

Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering

Deva Fosterharoldas Swasto ·
Dwita Hadi Rahmi · Yani Rahmawati ·
Isti Hidayati · Jimly Al-Faraby ·
Alyas Widita *Editors*

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Editors

Deva Fosterharoldas Swasto
Department of Architecture and Planning
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Dwita Hadi Rahmi
Department of Architecture and Planning
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Yani Rahmawati
Department of Architecture and Planning
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Isti Hidayati
Department of Architecture and Planning
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Jimly Al-Faraby
Department of Architecture and Planning
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Alyas Widita
Department of Architecture and Planning
Universitas Gadjah Mada
Yogyakarta, Indonesia

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The Malay Community Dilemmas in the New Urban World



Azli Abdullah, Julaihi Wahid, Siti Aisyah Muhammad,
Muhammad Rizal Khairuddin, and Ismi Luqman Hamadi Ibrahim

Abstract During the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economy, Malaysia has experienced rapid urbanisation. Urbanisation and modernisation invariably result in profound social and economic transformations. The rapid increase in the number of cities and urban centres brought about by economic growth led to the suburbanisation of large cities. This study provides the most recent research findings regarding the threat of urbanisation and the chronology of the destruction of Malay settlements in Kota Bharu. This scenario highlights the phenomenon of Malay settlements being subjected to physical planning emphasis in order to promote sustainable cities in the future. This study seeks to address the following issues: What effect does urbanisation have on the Malay settlement in Kota Bharu? What should the Malay settlements prioritise in order to develop the urban economy? How can urban planning encourage the Malay population to remain in the city? This paper answers these questions from the perspective of conservation of Malay communities by combining

A. Abdullah (✉) · S. A. Muhammad · M. R. Khairuddin · I. L. H. Ibrahim
Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Ekistic, University Malaysia Kelantan,
Bachok, Malaysia
e-mail: azli.ab@umk.edu.my

S. A. Muhammad
e-mail: aisyah@umk.edu.my

M. R. Khairuddin
e-mail: rizal.k@umk.edu.my

I. L. H. Ibrahim
e-mail: hamadi.i@umk.edu.my

J. Wahid
Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment, University Malaysia Sarawak, Kota
Samarahan, Malaysia
e-mail: wjulaihi@unimas.my

A. Abdullah
Arkitek TERAS Sdn Bhd (Team of Research in Architecture and Human Settlement), Kota Bharu,
Kelantan, Malaysia

a questionnaire from 350 respondents in Malay settlements with mapping and a chronological line of Malay settlement destruction.

Keywords Malay settlement · Malay community · Urbanisation

1 Introduction

Malaysia's urbanisation experience today is not the same as the pseudo-urbanisation scene articulated by Terry G. McGee in the 1960s [1], which involved unskilled workers migrating from rural to urban areas in search of urban jobs in a fragmented labour market. At the same time, it lacks the structural capacity to absorb the large urban workforce and widespread urban poverty. It has resulted in an increase in squatter settlements, poor people dispersion, and food shortages. The country's urbanisation process, particularly in the Peninsula, is currently on track to achieve first-world status by 2020. It is time to evaluate the quality of urban life in light of all the modern equipment available to support accelerated urban growth and a strong urban economy, transforming city centres almost throughout their hierarchy. So far, urban modernity has taken over the bleak prospects of pseudo-urbanisation, reflecting the economic, social, and environmental spirit found in liveable cities [2]. Malaysia is opening its doors to the world for investment to help drive its growth in a major push to increase its mobility along the path of development from the third to the first world by 2020. Malaysia was able to increase its economic strength through the export industry and subsequent wealth accumulation to finance various socio-economic development projects in the early 1970s by combining development policies appropriate to the world's readiness to come and contribute to the third world [3–8]. Malaysians' standard of living has improved recently, and the country is now one of the world's middle-income countries (Malaysia 2001, 2006). The country's poor population had decreased from more than 50% in 1950 to around 4% in 2006 [9, 10]. Many city dwellers now have access to modern shelters, sustainable employment, access to better food, clothing, mobility tools, and more time for recreation and leisure. In short, Malaysia's urban population now has more material assets. Over many years, the paradigm of growth development with redistribution produced the required results.

2 Literature Review

2.1 *The City*

The framework for considering the number of cities is a concept of "cities as systems within urban systems" [11]. Malaysia's cities and towns emerged from urban

settlements founded by the British colonial government beginning in the eighteenth century, yet these cities were segregated from one another so that the system could work [12]. These British colonial urban towns were linked by a sophisticated road network that allowed trade and the enforcement of law and order [13, 14]. Larger cities are expanding in urban regions, as shown in the Klang Valley, which has a continuous urban network from Kuala Lumpur to Port Klang and places north and south of the valley, including the Penang-Kulim and Johor highways, and the Bahru-Pasir Gudang city. New industrial cities were constructed, and intermediate cities expanded into rural areas, transforming them into advanced frontier agricultural lands. Additionally, the hinterland is undergoing change. As land development for commercial agriculture and settlements increases, more infrastructure is constructed to connect agricultural regions to the rest of the world.

More development corridors have been planned and implemented in the 9th Malaysia Development Plan [10], including the Northern Corridor, which covers Penang, North Perak, Kedah, and Perlis; the East Coast Corridor, which stretches from Kelantan to the east coast of Johor; and the Sarawak and Sabah development corridors. All these development corridors will have a broader impact than just rural and urban areas. Based on the results of previous development areas, this new development corridor will almost certainly result in a plethora of new cities to accommodate population growth expectations in response to the opportunities available. New settlements and commercial agriculture will have an impact on the outskirts of cities as well. Development implementers were fully aware of the need to conserve resources and protect the environment during the previous period of balanced development policy. To mitigate the impact of outright habitat transformation in cities, where people's voices are becoming more audible, city governments have put in place valuable programmes and activities to halt the slow decline in environmental quality. This means that when Malaysian authorities adopted the concept of sustainable development in the early 1990s; there was an awareness of the environment, the need to protect the environment, and the restoration of barren land. Of course, cities should carry full responsibility for all environmental issues. In the early years, skewed urban development resulted in widespread poverty in the hinterland. However, biased development in modern cities has resulted in soil degradation, pollution, increased grey areas, and a growing threat to life rights [15].

2.2 Towards Sustainable City for Malay Community

The sustainable urban agenda aims to improve the city's physical, environmental, social, and economic quality in order to promote a better social life. On the other hand, uncontrolled development has a negative impact on the city's sustainability, particularly in the historic city centre. Poor gentrification processes frequently lead to the destruction of historic urban structures and local identities [16]. Thus, the continuity and survival of ethnic areas, in particular, are dependent on adaptation to change and the preservation of the place's cultural and physical characteristics [17]. In the social