Land in abandoned areas
- Pond, or water retention areas
- Land created along canals and rivers
- Land along railways, roads and expressways, both old and new

In the following years; 2002; BMA again had consulted Kasetsart University to produce the Bangkok Green Plan. In the study, there is an effort to find under-utilized and vacant plots, which belong to both public and private to be developed as the parks. Policy and Planning Department (PPD) introduced the Green Space Master Plan for Bangkok (with consultation from Kasetsart University). This plan has aimed to gain more green space to reach the target average ratio of 4.968 sq.m./capita within 25 years phasing. The plan has looked for the va

Some of the photographs shown in the study are the example of the under-utilized spaces created by elevated structure, which has been assumed from the study that there should be the feasibility to be utilized for the public use instead of being left as an abandoned space or occupied by specific private purpose.

Utilization or redevelopment alternatives of the land are often influenced by several approaches. Most of them are strongly related to economic benefit. And in opposite, the schemes from state or city usually involve more on the social like park and green space. A Report on Vacant Land Management and Neighborhood Restructuring by Philadelphia City Planning Commission (Vacant Land in Philadelphia, June 1995) listed the principles for restructuring their neighborhood dealing with the vacant land as the followings;

- Stabilize, preserve, and reinforce physically intact blocks.
- Encourage the redevelopment of sites that support and strengthen existing community anchors.
- Assemble and market strategic sites having long-term redevelopment potential; encourage low-maintenance interim uses for these sites until they are ready for new development.
- Increase residential open space in existing and redeveloping neighborhoods.
- Reestablish the importance of the streetscape as a key neighborhood design principle.
- Modernize the Zoning Code to reflect neighborhood restructuring principles.
- Bring Nature back into the City.
- Change attitudes and expectations about vacant land reuse possibilities, both within City government and in the neighborhoods.
- Create mechanisms for the better management and maintenance of vacant land.

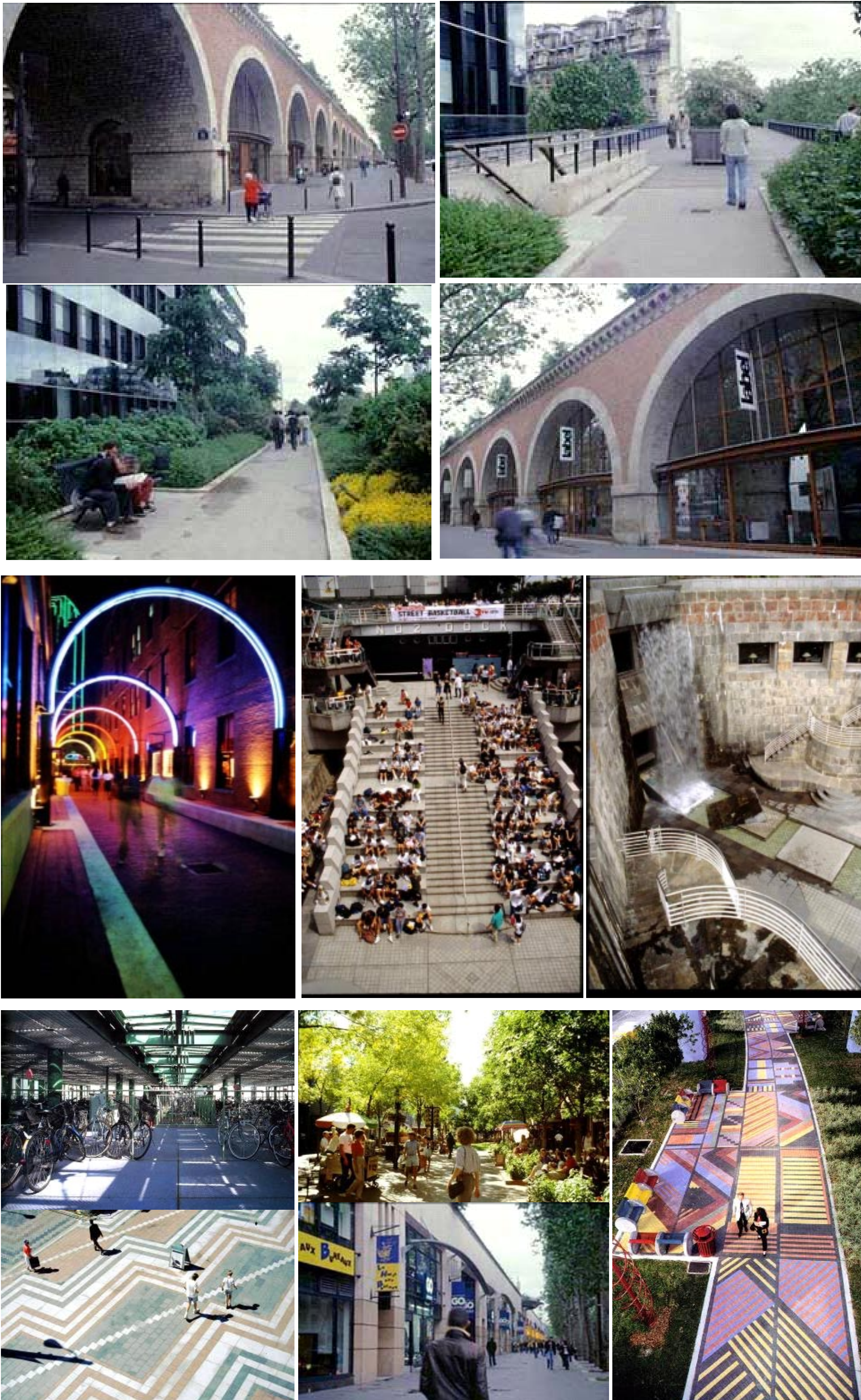
The examples of physical utilization of vacant lands have been given in only few literatures. Graham A. (Mossop and Walton, 2001 : 78-87) gave some cases in her articles titled 'Soft Architecture and Invisible Mending' on Walla Mulla Parks, Sidney, Australia. It is a small patch of wastelands dissected by the

DIRECTIONS OF LAND UTILIZATION

South Sidney overpass in the glue-sniffers, hypodermic a narcotic, and homeless hostel area. This space was dropped dead and no-one would even notice, competing with street action, Graham; an public artist; had been challenged and created her art pieces of urban life.

Marston described the work of Wallace, Roberts & Todd in 'Overtown Pedestrian Mall' (Cerver, 1997 : 164-173) that there is a project located in Overtown, an American district in Miami, where the construction of two major highways and a rail road line cut the community of African-American district in half. The Overtown pedestrian mall project is part of a cultural and economic revitalization plan that aims to stimulate private investment and increase community pride in this historical district. The project involved public agencies, neighborhood associations, landscape planners, civil engineers, and even a local artist: Gary Moore. The area undertrucks, once decaying, has been transformed into urban space.

There are some utilization examples of vacant land under elevated structure such as Viaduc des Art in Paris and Promenade Plante (Paris 12e) Completed in 1995, this 4.5 km pedestrian walk follows the old Bastille-Banlieue Est railway tracks and is located on top of an abandoned viaduct ; another multi-layer landuse example. Beginning at the Opera Bastille, it runs the length of the avenue Daumesnil, passes near the Gare de Lyon, the Reuilly garden and the Porte Dore, ending at park Bois de Vincennes. Parts of it are open to bicycles and roller-skates/blades. The path runs its unique course through viaducts, embankments, railway tracks and small tunnels, giving remarkable views of the 11th and 12th district's most modern areas. The arches of the avenue Daumesnil viaduct were remodeled into arts & crafts boutiques, art galleries and craftsman workshops located on the ground floor accessible from street pedestrian



According to the studies done by the same author, a piece of publicly owned vacant land can be potentially utilized in different categories. This paper has divided the alternatives of utilization into;

Esthetic approach - it covers all kinds of projects focus on city beautification such as sculpture installation, ornamental garden, flower decoration, water feature with no activity.

Transport purposes - serve for transportation and solve the traffic congestion problem (ie. Transportation hub, parking, park 'n' ride, etc)

Recreation purposes - there are two types of recreation ; passive and active recreation. Passive recreation is referred to sitting or strolling in the park, picnic, bird watching, etc. Active recreation is all kinds of sport, jogging, etc.

Commercial uses - generate economical benefit and perhaps partly of tourism services (ie. Shops, kiosk, market, mall, arcade, flea market, etc.)

Environment purposes - those uses for better urban environment, conserve the green vegetation area, storm drainage, water retention area, or sanitary land-fill can be listed in this category.

Social welfare - for the better living purposes (ie. Social housing, public library, police station, learning centre, museum, etc.)

The study was planned to find out the major directions of land utilization. The surveys had given some illustrations for the respondents in order to select their utilization schemes.

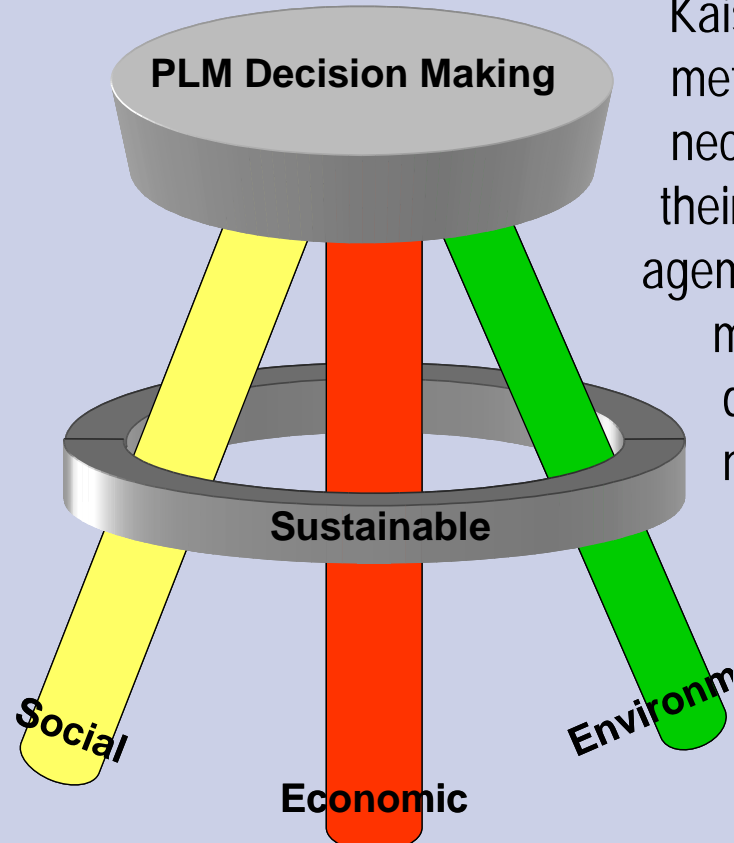
As can be found from the surveys results, there really were the strong distinctions across groups of actors. In the group of involved organizations, they were categorized into three sub-divisions; implementers/operators, land owner employers (non-decision makers), policy motivators (public/private)

1. **Decision Makers / Land owner organization / Policy Makers**
2. **Land owner employees** (non-decision makers)
3. **Implementers/operators** - BMA
4. **Policy-motivators**
 - o Public agencies
 - o Private agencies
 - o Citizens ; direct effected, indirect effected, and non-effected

The author has assumed that the actors as the key factors resulting decision making. The needs and roles of each actor sometime oppose others in order to satisfy the common interests within groups. According to the two surveys done by the author , questionings about only the preferences on land utilization of each plot could be responded in 2-3 different major directions. Within the involved organizations, there were diversities in roles. For examples the land owners would like to gain more benefit from their plots while the Park Department in Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) may look for the more green space. Citizens in each district have different roles and their own determination in order to satisfy their needs. People in residential area may need more green area for recreation, while people in the commercial area may ask for more parking spaces. Briefly, in the case of 'organizations', role of each organization was identified in this study as a significant factor, and in the case of 'citizens', zones and the existing land uses of respondents have strong influence.

FINAL CONCLUSION

There is not only single factor involves but also as many as three directions ; economic, social, and environment. It has been already discussed by many researchers, especially in the model of land use change management as 'a three-legged stool'.



Kaiser, Godschalk, Chapin Jr. (1995) gave the good metaphor that each leg of the stool also called 'value' is necessary and has its integrating structure in resolving their conflict claims through the land use change management process. The author introduced 'PLM decision making Tripod' to represent the balancing of the three decision making directions. The legs of the tripod may not be the same size, but all of them need to balance.

Thus, the study defined the possibilities of 'convertible' publicly owned vacant land. Many factors and indicators have shown the significance relationship of utilization whether or not the space is utilized properly. The convertibility of the urban vacant land is the important issue providing in the study. The alternatives are opened wide and the further implications should focus on the decision-making process of how we should concern while utilizing those space in policy level. The suggestion for further study and future PLM policy is to focus on the directions of each involved actor more systematically. The past and recent individual policies and attitude survey should be concerned. The decision-making should encourage participations as much as possible either through the form of committees, public hearing, the accountability and monitoring should be implemented in order to reach the consensus agreement. Conflicts and controversies in PLM have occurred after the hidden process in a box, thus the transparency in the earliest stage is significant.



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