LAND USE DYNAMICS AND GOVERNANCE IN THE SUNGAI SELANGOR WATERSHED

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Early Socio-Economic Development in the Sungai Selangor Watershed

Ahmad Kamal Ariffin and Jamila Mohamad

The town of Kuala Selangor served continuously as the governing centre for the Selangor Sultanate during the reign of three Sultans of Selangor, namely, Sultan Salahuddin (1766-1782), Sultan Ibrahim (1782-1826) and Sultan Muhammad (1826-1857). During this era, Kuala Selangor was also developed as a settlement area and economic centre. The reign of the first Sultan Salahuddin can be considered as the beginning of the Selangor Sultanate. Thus, it is not surprising that in his reign, Sultan Salahuddin focussed on restructuring the administrative system. Sultan Salahuddin also introduced the position of Regent who will be the heir to the throne of the Selangor Sultanate. It can be observed that the introduction of this position is to ensure that the throne of the Sultanate of Selangor will continue to be dominated by the Bugis family.

In addition to that, Sultan Salahuddin had also introduced the position of ‘Orang Besar Daerah’ (District Chief) that plays the role of the River Administrator for all rivers in Selangor. This is important to note as, after his installation as the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Salahuddin had delineated the watersheds as the basis for the royal administration. Each administrator is tasked to manage the affairs of the various watersheds in Selangor. For example, Sultan Salahuddin had appointed Raja Muda Ibrahim to administer Sungai Klang. It is a practice, until the 19th century, that control over all rivers in the state be passed on to the king’s heir (son) as their holding area. According to Khoo Kay Kim, Sungai Bernam was handed over to Raja Hitam, Sungai Selangor to Raja Musa, Sungai Jeram to Raja Ali, Sungai Klang to Raja Abdullah, Sungai Langat to Sultan Abdul Samad, Sungai Lukut to Sultan Jumaat and Sungai Raya to Raja