Socio Cultural Perspective on a Formation of Peri Urban Identity in Kuala Selangor Region, Malaysia

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Abstract

At present time, Malaysia gradually undergoes a pace of urban and rural transformation. The rapid growth of cities in Malaysia expanding beyond their incorporation boundaries transformed the land use from rural to urban. This situation developed an area in between urban and rural knows as peri-urban area which increase in number and typologies. Peri-urban continues to grow spatially and in population, thus these zones have unique identities which continue to evolve. Thus, the aim of this article is to explore the importance of socio-cultural landscape at Kuala Selangor as urban peripheries and how it could establish the identity for the future of a good environment. Providing a socio-cultural approach to the peri-urban notion, this paper discovers through the literature study the subjective dimension on the socio-cultural definition at the peri-urban area, in order to understand its 'unique identity'. In this article, the notion of 'socio-cultural landscape' is presented in arrange to investigate the ambiguity that exists within these days peri-urban area with respect to their social and unique presence. The paper is based on an extensive literature review to distinguish the significance of socio-cultural landscape for peri-urban areas in regards to revive its image and identity.

Keywords: *socio-cultural, urban sprawl, peri- urban, urbanization, identity*

1. Introduction

Across the globe, population growth and urbanization are anticipated to escalate by the addition of 2.5 billion people to the world's urban population by 2050. Estimated about 90 percent of the increment concentrated in Asia and Africa [1]. Urban areas are rapidly expanding all over the world and the urbanization process will continue to grow exponentially in the coming decades. Changes in the land use increased ten times higher with continuing expansion at 0.5 to 0.7 % per year. The city expansion has modified the pattern of natural resource usage in the rural area and developed changes in the social, cultural and economic. Thus, this resulting in creating an area classified as 'peri-urban' that rapidly grow at a rate which, in the event that proceeded in 30 to 50 years' time, the area would expand twofold than the urban areas [2]. Peri-urban areas in East Asia will expand to 40% of the total projected urban population growth or two hundred million folks by 2030, contributing to being one of the largest and most vital land cover changes in the region. In developing countries, peri-urbanization which distinguished by fragmented and fast growth shows a rapid increase. These peri-urban areas are not homogenous but it is a dynamic zone which acts as the focus of noteworthy non-metropolitan development, both in Malaysia and across the world.

In most of the developing countries, including Malaysia, urban expansion ensuing from the industrial policy adopted since the seventies and has attracted a massive cluster of young folks to maneuver to urban centres with the hope for greener pastures [3]. This Peri-urbanism may also lead to the declination of social stratification and cohesiveness [4]. Yet, it is a challenge to monitor the unique process of peri-urbanization in this complex and dynamic area. Understanding and characterizing the process of peri-urbanization is crucial as the impacts towards the zones and its inhabitant are wide range and across multiple scales counting the regional effects on the economic development, environmental and local livelihood. On top of that, little consideration is paid to the effect on the socio-economic and vocation of the local communities living inside the peri-urban areas in encountering intense urbanization except those attempted by Naimah Samat et al., (2014); Narimah Samat, Ghazali, Hasni, Abdallah, & Hadary (1990)[4,5].

2. Theory and Methodology

Up to the present, a common understanding has yet to be achieved on the definition of the peri-urban area due to the dynamic and complex nature of the rural/urban interface including Malaysia. However, most literature has gone beyond defining and characterizing the peri-urban as a zone where a mix of urban and rural activities happen, but also the peri-urban process theories [6]. The blurred location of the peri-urban area in Selangor which located in between contagious built-up area of Kuala Lumpur Metropolitan Area and hinterland might influence the socio-culture in that special area. The socio-cultural that resulting from urbanization create a unique identity that

dynamically changes through times are regularly parallel moves in socio-cultural parts, characters, discernments, and the city's 'reason for being' a common address in numerous cities which not hold their unique function [7]. Malaysia fringes area of towns and cities are well populated and developed. For instance, in Selangor, there are increasingly built-up zones comprising of private houses, high-rise flats, shopping malls and indeed lodgings outside the Kuala Lumpur boundary. In fact, it is not conceivable to distinguish between urban and its peri-urban regions. There are no clear refinements of country and urban as the districts are overlapped. The application of the City Region Concept in the development of Selangor State Structure Plan 2035 was adopted as referred to some of the criteria used by the OECD and European Commission in defining urban areas. The criteria are:

a.   A region that has more than 1 local authority. The State of Selangor has 12 PBTs and Greater KL has 10 PBTs (including DBKL and Putrajaya).
b.   Municipalities that share at least 50 percent of their boundary with the functional area
c.   At least half of the city residents live in an urban core
d.   An urban center has at least 50,000 inhabitants.

As referred to the Selangor State Structure Plan 2035 (Selangor Department of Town and Country Planning, 2015), the concept of City Region that has been applied in Selangor and somehow neglecting the peripheral urban area which also part of the state[8]. It only divides the state into;

a.   Core urban
b.   Contiguous built up area
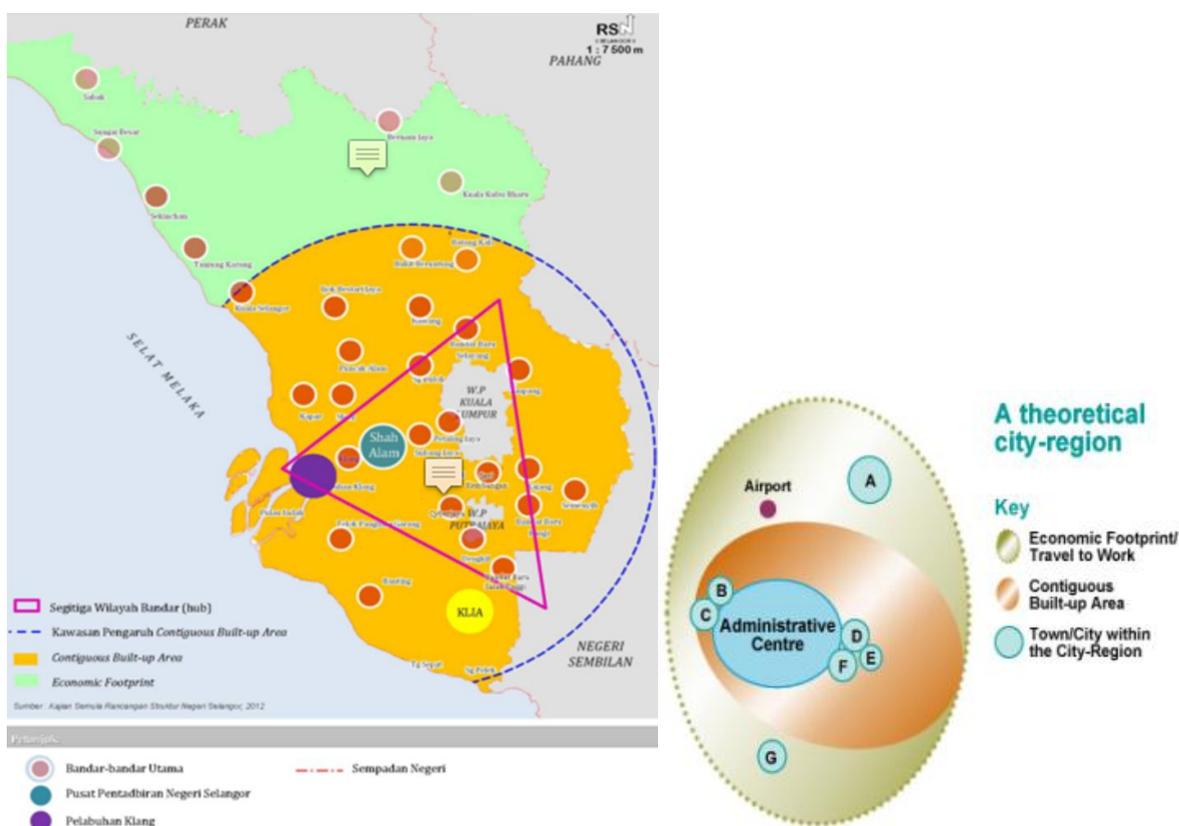c.   Economic footprint
d.   Hinterland

Fig 1: City Region Concept in Selangor (source: Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa Negeri Selangor, 2015)(8)

2.1 Drivers of Changes in Peri-urban Socio-cultural

In general, there are impacts of urban sprawl encroachment towards the socio-cultural landscape in the peri-urban area [9]. Socio-culture of peri-urban areas has a unique characteristic that makes them profoundly distinctive from the other region: their vicinity to or fractional consideration in the urban system makes them especially defenseless to weights by urban improvement or related activities. The socio-economic transitions in peri-urban area have profoundly altered their spatial land use and regional resources. For urban peripheries, challenges are straightforwardly related to their exceedingly heterogeneous mosaic of physical situations (with distinctive densities and land uses), their quick changing in social and cultural structures, and assorted forms of administration that include a few organization administrations at distinctive regulatory level [10]. Nunta & Sahachaisaeree(2012) research on cultural landscape uncovered that social and behavioural importance of societal personality and way of life within the past are vital to the clarification of the current social and social dynamics [11]. Peri-urban spatial patterns and sustainable socio-cultural landscape will lessen the impact of urbanization [12, 13].

2.2 Urban Densification and its Effects on Peri-Urban Socio-Cultural Landscape

Urbanization that leads to peri-urban development results in basic problems like improper infrastructure, destitute in land use planning like migration, land securing, infringement, slums, psychological problem, and low level of economic activities. On top of that, political, social and environmental problems a common phenomenon in the area [14, 15]. What else may well be the identity of a peri-urban region

if not the assimilation of the ethnic, gender, economic, social and neighbourhood characteristics on a built environment fabricated by human creatures? The socio-cultural identity and the non-economic variables associated with the built environment and are changed into an image by design and urban planning. The newborn developments in the peri-urban area impose a new socio-cultural landscape by creating a life-style based on the new consumption patterns, which is the income level and in this case the real danger is that this could be transformed with the passing of time, into a new 'cultural landscape', wrecking the socio-cultural identity of the 'place' [16].

3. Method

The methods used for this article embody literature review conducted in Web of Science, Scopus, Science Direct and Springer, and comparison and evaluation of findings from selected studies. The search was based on key words: socio-cultural, urban sprawl, peri- urban, urbanization, identity in the period of 2010 till December 2018. In addition, findings from the relevant studies cited within the detected studies on the analysis topic were used. The author also used the information from web pages which were relevant to the research topic, and spatial data from PLANMalaysia (2018) and Department of Town and Country Planning of Selangor (2018).

3.1 Result and Discussion

From the review of related Literature Review, the following step is the POD Tree Theoretical Proposition Development adopted from the Eagle table [17].
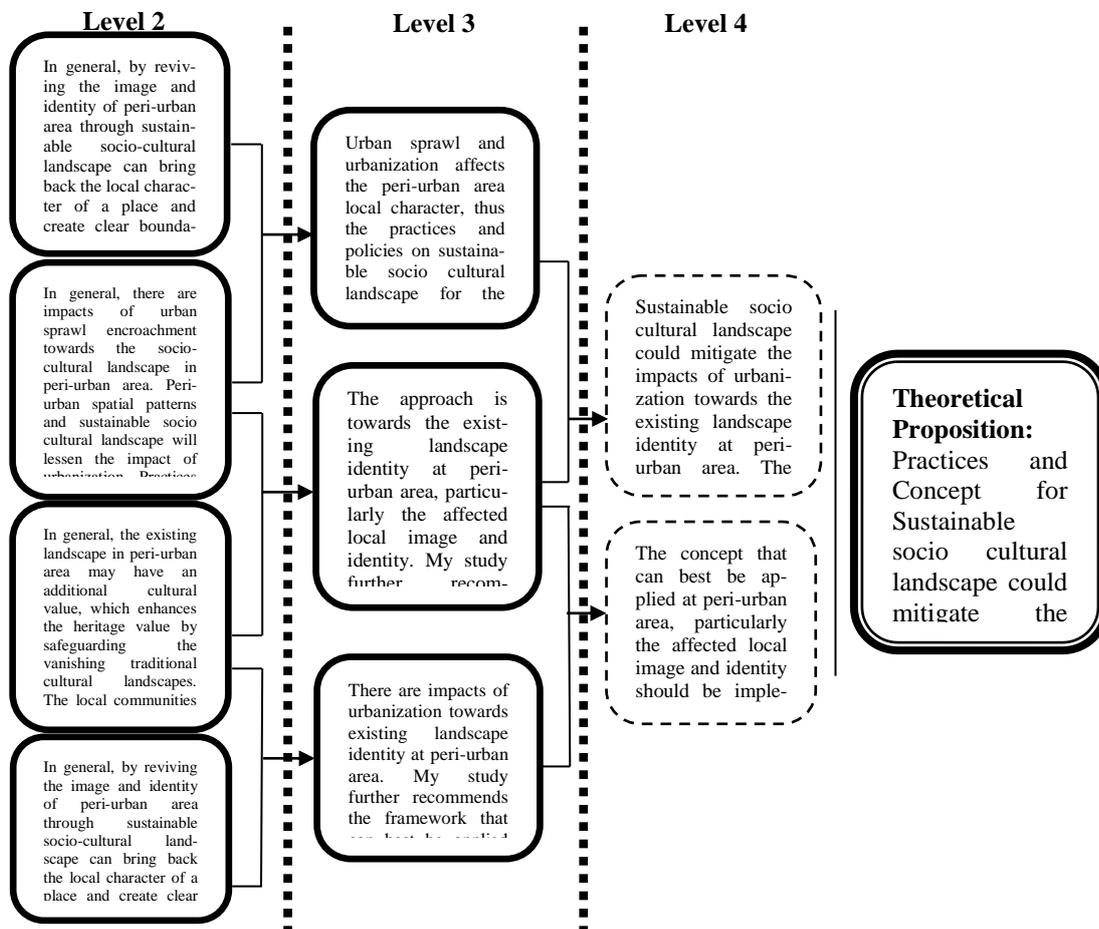

Fig 2: Synthesis of Literature Review (POD Tree) adopted from (Ibrahim, 2011)

3.2 Classifications of the urban-rural areas in Selangor

For the classification of urban-rural regions, different approaches and methods are used globally. In Malaysia context of characterizing the peripheral urban area, PLANMalaysia was developed a National Rural Physical Policy 2030 (NRPP) that encompasses various aspect of social, economic, environment, transportation, infrastructure, utility, heritage, management and, monitoring mechanism. The rural typology grid was developed from physical, demography and economic status to determine the physical location of village spatially with six typology criteria; U1 (major Urban), U2 (Secondary Urban), UR (Urban Rural, RU (Rural Urban), R5 (Rural) and R6 (Major/Mainly Rural). Thus, the existing classification system was used in this study in order to identify the area of peripheral-urban produced by PLANMalaysia. This typology grid then was used to assist in identifying the location of peri-urban area in Selangor. According to the given criteria, peri-urban area happened at U2 (secondary Urban), UR (Urban Rural) and RU (Rural Urban).

3.3 Socio-cultural of Kuala Selangor peripheral area

Kuala Selangor is one of the districts of Selangor, Malaysia (latitudes 3.341688°N and longitudes 101.246327°E) with a total landmass of 1,194.52 square kilometres (461 sqm). This district divided into two divisions, Tanjung Karang and Kuala Selangor by Selangor River. Kuala Selangor district estimated to have 369,000 populations in 2035. The industrial activity based on agriculture, fisheries and farming. Kuala Selangor is one of the five cities in Selangor that have been proposed as tourist nodes in the Selangor State Structure Plan 2035. This node will serve as a Service center for heritage tourism (Bukit Malawati) and natural (Natural and Wildlife Park in Kg, Berembang and Kg. Kuantan). However, the rapid urbanization process in peninsular Malaysia also caused urban sprawl into the Sepang and Kuala Selangor Districts, especially areas bordering Petaling District, Putrajaya and KLIA [8].
The existing digitized typology map of Kuala Selangor under the Policy of National Rural Physical Planning 2030 was used in this study. These maps produced by PLANMalaysia were used to analyze the grid typology of Kuala Selangor. Based on the Rural Grid System, it can be seen that Kuala Selangor consist of mix categories of development from U1 (major Urban) to Major Rural (R6). The peri-urban which considered at U2 (secondary Urban), UR (Urban Rural) and RU (Rural Urban) cover approximately 60% of the whole district. This is supported by Selangor Department of Town and Country Planning (2015) which state that the northern part of the State of Selangor (northern part of the District of Kuala Selangor) is seen beyond the influence of the Selangor municipal hub area(urban area) and is more responsible for hinterland areas that relate to the urban hub areas for economic and social activities [8]. Since the grid system is characterized by population, the area of each typology grid is set in accordance with the total population as the stated criteria. Therefore the urban-rural typology might not result in a hierarchy distribution. This is happening in Kuala Selangor Peri-urban area when U2 (secondary Urban) located next to R5 (Rural) and UR (Urban Rural) next to Major Rural (R6). In addition, the characteristic; livelihood pattern, socio-cultural and economic activities of each grid of the typology are different and not to mention the situation at the grid border. Thus, the variety in character of the peripheral area in Kuala Selangor conveys uniqueness in its identity
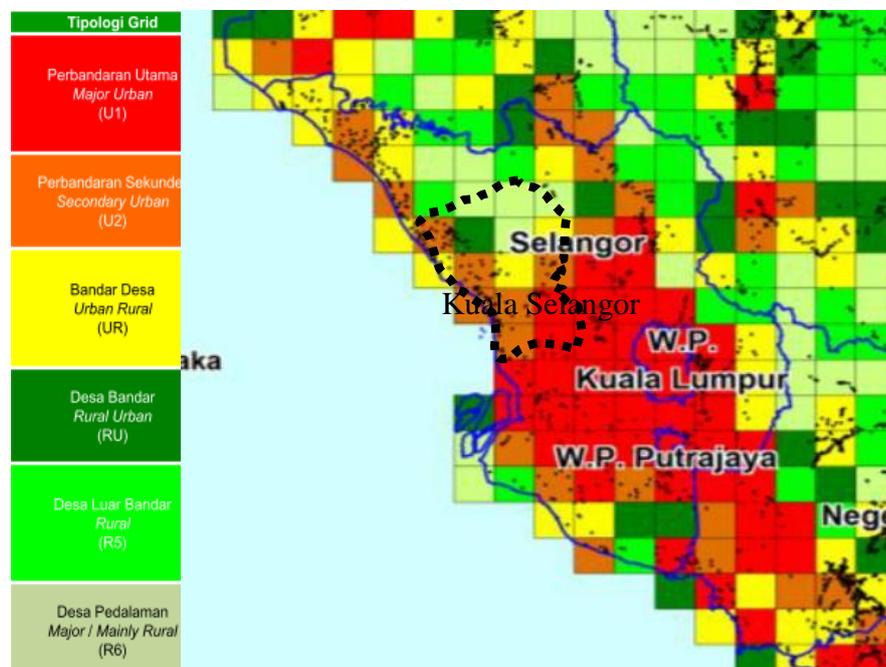

Figure 3: Map of Selangor Typology Grid From DPF Desa Negara (source: PLANMalaysia, 2018)[18]

4. Conclusion

In a nutshell, peri-urban areas have the potential to play a positive part in upgrading urban supportability at the global level. Typically because cities in all nations have to confront the challenges postured by urban sprawl, peri-urban regions are the clear cases of the complexity of land use planning [19]. Thus, the purpose of this 'socio-cultural understanding of peri-urban form' is to be able to create new and regenerate existing image and identity with sustainable living qualities. We can create a more complex level of understanding by bringing together specialized knowledge on the physical form of the development pattern and its social use and meaning. In general, by reviving the image and identity of the peri-urban area through sustainable socio-cultural landscape can bring back the local character of a place and create clear boundaries for a peripheral urban area by characterizing the complexity of peri-urban character that affects by urban and rural identity [20]. Therefore, there is a need to understand the importance of socio-cultural landscape at peri- urban area to revive its unique identity.

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