

Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering

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

Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Indonesian Architecture and Planning (ICIAP 2022)

Beyond Sustainability Through Design,
Planning and Innovation

 Springer

Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering

Volume 334

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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

ISSN 2366-2557

ISSN 2366-2565 (electronic)

Lecture Notes in Civil Engineering

ISBN 978-981-99-1402-9

ISBN 978-981-99-1403-6 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-1403-6>

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Beyond Sustainability: The Force of Urbanisation on the Malay Community in Kelantan



Azli Abdullah, Julaihi Wahid, Nashwan Abdulkarem Al-Ansi, and Engku Nasri Engku Mohd Ariffin

Abstract This paper explores the relationships between migration and urbanisation in Malaysia, focusing on Malay settlements in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. The findings provide a comprehensive analysis of the Malay community's migration phenomenon and draw attention to the issue of Malay settlement. The paper provides an overview of the impact of Malay culture, arts, and identity, which are becoming progressively under pressure in Kelantan. It describes the various economic, social, and cultural aspects of the Malay settlement in order to provide a real situation. A case study in Malay settlements in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, supplemented by interviews with local villagers and 350 questionnaires was analysed to comprehend the critical challenges facing Malay settlements that led to their destruction. The paper concludes that the migration in settlements resulted in the destruction of the Malay culture and identity, as well as the continuous destruction of the population density in Malay settlements. Utopian dreams were a hope for many Malay communities that finally eroded their identity and made them resilient to facing the global phenomenon. Besides, the idea of community conservation is still new in Malaysia, which has led to a turn to oblivion in the future.

A. Abdullah (✉)

Department of Architecture, Faculty of Architecture and Ekistic, University Malaysia Kelantan, Kota Bharu, Malaysia

e-mail: azli.ab@umk.edu.my

J. Wahid

Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment, University Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Malaysia

e-mail: wjulaihi@unimas.my

N. A. Al-Ansi

College of Architecture and Planning, Al-Qassim University, Buraydah, Saudi Arabia

e-mail: n.alansi@qu.edu.sa

A. Abdullah · E. N. E. M. Ariffin

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

Keywords Loss of culture · Loss of identity · Malay settlements · Malay community · Kelantan

1 Introduction

Human settlement challenges and problems are now a topic of discussion for national governments in many Western and Eastern European countries, North America, and parts of the Third World [1]. On the global and national agenda are programmes to encourage the development of economically challenged regions, gradually increase metropolises, and revitalise metropolitan areas. The work of the United States Commission on Population Growth and the American Future, which devoted one of its research reports entirely to the subject of population distribution policy, is an important example [2]. While much of the Commission's attention is focused on the population of developing countries, it commissioned reports for its research report, *Population, Distribution, and Policy*, that directly address the problems and issues of human settlement and internal migration [2].

... The Commission's main national concern and focus is the country's population growth. However, because more people migrate to rural areas, small towns, cities, and suburbs across the country, national growth is reflected in local growth. And the decisions we make about the country's population growth cannot help but impact the local community

The distribution of the population and the growth of the local area are undoubtedly affected by where people move. As a result, in order to keep going, every necessary national distribution tries to expedite the migration process by encouraging people to move from one place to another or not move at all. Nonetheless, migration has an impact on the growth of urban slums as a result of the problem of urban poverty [3], where urban sectors are unable to absorb the entire labour market, particularly those migrating from rural to urban areas, causing unemployment problems as well as a lack of provision of basic amenities [4, 5]. This group eventually formed squatter areas due to a lack of ability to buy or rent a suitable house to live in [4, 6], combined with a limited supply of low-cost housing that could not compete with demand [7]. Due to overcrowding, bad or poor and scattered building conditions, crimes, social problems, and a lack or weakness of infrastructure and community facilities, the growth of urban squatters creates non-ideal living conditions [4] in the city [7]. Furthermore, the existence of squatters in cities is a burden on the government because the majority of them lack skills and, if not addressed, can contribute to a more serious problem of urban poverty [7]. This is because migration leads to rapid and uncontrolled urbanisation and urban population growth (especially in terms of the labour force). Furthermore, such a group is commonly associated with having a low level of education, no skills, or financial capital, even in rural areas [8], where most are poor. This represents a major challenge to the urban sectors in terms of providing suitable employment opportunities and salaries, as well as basic necessities. As a

result, discussing urban poverty is inextricably linked to migration, urbanisation, and urban growth. Migration, like urbanisation, cannot be restricted because it is a need for various sections of society to meet their economic, socio-cultural, demographic, or physical needs. Migration is also a decision option for improving one's quality of life [9–12]. The World Bank published a report in 2018 on the impact of climate change on migration in South Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa, predicting that 143 million people in the region would be forced to migrate by 2050. Climate change could cause 86 million internal migrants in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2050, 49 million in East Asia and the Pacific, 40 million in South Asia, 19 million in North Africa, 17 million in Latin America, and five million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, as per data by region [13].

2 Literature Review

2.1 Liveable Mega Urban Regions in Malaysia

Malaysia has experienced rapid growth as a result of globalisation. Meanwhile, the process of urbanisation has resulted in various changes in Malaysian human settlements. Starting from a small-town centre, a town combined into a town centre, and finally a large-town region spreading from Klang Valley to Port Klang [14, 15]. The second conurbation is in Georgetown, Seberang Perai's industrial city across from the Kulim industrial area, and the third is in Johor Bahru and Pasir Gudang. Most cities have a population of nearly 20 million people. These three cities are still the smallest compared to Bangkok, Thailand, and Jakarta, Indonesia [16].

2.2 Pseudo-Urbanisation

After World War II, there was a time frame of pseudo-urbanisation. The dilemma of poverty was faced among the Malays in the village after the war ended. On the other hand, urban populations had become more fertile due to rural migration to cities. The supply of labour from China and India was stopped. The land would be rapidly developed after the end of the war and Malaya's independence in 1957. According to [17, 18], starting from a low-income family and without a good education, the Malays began to enter the labour market in the city known as the kitchen. They began working in the city as maids, gardeners, and construction workers [19].