SUSTAINABLE CITIES
OR SUSTAINABLE ETHNICITY
AND DIVERSITY?

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Abstract: Are cities created to sustain ethnicity and diversity? Or are these cities with close association to economic growth in their initial stages sustainable? The nation's colonial past has led it inevitably onto the path of westernization through expansionism and urbanism. This paper will examine several issues. The discussion builds on the historical aspect of the emergence of multi cultural society who work and live in towns that became the administrative centres of states, particularly influenced by the productive and commercial structure of the economy. The historical processes of the cities or major towns in several states are mentioned to see if they have led to a culmination in the present state of emergence of cities. The role of human capital migration in establishing a socio-cultural diversity with strong links to economic reasons which have in turn shaped the gulf that exists in most cities between the wealthier and poorer citizens. If we were to examine the construction of the major towns in Malaysia, they were the result of the interaction of the cities with their rural hinterlands. The question is, are these cities capable of retaining their roles as regional or sub-regional centres for a variety of other services or are they losing their edge. This paper looks at the evolution of the social cultural diversity and ethnicity and how these might affect the development of cities and whether these developments will make cities more or less 'sustainable'. The depletion of resources and the change in government's policy are also shown to have a paramount effect on the sustainability of cities.

Introduction

In the wake of globalization, the hegemony of the urban economy resulted in cities becoming the export platforms agglomerating businesses through a global communication networks that link it to other global cities. Paradoxically, it has led to the extent of widening gaps between the rich and poor countries, and exacerbated the phenomenon within the countries as well, resulting in social cultural diversity and inequalities. Hence, the management of diversity is crucial, not only in the hands of the principal role of the government, be it global or local, but also in the hands of the civil society in creating and sustaining the urban centres or cities.

Ethnicity

Ethnicity refers to social constructions and represents complex patterns of behavior, expectations, and beliefs. Ethnicity and culture are inextricably bound and the fact that, they may be certain biological and genetic concomitants of these patterns are also the product of social beliefs and practices. Ethnic identity is an enduring fundamental aspect of a person's social identity that derives from his or her knowledge of membership in an ethnic group and feelings associated with that membership (Phinney, 1996). It includes more than race and shared ancestry, referring also to beliefs, ways of communicating, attitudes, values, and behavioral norms shared by a culture (Keefe, 1992). Despite the definitional debates in the literature, there is consensus that (a) the term *race* emphasizes the person's genetic heritage, *ethnicity* highlights socio-cultural heritage, and *culture* refers more to current practices than to multigenerational heritage, and (b) that people who differ in race also differ in ethnicity but the reverse may not be true.

Belonging to an identified racial, ethnic, or cultural minority community may be important for a minority individual's development of a healthy ethnic identity, acquisition of a cultural frame of reference, learning of culturally appropriate social skills, and emotional attachment to the group and the resulting identity. This is congruent to the definition of ethnic by Landrine and Klonoff (1996) who advocated that "ethnic enclave defines *belonging* from the perspective of the social group and socialization processes that may provide emotional attachments, physical safety and positive ethnic identity reinforcement for the individual, located within a socio-cultural framework".

A Brief Look at "Sustainable Development"

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) defined sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." This statement, while admirable and important, is open for debate. While impressive, there seems to be a disconnect between concern and policy, be it, at the global level or national level. Historically, the most powerful nations of the North put environmental concerns at the center focus of development, this hegemonic interest has waned. President George W. Bush's administration has pulled the US signature from the Kyoto Protocol, attempted to disavow agreements negotiated at the Cairo Summit on population, weakened many domestic environmental regulations that articulate with global ones, deepen global investments in the fossil fuel economy rather than seeking alternative energy sources that would cause less harm to the environment. Given these concerns, how can sustainable development, in specific, urban areas be achieved? Most observers claim that this will ultimately need good governance, eradicate poverty, enable economic well-being, ensure human rights, expand the world's diverse identities, and safeguard the ecological plateau. Its premise is the principles of cooperation, efficiency, equity, integrity, and sovereignty, to name a few.

During the preparatory meetings for the URBAN21 Conference (Berlin, July 2000) the following definition was developed to define sustainable urban development:

> "Improving the quality of life in a city, including ecological, cultural, political,
> institutional, social and economic components without leaving a burden on
> the future generations. A burden which is the result of a reduced natural
> capital and an excessive local debt. Our aim is that the flow principle, that
> is based on an equilibrium of material and energy and also financial
> input/output, plays a crucial role in all future decisions upon the
> development of urban areas."

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg following the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, calls for the integration of environment and development in order to fulfill basic needs, improve living standards for all, and better manage and

protect ecosystems for long-term sustainability, particularly between sustainable growth and poverty reduction.

The concept of sustainable urban development would be discussed with the relevance of the emergence of cities, which is seen primarily as the role of the government and the shift in the government's policy will determine the future and sustainability of the administrative centres or cities concerned, and the relevance of the socio-cultural diversity in influencing the sustainable urbanization process.

History of Socio-Cultural Diversity

Socio-cultural diversity has been studied in various forms of social, political and economic construction but few in sustainable urban development. Industrialization, without doubt is the major force of existence and expansion of city development and socio-cultural diversity is a result of colonization and industrialization processes.

Let us take a look at Malaysia's classic multicultural population which is estimated at 22.2 million, at a growth rate of 2.4% per annum with 33% of the population below the age of 15 years. The majority group is the Malays (49%), other bumiputera 8.8%, the Chinese at 24.9% while the Indian descent comprise about 7%. Non-Malay indigenous groups make up more than half of Sarawak's population and about 66% of Sabah's population which are divided into dozens of ethnic groups. Others (including the Ceylonese Tamils) 3.1 %, while non-citizens, mostly Indonesian migrant workers constitute 7.2%. The minority populations are decreasing relatively as a proportion of the total population in Malaysia. For example, by 2021, the Chinese is expected to decline to 21% of Malaysia's total population. Besides declining reproduction levels, emigration is another causal factor for the decline in the Chinese ethnic. Geographically concentrated in urban areas, the Chinese are mainly engaged in commercial activities and the professions. The urban population constitutes 57.4% of the total 22.2 million in Malaysia and in Asia, the urban population growth rate is estimated at 36.7% in the year 2000.

Socio-cultural diversity and ethnic minorities with the connection to multiculturalism is often infused with political meaning that often elicits a range of emotional responses derived from experience

with issues around diversity, such as who is represented and how representation takes place, rituals and practices, culture and histories, gender and language. Advocates for multiculturalism argue that culture is pervasive and permeates people's actions, and therefore inherently political. Socio-cultural diversity espouses an understanding of how each culture is salient in a person's life and how each operates within societal systems. Inevitably, the form of socio-cultural diversity is firmly rooted in a zero-sum game of power sharing and cultural legitimacy.

It is inherent to understand the developmental hazards of multicultural experience as the world's population becomes more geographically mobile and inclined to procreate across ethnic lines (Root, 1996). Under favorable conditions, multicultural experiences may result in personal strengths such as cross-cultural adaptation, intercultural effectiveness (Cui & Van den Berg, 1991), greater flexibility, and less ethnocentric attitudes (Smith, 1991). On the other hand, experiences may result in a pattern of emotional distress and psychological vulnerability. The social consequences of their manifestations would include rejection and non-inclusion by others and subsequent social withdrawal.

Now, let us examine the historical existence of ethnic minorities of the Chinese and Indians. The existence of socio-cultural diversity and ethnic minorities is the result of the working population, motivated by considerations of economic rationality. This can be traced back to the colonialism days where different ethnic groups were involved in the respective sectors of the economy and the dichotomy of labour and ethnic stratification. The rapid increasing influx of human capital from poverty-stricken areas of southern India and southern China were facilitated in the operations of tin and rubber industries as cheap labour.

This phenomenon peaked in the late 1920s which increased the urban population of Malaya then. The city of Kuala Lumpur was the hub of development and activity during colonialism and was the pulling factor of transmigration of labour. This marked the political, economical and social development of the nation. It also resulted in the development of the first squatter settlements and high density slum area. One interesting note is that the wealthy traders had built villa residences on the suburb of Kuala Lumpur, as in contrast to the tradition of the Chinese Kapitans, who had lived in the middle of Kuala Lumpur. This phenomenon has continued through the passage of

time. Today, public-private partnership involving the city, and the role of private investors have resulted in the expansion of the hub and facilitated the acquisition of numerous economic development projects. This similar increasing differentiation of urban areas by social class were also witnessed in Melaka and Georgetown in the southern and northern urban circuit respectively. These two towns emerged as the ancient harbour towns orientation, thus pointing to the importance of peasant agriculture for urbanization.

In the context of the historical period, colonial policies were based on ethnic socio-cultural pluralism, drawing attention to the importance of the respective groups emphasizing their ethnic differences. This had the effect of accentuating social and cultural differences within and between groups (Abraham,1997). Prior to the economic depression and other political developments in the 1930s, inter ethnic relationships were determined by the ethnic division of labour, performing mutually exclusive functions. This resulted in ethnic stratifications, characterized by the political nature of the relationship between indigenous Malays and the minority immigrants. All ethnic groups suffered intra-ethnic exploitation through the mechanism of manipulation and control within the colonial system. In Malaysia, urbanization and economic development are intertwined with the cities inhabited mainly by the Indians and the Chinese, while the Malays in the Kampungs. This imbalance between ethnicity and rural/urban residence is a potential conflict, which actually took place in 1969 in Kuala Lumpur.

This was the genesis of politic-economic stratification along ethnic lines and dichotomized political and economic spheres of influence. A restructuring of society took place to reduce and ultimately eliminate the identification of ethnic with economic function through the New Economic Policy (1971-1990) and continued through with the National Development Policy (Post 1990) with emphasis on balanced development and ethnic harmony. Today, there is no clear distinction of social class and ethnic that could be easily distinguishable. The question of ethnicity and race-class dimension is and ought not to be viewed in conflict terms as a phenomenon of dominance and subordination, but in relation to the means of production, efficiency, competitiveness, skills and knowledge, thus making it complimentary.

Sustainable City vs. Sustainable Diversity

Malaysia's urban past has been shaped by internal and external forces, through the period of colonial urbanization to the post-colonial system currently supplemented by the forces of globalization. The main pattern of urbanization experienced in Malaysia is that identified by McGee as "quite rapid urbanization accompanied by economic growth and successful sponsorship of industrialization." The urbanization process is concentrated in a primate city, in this case, Kuala Lumpur, where half of the overall urban population resides and growth rates exceeding the overall growth rate of urban population (Evers & Korff, 2000). A primate city is the biggest city in the country and its population is several times more than its second biggest city, being the major port, location for the headquarters of business and administration, cultural and social centres and prime location for industrial production. In fact, the big cities in Southeast Asia strongly display the features of primate cities.

To alleviate labour shortages of semi-skilled and unskilled in selected sectors of the economy, the Government has approved the recruitment of 695,100 foreign workers as at June 2002, a decline of 10% from 769,600 as of December 2001. The majority are Indonesians numbering 580,300 or 83.5% of total foreign workers, followed by Filipinos 18,800 (2.7%), Thais 3,900 (0.6%), and Pakistanis 1,900 (0.3%). By sector, the majority was engaged in the manufacturing sector (36%), followed by plantation (26%), domestic services as household maids (23%), and construction sector (8%) (Economic Report 2002/2003). The flow of migrant workers, serves as one of the factors contributing to urban population growth. Kuala Lumpur as a primate city in the year 2003 has a population of 1,4034,000 as compared to 1,145,100 in 1991.

Flexible labour regimes have constructed the society into heterogenous ethnicity with multi socio-cultural backgrounds in big cities and major towns. Such a scenario is evident in many export-industrialized countries like Malaysia. The key principle of the new international division of labour is the search for cheap labour by many transnational companies resulting in demographic imbalances throughout the world, more evidently in the developing world affected by both the impacts of technology and demography. If we were to scrutinize the pattern, it is similar to the past history of socio-cultural existence, with the change, in the actors. Thus the challenge is to unleash the energies of various ethnics of diverse socio-cultural background without eroding and

fragmenting the social bases of cooperation, whereby the results could be substantial, for the individual, as well as the nation holistically.

On the other hand, what is the role of socio-cultural diversity and ethnicity in the maintenance of the city's survival in terms of life and growth? At the same time, what is the relevance of such diversity in achieving sustainable ethnic peace in a sustainable development of a city? To salvage the continuous existence of a city, what is certain is that an ethnic-based and socio-cultural approach is unlikely to have much of an impact on the maintenance and sustainable city in Malaysia. Let us look at some of the examples of urban cities or major towns during which they prosper during their period of glory which serve as administrative capital then, but no longer developed as a hub of activity but only remained as towns today.

The towns that functioned as colonial cities then were centres of administration, ports, and housed the state residence's home. One classic example is the town of Kuala Lipis. The town began its life as a trading center for jungle products such as animal parts for medicinal values, feathers from exotic birds, roots and herbs, collected by the Batek tribes in the interior and traded with Chinese middlemen for rice, salt and other basic necessities. The town grew as its reputation as a trading centre brought Chinese and local from afar and built atypical Chinese shophouses that still lined the 400m long main street called Jalan Besar. The colonial government built the railway to transport precious ore in 1920 extended from Gemas town in Johor in the south to Kuala Lipis, linking these isolated trading centres to the ports. Sir Hugh Clifford, the Resident of Pahang then built his residence on a hillock overlooking the town, which housed the district's law courts today. However, the reduction of riches from tin and gold and the failure to attract more Chinese traders and miners to settle in Kuala Lipis, the town's popularity eventually diminished. The colonial government relocated the administrative center of Pahang to Kuantan by the coast which is the state capital today. The bridges and railway track are still in use. So, why is it that Kuala Lipis lost its vigour?

Another example, in the state of Perak, the town of Taiping, formerly known as Klian Pauh, emerged as the major town in Perak with the signing of the Pangkor Treaty on 20th January 1874 to mark the end of Larut War. Taiping in Chinese character means 'eternal peace' and was made

the administrative center of the British government making it one of the oldest town in Malaysia. The town was founded as a result of peace between the warring Ghee Hin and Hai San mining clans. The town has many Malaysian firsts, among them, Malaysia's first railway (from Taiping to Port Weld), the first modern prison, the first museum, the first hill resort (Maxwell's Hill, now known as Bukit Larut), the first Lake Garden, and also home to a Commonwealth War Cemetery, dedicated to many war heroes. The town is full of cultural diversity and a fascinating urban heritage, but why did its survival not sustainable? At least, the town's reputation was lately revived through the Taiping Peace Initiative which was conceived in the year 2000 which was the United Nations Year for a Culture of Peace with the first peace pole planted in Taiping on 22 April 2001, as a mark of historical heritage. Is the purpose and function of the town restricted solely for historical memories and remained undesirable and abandoned for other indications?

In these two examples, it would be expected that these towns would serve as administrative centres for the respective states and expected to boom throughout the years, and not depleted its role. In the case of Taiping, the Japanese provided the turning point by establishing Ipoh as the administrative center of Perak. During their occupation in 1941, the Japanese Imperial Army transferred all administrative concerns from Batu Gajah and Taiping to Ipoh. This legacy continued after the colonial government's return to power and survived till today.

One of the modern factors affecting the development of a city is that of the development of the new information and communication technologies as can be seen in the change of future administrative center of Malaysia with the shift from Kuala Lumpur to Putrajaya. Is the "flight to Putrajaya" likely to be the pattern for future settlements?

If we were to examine the development stage of a city in Malaysia it is very much related to economic forces. The centres of administration were erected as a consequence of economic spectrum rather than the dependence of a socio-cultural factor. In other words, the various ethnic groups did not play a primary role, that would be a major factor in erecting a town, but they constitute the inhabitants of the centres of administration. The underlying factor in the emergence of Kuala Lumpur was the surge in tin production in the Peninsular in the 1890s and through many decades. The large expansion in primary production through the establishment of mines, estates,

and so on, largely with imported capital from European agency and a general rise in per capita incomes. The inflow of foreign capital and immigrant human capital (ethnic minorities), together with the indigenous farmers to commercial crops and the provision of infrastructure by government, was of sufficient magnitude (at least in the west coast of the Peninsular) to bring about the onset of modern towns such as Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, and Penang.

On the other hand, the changes in government policy were major factors bearing on the long-term sustainability of a city. As proof of point, urban centres of yesterday were those of traditional economic and social spectrum, as in the case of the major towns mentioned above. These are the centres in which business activities, employment centres, commercial and cultural facilities are brought together with the residential function. Although ultimate economic dependence still exist on these cities, yet this traditional phenomenon may decayed in time, as indicated by the shift of the government policy where Kuala Lipis, and Taiping are concerned. The future of these urban centres at that point of time were directly affected by the ebb and flow of trade and changing demographics, is largely dependent on government action. Hence, the depletion of resources and the change in government's policy has crucial impact on the sustainability of urban centres.

Does this shift of government action mean that Kuala Lumpur will nevertheless suffer the same fate? Will it end up as the city where only those without any other choice will end, decades later? Initiation of the government with the funds and freedom to push through projects like capitals and major administrative centres have a higher degree of success of establishments such as Putrajaya and Cyberjaya. The role of the state has hitherto often had a profound impact on the development of cities. The question is, are these cities capable of retaining and sustaining their roles as administrative hubs of the future? Or would they just be the technological and futuristic hub driven by high tech buildings? Or are they merely passing through?

With this point in mind, what is the post-1997 future of Hong Kong? This is a futuristic question which suggests some futuristic comments. China has always been willing to forgo its economic interests in order to make a political point. Hong Kong is at present, China's biggest asset and may become the number one city in the world, if warranted. Hong Kong under Chinese sovereignty may need to worry about the insidious effect of Chinese management on the environment,

infrastructure, and social structures. Beijing made it clear before the 1997 takeover that its idea of maintaining the status quo did not include allowing absolute freedom of the press and expression. Some Hong Kong watchers suggest that since a certain reduction in political freedom is ascertained, a more serious indicator is whether China induces Hong Kong authorities to make economic decisions in Beijing's interest. In this context, many in Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Shanghai envy Hong Kong's privileged position and believe their cities can do everything that Hong Kong can. The fact that they have that alternative in mind may make Hong Kong lose its competitive edge to others. For instance, Japan in recent years has been more prepared to invest directly in China even though it still retains its financial interests in Hong Kong, just like any other countries. Hong Kong's role as entrepot for China trade and as a regional financial centre may well decline under the current situation taking place between China and the rest of the world. The China's governance may not pay due attention to Hong Kong's sustainability. Hong Kong's fate may be to become just another one of the Chinese coastal cities albeit one rich in history, and a special local character.

In the Singapore context, the government has adopted the view that the effectuation of housing and location preferences should be sacrificed for the higher goal of residential integration of a balanced social and ethnic mix. This involved specific limits to the proportion of flats each ethnic group is allowed to occupy in each neighbourhood, and in each block in the public housing estates. The limits on individual blocks have been set three percentage points higher than the limits on neighbourhoods to allow some variation in ethnic proportion from block to block. The ethnic limits have been introduced as an additional criterion in the allocation of new flats in newly completed neighbourhoods and housing blocks in the public housing estates and New Towns. Thus, in the neighbourhood/block with too many Chinese, a Chinese owner can sell his flat to a buyer from any ethnic group, but non-Chinese owners can sell to non-Chinese buyers only. The ethnic limits also apply to the rental subsector. The government has publicly justified this by arguing that this scenario would lead to harmonious living and better understanding among the various ethnics and socio-cultural groups (Marcuse & Kempen (ed.),2000). Herein lies the relevance of the socio-cultural factor and ethnicity in urban planning. The question whether the physical and living environment is conducive to social interaction, and community spirit and the potential for

achievement in such re-engineering spatial balance remains a source of concern today and in the future.

Spatial Transformation and Role of Urban Governance

Socio-cultural differences need to be bridged rather than reinforced. The role of human capital migration in establishing a socio-cultural diversity with strong links to economic reasons which have shaped the gulf that exists between the wealthier and poorer citizens in urban centres. The contrasts in social status and wealth create a dual phenomenon where the rich and poor live together but use very different spaces. The rich visit the luxury shops whilst the poor visit the street bazaars; the rich use private cars and the poor public transport; and they have different places of work. The urban poor is classified as the "informal sector" and often viewed as being a challenge to city governance (Phang, 2001). Due to lack of provision of essential services like healthcare, waste management, water, energy, transportation, and issues like environmental pollution and degradation, the local government in cities and urban centres are pressured to support these functions (Phang, 2001). And again, different ethnics would have different spatial levels in the urban centres. This is evident in cities of today and has been a centuries-old pattern. Would there be a shift in such a pattern with the establishment of new administration centres like Putrajaya in Malaysia? These patterns of segregation and concentration are inter-related with the social, cultural, political and economic structures of the society in which they exist. And the more heterogeneous the society is in respect to ethnicity and religion, the higher the risk of conflict. Herein lies the challenge of good governance. The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, defined good governance as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a nation's affairs. This includes the complex array of mechanisms, processes, relationships, and institutions through which citizens manage affairs involving public life.

Again, the context of good governance here lies in urban governance within which the dependence upon local government is crucial in facilitating and providing good urban management in developing better cities of tomorrow. As past practices have shown, few city governments in the developing countries have provided for adequate plans of their cities, resulting in haphazard growth and physical development (Phang, 2001).

The management of diversity is a critical challenge as governments are challenged to ensure that all groups feel a sense of inclusion. Issues of ethnicity, gender, age, religion and other ecological orientations are all elements that need careful attention and policies and practices must foster inclusion. They are the context within which we must act. Institutions in civil society have been responding to these challenges. Successful integration among the three major institutions that promote good urban governance are crucial namely the state, the private sector and the civil society. The role of civil society is essential in facilitating political and social integration, ensuring participatory governance, generating social capital and fostering social cohesion.

Therefore, the principal role of the government is to sustain the diversity of civil society as well as sustaining the growth of urban society in urban cities. This, in turn, requires systems of accountability, transparency, efficiency in resource management and delivery of public services in urban centres. When the capacity of the local government to manage the economy and deliver public service is weak, the prospect for sustainable and equitable development is poor.

With the implementation of government's policy, a trend that is of noteworthy is that residential areas are not determined by ethnic but by social class that reflects a new principle of social and spatial organization in Malaysia, such as Damansara, even though undeniably, the areas identified by ethnicity do exist as in Bandar Baru Bangi. With the rapid expansion of a new middle-class and new housing schemes, rank and position in the civil service rather than ethnic became the determining factor for residential allocation. Industrialization and location of expatriates from multinational corporations, tended to have a similar impact. The hypothesis of an increasing differentiation of urban areas by class seems to be more evident, thus further studies are necessary.

The increase in land prices in favoured areas can further highlight the issue of ethnic and class in urban Malaysia whereby the integration tends to be much higher in upper middle and upper class areas in a Westernized style of living and common consumption pattern that reduce ethnic differences as already analyzed in McGee and McTaggart's study of Petaling Jaya. Herein lies the revelation of socio-cultural diversity emerging from the social class factor as the current trend of the

social ecology especially in cities like Kuala Lumpur due to urbanization and industrialization processes.

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Harmonisation of Socio-Culturalism and Urbanism

To what extent has outsourcing of human resources increased the substitutability of domestic labour across national boundaries, thereby aggravating the economic insecurity confronting workers? Undeniably, the import of human capital is crucial and has contributed vastly to the economic development and the argument holds that skilled workers are in great demand in the expanding world market. However, it can underscore that potential through its conflict with social stability, even as they provide benefits to the investors and consumers. It can undermine social cohesion on one hand, and on the other, enhance the opportunities available to those who have the skills, knowledge, and mobility to flourish in the labour market.

As can be witnessed today, employers are now less willing to provide the benefits of job security and stability, partly because of increased competition, and partly to the enhanced global mobility. This makes them less dependent on the local workforce. Therefore, we witness the increased emergence of workforce diversity in terms of skills, knowledge and various socio-cultural and ethnic background. Hence, some degree of harmonization among the various socio-cultural and ethnic groups is indeed needed.

Our society has been far from monocultural since the western imperialism. Hence, it is suggested that a set of cultural competency be established to encourage people from all walks of life, from all segments of the society to become culturally aware, sensitive and respectful towards one another, to be culturally competent, toward greater equality and recognition of diverse needs and perspectives. Few could disagree on the importance of such commitments. In essence, lives embedded within the context of ethnic minority communities, is itself embedded within the dominant Malay culture, in Malaysia. The complexity and heterogeneity of ethnic communities and socio-cultural diversity ought to be well attended and nurtured to address the collective challenges of sustainable and meaningful development. Perhaps, a sustainable urban city would be realized if

the multi-ethnics' interests were managed effectively in lieu of public participation in decision making in the well-being of human and urban development.

The stakeholders need to find effective long-term solutions together in a committed and collective action to address the social development challenges and social sustainability, crucially in local environmental conditions and ensure that local priorities are considered seriously. Best practices could be disseminated if there exists greater political commitment by the local government in implementing policies for sustainable development with the support of technical and financial assistance by other private entities. The integration of socio-cultural diversity and ethnicity into the topography of urban space is necessary to map a new meaning of public life into a paradigm of new urbanism despite its complex nature and ensure the city's continuous survival. Nonetheless, other factors such as urban governance, government's policies, which aim at sustainable urbanism can contribute crucially, irrespective of the economic situation in encompassing a very wide range of concerns.

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