MOVING TOWARDS AN EQUITABLE SOCIETY

Ainin Sulaiman
PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In our Eleventh Malaysia Plan, inclusivity among Malaysian has become the main agenda for our national socio-economic development plan. Only by acknowledging and harnessing the strengths of differences in our society, Malaysian can work together towards achieving a prosperous and equitable society.

In aligning with this national agenda, University Malaya through its Equitable Society Research Cluster (ESRC) plays an important role in strategizing and supporting research that tackles inequality issues among our society, as evidenced in the publication of this edited book. This book compiles 15 articles from 15 research programmes under ESRC University of Malaya Research Grant (UMRG) holders. Most of the articles have been presented during ESRC colloquium which held on 24th May 2016 in PAUM Clubhouse. The idea for this book actually came from our previous dean, Professor Dr. Jamilah Mohamad and the effort continued by our new dean, Professor Dr. Ainin Sulaiman. Hence, this book is really special because it is a continuous effort from two deans.

Apart from that, we can see the multi-disciplinary research being compiled together in one book and the main theme is equitable society. Each of the chapter discusses and highlights on different topics and can be categorized under education, community, tourism and international studies. It is hoped that the authors would be able to expand the chapters to provide latest analysis in the future since the study is still ongoing. This will enable the expansion of the knowledge and further benefit our society.

To conclude, I would like to represent the community of researchers who have benefitted from the UMRG funding disbursed under the UMRG programmes by thanking the Office of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Innovation), University of Malaya, under the charge of Professor Dr. Noorsaadah Abd. Rahman for innovative research leadership. In this respect, we also acknowledge the contribution of the Ministry of Education as the source of research funds. Thanks are also due to the Institute of Research Management and Monitoring (IPPM), and Research Cluster Office, University of Malaya for facilitating the research programmes in many ways.

Finally, sincere appreciation goes out to our dean, Professor Dr. Ainin Sulaiman and our former dean, Professor Dr. Jamilah Mohamad for their guidance and also our own cluster staff, i.e. Mushira Zainal Abidin, Nor Ain Abdul Rani, Nina Sakinah Ahmad Rofae and Ali Imran Sairi.

We hope that the readers find the book useful and interesting.

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Living Qualities of Urban Village Communities in Kuala Lumpur: A Literature Review

Muhammad Syamil Mohd Shamsul, Norhaslina Hassan, Safiah @ Yusmah Muhammad Yusoff and Amirhosein Ghaffarianhoseini

ABSTRACT

Good living qualities is important in ensuring the quality of life, sustainable development and wellbeing of local communities such as urban village communities. In an effort to gear Malaysia toward a developed nation status, living qualities of an area in particular and Malaysia in general need to be increased from time to time. Cities such as Kuala Lumpur are centers of human civilization that requires continuous monitoring of the living qualities for urban development impacts vary with time. Urban village with its own historical interest in the development of a city especially Kuala Lumpur requires special attention in terms of planning as it tends to be left behind and is usually associated with complex developmental problems and poor living environment that contribute to the generally unsatisfactory living qualities compared to other parts of the city. This paper seeks to identify and examine related concepts in assessing living qualities of urban village communities in Kuala Lumpur through literature review with the aim towards developing a robust framework with which the living qualities of these communities could be measured and accordingly improved.

Keywords: Living Qualities, Quality of Life, Sustainable Development, Urban Village, Kuala Lumpur.
INTRODUCTION

Good living qualities is important in ensuring the quality of life, sustainable development and the wellbeing of local communities such as urban village communities. In an effort to gear Malaysia towards a developed nation status, it is necessary to assess the living qualities of residential areas such as urban villages. As human beings are revolved around cities, they become centres of the human civilization and soon overcrowded. Consequently, the living qualities of such cities require continuous monitoring by authorities especially in terms of its impact on urban development, which varies with time (Hussain and Mohamad, 2002). Over the years, the pace of development in Kuala Lumpur has created some changes in the urban areas which in turn, affect some villages. Urban villages have their own historical importance in the development of Malaysia in general and Kuala Lumpur in particular. These urban villages, however, require special attention in terms of planning as they tend to be left behind in the midst of development and their neglect is usually associated with complex developmental problems and poor living environments which contribute to the generally unsatisfactory living qualities of such cities.

Quality of life refers to the degree of needs and requirement of a community that has been fulfilled (Ahmad, 2005). It encompasses personal advancements, healthy lifestyles, access and freedom to acquire knowledge and the ability to enjoy living standards that exceed basic requirements as well as the individual's ability to achieve the level of social welfare that is in line with Malaysia's aspirations (Economic Planning Unit, 1999). Research looking at the quality of life in cities, particularly, urban village communities, is important for the purpose of describing such sustainable cities and communities in Malaysia.

Sustainable cities and communities refer to places or a region where a community wants to live and work in the present and in the future. In the early stages, sustainable development focused more on practices that have been designed to maintain sustainability in the long run where a community can continually practice without affecting the environment (Centre for Global Sustainability Studies (CGSS), 2009). However, sustainable development now includes a variety of changes which are aimed to balance the three dimensions
of the concept of sustainable development namely: environmental, economic and social dimensions all of which, are supposed to be linked to each other. Din et al. (2013) stressed that sustainable development should ensure that the environmental, economic and social dimensions are considered and sustained for an unforeseeable future. In addition, sustainable communities are also concerned about fairness and equality in the offer of best opportunities and services in sustainable cities (Colantonio, 2007). Therefore, sustainable communities become the prime trigger in creating a sustainable city that is suitable for habitation and work and it should be able to improve the living qualities for those communities in the long run. The process of forming sustainable cities and communities is long and continuous. What is no less obvious is that development efforts towards improving the quality of life is couched in the concept of sustainable development, thus, the objective of this paper is to review the concept of the quality of life and sustainable development. This is achieved by focusing on the relationship between the two in the effort to identify values that are seen to be acceptable measurements of living qualities in an urban village that is enveloped within the context of rapidly urbanizing Kuala Lumpur.

URBAN VILLAGES IN KUALA LUMPUR

In Malaysia, urban village is a concept that is also known as villages in the urban area or villages in the city. Urban village communities are a part of the urban population. They have a significant interaction with the urban environment in which the rapid growth of urbanization is impacting them in terms of how they deal with the changes of the urban environment (Samsurijan et al., 2014). An urban village, during the process of urbanization, may extend to rural villages which have been spatially encompassed by expanding urban area, initially forming a distinctive rural landscape within the urban environment (Hao, Sliuzas, & Geertman, 2011). This phenomenon has also been stressed by De Tong (2009) who says that in the process of urbanization, urban villages are gradually encircled by the urban areas, thereby, leading to a mixed development of urban and rural areas, which is featured in dual urban environment.
There are two general types of urban villages in Kuala Lumpur: traditional villages and new villages. Based on the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (2004) report, urban villages are categorized based on their specific location in Kuala Lumpur. Urban villages in Kuala Lumpur can be divided into three types namely: traditional villages that are located in the Malay Reserve area, traditional villages which are not gazetted in the Malay Reserve area and the new villages. Traditional villages are settlements that were inherited by the ethnic Malay community for generations. In addition, traditional villages have the characteristics of Malay architecture, concept and environment of Malay villages. Traditional villages located in the Malay Reserve areas are the settlements that have been created under the Malay Reservation Enactment 1913 and the Land Enactment 1987. The objective of the legislation was to ensure that Malay communities are able to own land, particularly in areas and cities such as Kuala Lumpur. In addition, there is a provision of the enactment which states that the Malay Reserve area cannot be transferred, either by sale or lease to non-Malays. In Kuala Lumpur, there are six Malay Reserve areas including Kampong Bharu, Kampong Datok Keramat, Gombak, Segambut, Selayang and Kampong Sungai Penchala. Generally, the pattern of land ownership and provisions of basic infrastructure reflect the original use of the land whereby most of it is agricultural. Thus, many of such villages are characterized by poor infrastructure and deterioration of the environment, a landscape which is very different from other settlements in the urban area.

Meanwhile, traditional villages which are not gazetted in the Malay Reserve area also have characteristics and issues similar to traditional villages that are located in the Malay Reserve area. However, significant difference can be observed in which the location of the village is outside the provision of the Malay Reservation Enactment in 1913 and the Land Enactment in 1987. Since these villages are not gazetted in the Malay Reserve area, there is no restriction on property ownership and development. To date, such villages are multicultural in nature and have no predominant ethnic community. There are 12 traditional villages in Kuala Lumpur as shown in Table 10.1.
Table 10.1: List of new villages and traditional villages which are not gazetted in the Malay Reserves area in Kuala Lumpur

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New villages</th>
<th>Traditional villages which are not gazetted in the Malay Reserve area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Kampung Baru Salak Selatan</td>
<td>1 Kampung Batu Muda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Kampung Baru Air Panas</td>
<td>2 Kampung Cheras Baru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Jinjang Utara</td>
<td>3 Kampung Delima</td>
</tr>
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<td>4 Jinjang Selatan</td>
<td>4 Kampung Malaysia Raya</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 Kampung Melayu FRIM</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Kampung Pasir Baru</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7 Kampung Petaling Bahagia</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8 Kampung Segambut Dalam</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9 Kampung Segambut Tengah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 Kampung Segambut Bahagia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11 Kampung Pasir Segambut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 Kampung Pandan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kuala Lumpur City Hall (2004)

Following traditional villages are the new villages which are also urban villages situated in Kuala Lumpur. New villages were established under the Briggs Plan during an emergency in Malaya between 1948 to 1960 as a measure to restrict the activities of the communists. There are almost half a million inhabitants, covering almost 10% of the population of Malaya at that time who were ordered to move into new villages, the majority of whom are Chinese. Urban villages in Kuala Lumpur require special attention in terms of planning and development. More often than not, they are left behind in terms of development and are usually associated with complex developmental problems and poor living environments, surrounded by high buildings and associated with poor infrastructure and public amenities (Figure 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3).
Figure 10.1: Urban villages in Kuala Lumpur associated with complex developmental problems and poor living environment

Figure 10.2: Urban villages in Kuala Lumpur surrounded by high buildings
THE CONCEPT OF QUALITY OF LIFE

Quality of life is a complex and multidimensional concept that requires multiple approaches from different theoretical perspectives because it has neither an agreed definition nor a standard form of measurement. Many definitions have been given to explain quality of life. This leads to a variety of concepts and perspectives as there have been attempts to define it with different disciplines (Cummins, 2000). Quality of life has been the focus of many research but a consensus as to how it should be defined has not been reached (El Din, et al., 2013). Quality of life encompasses the fulfilment of all particular needs of an individual or community that relates to the person’s wellbeing (Omar, 2009). According to Foo (2000), quality of life would be the individual's overall satisfaction with life. It is considered to be of utmost importance for sustaining any urban development that desires to improve the quality of life for a particular individual or community in urban areas (El Din, et al., 2013).
This is supported by Turkoglu (2015) who say that quality of life is the exploration of the relationship between a particular individual or community and their everyday urban environment. Therefore, the quality of life concept can lead to an improvement in certain domains, aspects, elements, factors or components which involve an individual and community as a whole. For the purpose of assessing the living qualities of urban village communities in Kuala Lumpur, determination and the selection of domains and indicators that affect their living qualities should be identified in advance. This is because these elements are able to show the assessed living qualities of urban village communities from time to time.

**Measuring Quality of Life**

Quality of life can be measured either with a focus on one specific domain or through several domains. Besides domain, the term aspect, component, element and factor can also be adopted. In this paper, the term that will be applied is domain. Domain can be processed by the objectives and perspectives of a research conducted but this may differ for each discipline and according to the concepts of the research. Quality of life can be investigated either by giving focus to one specific domain acting as unidimensional construct or by using a more comprehensive approach through several domains acting as multidimensional construct, depending on the research objectives and perspectives (Felix & Garcia-Vega, 2012). According to Din et al. (2013), quality of life is a complex, multidimensional construct that requires multiple approaches from different theoretical perspectives. The indicators of living qualities of life can be seen as a measurement tool that can be used effectively to assess the living qualities. Quality of life indicators are also able to assess the status of the quality of life of a particular individual or community either by increasing, maintaining or decreasing it and this outcome is based on the quality of life of a particular year (Nor, 2000). Therefore, the indicators of quality of life for each domain play a role in reflecting and representing the quality of life in a more detailed and thorough manner. Based on Feneri e al. (2015)'s recommendation, quality of life can be classified objectively, subjectively or both. The objective and subjective quality of
life require proper attention and understanding of their relationships. The following sections discuss objective and subjective quality of life.

**Objective Quality of Life**

Objective quality of life involves physical hard measures which are objective quantifiable indicators or expert judgments which are evaluations based on a specific professional background (Abdullah, Muslim, & Karim, 2013). Objective quality of life represents, in a broader sense, the individual's living qualities comprising of verifiable conditions inherent in the given cultural unit and are especially useful at the community, city, and country level (Turkoglu, 2015). According to Mohit (2013), objective quality of life refer to those that can be observed and measured through physical properties and frequencies and they allow researchers to use them as secondary data. However, the use of objective quality of life may pose problems with validity issues.

**Subjective Quality of Life**

Subjective quality of life is evaluated and perceived in a different way, individually (Feneri, et al., 2015). Subjective quality of life refers to an individual's internal judgment of wellbeing and it is frequently more accurate as gauges of actual feelings and perceptions of the individual (Felix & Garcia-Vega, 2012). Abdullah et al. (2013) indicate that individual responses such as observations or perceptions offer a soft measure of the living quality as it is experienced. Subjective quality of life that is indicated by the psychological state of life satisfaction has been employed more at the individual's level and it measures the individual's level of life satisfaction as he/she experiences it (Seik, 2000). This claim is also supported by Turkoglu (2015) who says that subjective quality of life explores the degree to which the individual's life is perceived to match some implicit or explicit internal standard. A particular individual or community may have different perceptions or views with regard to domain where it represents more than the private living standards and refers to all the elements of the condition in which a particular individual or community lives, i.e. all their needs and requirements to measure their happiness, satisfaction and wellbeing.
(Omar, 2009). The opinions or perceptions of a particular individual or community who lived in a city is often based on his/her experiences and knowledge. This is because people who live, work and survive inside such areas should be taken into consideration while measuring the quality of life status in any city since their opinions or perceptions are vital and can be used for counter checking the result of the quality of life status produced by the statistical department (Azahan et al., 2009). On the other hand, subjective quality of life can be used particularly, for planning and policy purposes that provide valuable feedback information that demonstrates how the findings may indicate in what way a particular individual or community intimately feels about the various aspects of their life especially those aspects which involve public policy (Seik, 2000).

The Relationship between Objective and Subjective Quality Of Life

Zapf (2002) offers a very helpful taxonomy of welfare concepts, which combine objective and subjective quality of life measures at the individual and societal level (Table 10.2). Using this taxonomy, three main approaches of looking at welfare measurement, based on the level (individual vs. societal) and type of measurement (objective vs. subjective) can be identified. The first relies on objective indicators for welfare measurement, the second bases welfare predominantly on subjective indicators with wellbeing of individuals as the final outcome of conditions and processes and the third combine objective and subjective indicators.

Table 10.2: Taxonomy of welfare concepts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Objective indicators</th>
<th>Subjective indicators</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual level</strong></td>
<td>Objective living conditions</td>
<td>Subjective wellbeing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. income)</td>
<td>(e.g. income satisfaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Societal level</strong></td>
<td>Quality of society</td>
<td>Perceived quality of society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. income distribution)</td>
<td>(e.g. conflict between rich and poor)</td>
</tr>
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Source: Zapf (2002)
Turkoglu (2015) agrees that the subjective quality of life is an important part of the quality of life but the extent of that measurement needs to be explored and evaluated alongside objective quality of life in order to establish its significance. This claim is also supported by Feneri et al. (2015) who say that the combination of the objective and subjective quality of life is a valuable tool for making an assessment of the overall quality of life. The tool can be used to examine whether or not a particular individual or community receives happiness, satisfaction and wellbeing from the urban environment and if so, what the level is. The tool also allows the active participation of members in policy and decision making.

THE CONCEPT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

There is no definition of sustainable development that can be universally accepted. However, the one frequently cited is the one proposed by the Brundtland Report which defines sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations (Figure 10.4). Din et al. (2013) stress that sustainable development should ensure that the environmental, economic and social dimensions are considered and sustained for an unforeseeable future. Research working on the quality of life which also involves sustainable development is important for the benefit of sustainable cities and communities. Sustainable cities are where achievements in the physical, environmental, economic and social development are made to last whereas sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work in, now and in the future. According to Hashim and Shuib (2012) who are from the Institute for Sustainable Communities, sustainable communities are places that are environmentally, economically and socially healthy and resilient.
The Relationship between Quality Of Life and Sustainable Development

Based on the recommendation of Hashim and Shuib (2012) who were mentioned in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, it has been proclaimed under Principle 1, that human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development. They are entitled to a healthy and productive life that is in harmony with nature. In addition, in the World Summit for Social Development in 1995, it was agreed that development should aim at improving and enhancing the quality of life of a particular individual or community. Therefore, sustainable development should not only focus on environment solely but also integrate economy, social policies and culture to become mutually supportive as measures that can enhance the quality of life of a particular individual or community. The quality of life concepts is closely related to the three dimensions of sustainable development which include environment, economy and society that are being placed in the broader context of sustainable development (Feneri, et al., 2015). Based on Turkoglu (2015), a well-informed framework that is equipped with the data including the quality of life assessment is essential in enhancing the sustainability process because only a well-
organized national, regional and local framework can enhance the ability to deliver services and resources.

CONCLUSION

Good living qualities are important in ensuring the quality of life, sustainable development and the wellbeing of urban village communities. Quality of life is a complex and multidimensional concept that requires multiple approaches from different theoretical perspectives because it has neither an agreed definition nor a standard form of measurement. The measurement of quality of life can be classified by objective quality of life, subjective quality of life or both. Sustainable development should now include a variety of changes, all aimed at balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development namely: environmental, economic and society which are supposed to be linked to each other. Through the relationship linking the quality of life with sustainable development concepts, the assessment of living qualities in urban village communities in Kuala Lumpur can be made not only through establishing the current level of living qualities but also in predicting their future living qualities. A more thorough review of the concepts is deemed to be able to guide the identification of suitable domains and indicators covering both the objective and subjective quality of life measures that can be used to assess the living qualities of urban village communities in Kuala Lumpur.

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