



QUANTIFYING LAND USE ACTIVITIES IN
DETERMINING URBAN GENTRIFICATION: CASE
STUDY PETALING JAYA & KUALA LUMPUR

BY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of requirement for the
degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning

Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design
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SEPTEMBER 2016

ABSTRACT

Gentrification is a phenomenon which known as a shift of socio-economic upgrading of neighborhoods. It oftenly involving a direct and indirect displacement of the local population to make way for the more financially potent newcomers. The objective of this research is to determine the type of land use activities that enable the urban area to be gentrified. Apart from that, the land use types that has undergone gentrification in Malaysia need to be identified by using the land use activities calculator. Apart from that, strategies and recommendations to address gentrification issues and overcome the problems that occur in the urban area are to be formulated. The study examines the calculation of the area whether it has undergone gentrification or vice versa. The study have been conducted in Petaling Jaya and Bangsar. These study areas are the areas that undergoing the process of development. The gentrification calculators is been used to calculate type of land use activities in determining urban gentrification. The approaches of land use planning are recommended in upgrading gentrification problem in urban areas. This study adopted both quantity and qualitative approaches to access the positive and negative impact as well as to calculate whether the study areas are undergoing gentrification or not. 120 respondents are picked randomly and one stakeholders perception was being interviewed and the outcomes were analysed accordingly. Finding shows that both areas have not undergone the gentrification. However, the tendency of the study areas to turn into gentrification is high. The types of land use that has potential to be gentrified is residential. The demand of the needs of the communities in residential area is high causes the residential lots to be converted to commercial lots. The affordability of the houses is no longer exists. Traffic jams also is likely to occur. Recommendations are made based on the findings in order to mitigate the problem of the area. The principal recommendations are within the concept, planning and policy.

ملخص البحث

الاستطباقي هو ظاهرة تعرف بالتحويل الاجتماعي والاقتصادي للأحياء، وهي تنطوي في الغالب على النزوح المباشر وغير المباشر للسكان المحليين لإفساح المجال للقادمين الجدد الذين يتميزون بكونهم أكثر ثراء من الناحية المادية. يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحديد نوع الأنشطة التي تؤهل منطقة حضرية لتصبح منطقة أرقى وأغنى. وزيادة على ذلك، فإن الأراضي التي خضعت للاستطباقي ماليزيا في حاجة إلى فرز وذلك باستخدام الآلة الحاسبة المتعلقة بأنشطة استخدام الأراضي. وإضافة إلى ذلك، فإن الاستراتيجيات والتوصيات التي تعالج قضايا الاستطباقي والتغلب على المشاكل التي تحدث في المناطق الحضرية لم يتم وضعها بعد. تفحص هذه الدراسة جميع المناطق سواء أخصت للاستطباقي أم لم تخص. أجريت هذه الدراسة في كل من منطقة بيتالينج جايا وبانجسار، حيث شهدت هاتان المنطقتان عملية تنمية. وتم استخدام آلات الاستطباقي الحاسبة بغرض حساب نوع الأنشطة التي تمارس في استخدام الأراضي والتي من خلالها يتم تحديد الاستطباقي الحضري. ينصح بمناهج مخطط استخدام الأراضي في ترقية وتطوير مشكلة الاستطباقي في المناطق الحضرية. اعتمدت هذه الدراسة كلا من المنهج الكمي والنوعي للوصول إلى الآثار الإيجابية والسلبية، وكذلك لحساب ما إذا كانت المناطق قيد الدراسة تشهد الاستطباقي أم لا. تم اختيار 120 مجييا بشكل عشوائي وتم إجراء مقابلة مع واحد من أصحاب المصلحة، وتم تحليل النتائج وفقا لذلك. تبين النتائج أن كلتا المنطقتين لم تخضعا للاستطباقي. ومع ذلك، فإن احتمال تحول المنطقتين قيد الدراسة إلى الاستطباقي مرتفع جدا، كما يلاحظ أن الأراضي التي يمكن أن تتحول إلى مناطق راقية هي تلك التي تستعمل للأغراض السكنية. لقد تم تحويل الكثير من المباني السكنية إلى محلات تجارية وذلك لمتطلبات المجتمع في تلك المنطقة. القدرة على تحمل تكاليف المنازل لم يعد متاحا، كما أنه من المحتمل أن يزيد معدل الاختناقات المرورية. تم صياغة التوصيات استنادا إلى نتائج البحث بغرض التخفيف من مشاكل المنطقة، وتمثل التوصيات الرئيسية في: المفهوم، والتخطيط، ووضع السياسات اللازمة.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion; it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Urban and Regional Planning.

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I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved parents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, along with Selawat and Salam to our role model, the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Alhamdulillah, all praise to Allah for his blessings and guidance of His grace as well as for giving me strength, idea, health, ability and patience, so I could complete this dissertation. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Madam Norzailawati Mohd Noor for guidance, advice, supervision, understanding and idea throughout the study. I have been extremely lucky to have a supervisor who are very kind and cared so much regarding my work. I would also like to extend my gratitude to all lectures in Master of Urban and Regional Planning Programme, who have taught and encouraged me for what I achieved today. Huge thanks to my beloved husband and parents, my dearest sisters and brothers. Thank you for always supporting me and believing in me for every condition. Finally, I would like to thank my lovely friends who have given me helps, support, and smiles during the completion of this dissertation. This work would have been more difficult without yours.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

No city sits still. Rapid growth in the urbanized area has often been accompanied by the increased need for land, simultaneously propagating many land use activities. This has consequently presented challenges to local and regional policy makers, which need to be addressed in order to frame and determine the various policies that are to be implemented. Gentrification is not a new topic of discourse, but rather has been a part of the economic forces that have been driving urban development since the 1950s. The first phenomenon of gentrification is claimed by some scholars to have started in the 1970s as it has been a major force in shaping the fate of urban neighbourhoods in recent decades (Freeman & Braconi, 2004).

“Gentrification” has become a generalised term, and, along the years, has somewhat lost some of the significance of its origins. Instead of being defined as the end of suburbanisation, gentrification is rather a transitory trend. One would be hard-pressed to determine whether gentrification is occurring within a neighbourhood without first understanding the definition of the phenomenon. It can be said that social needs and demands, resulting from rampant urbanisation, are the root factors of gentrification, in that a rapidly increasing urban population has led to the scarcity of real estate, and has consequently driven up market prices to levels that are beyond the reach of even the upper middle class. The search for affordable property has led to this class of society purchasing real estate in areas that are traditionally considered economically deprived. The influx of the upper middle class into these neighbourhoods has eventually led to their revitalisation and redevelopment.

The aim of this study is to identify a core area that has been gentrified. A profound study needs to be conducted in order to identify the complexity of the gentrification factors and processes, as well as to analyse the land use impact to surrounding areas. There is also a further need to study land use changes and built-up land use patterns in a way to facilitate the speculation of future developments in the area.

1.2 BACKGROUND STUDY

The gentrification phenomenon has indeed been a reality in many older central city communities during the 1970s. Gentrification is a dynamic and multi-layered process. The change of social composition, whereby a population of the middle class replaces a population of the working class within an area, is likely to occur within cities and has brought rise to the term “gentrification” (Hjort, 2009).

This process, however, has evolved differently based on different social, political and geographic contexts. The economic recession of the late 1980s seemed to have reversed or at least slowed the process of gentrification in many cities during the early 1990s (Freeman & Braconi, 2004). However, the economic boom of 1990 erased any lingering doubts that gentrification would be a long lasting phenomenon.

The factors triggering the phenomenon of gentrification are also to be identified. The growth of population and economic development are among factors that cause gentrification to occur (Abbas, Said, Aksah, & Ismail, 2013). Further factors that trigger gentrification are corruption, poor planning, commitment gaps, policy disconnection and generally poor governance (Ejumudo, 2013).

The capital investment theory and sociocultural reproduction theory might also lend credence to this concept. For example, the invasion of working- class

neighbourhoods in the inner city by people of the middle class with higher incomes causes the displacement or replacement of many of the neighbourhood's original occupants. This is because gentrification also involves changes to existing buildings of the neighbourhood, particularly its function and activities, in order to satisfy the requirements of the new owners (Kotze Nico, 2013). Apart from this, many higher income households have migrated to the suburbs, which has invariably led to a concentration of poor and less educated households in the urban core, subsequently resulting in these cities facing fiscal difficulties. Raising taxable income, property values, stimulating activities as well as proceeding sales taxes can at least aid to ameliorate this problem (Freeman & Braconi, 2004). Evidently, the economy of a city can also be affected by gentrification.

Gentrification remains one of the most pressing and contentious issues facing cities today. Neighbourhoods in a number of cities have experienced gentrification for the past several decades. Petaling Jaya is one of the towns that has been selected to identify the process of gentrification. A previous study has stated that "the process of gentrification starts with changing societal needs and demands rather than the structural changes in the housing market" (Mathema, 2013). Extensive transformations in society, economy and politics have been a result of the emergence of the postmodern society, globalization, international migration, as well as individualization (Huber, 2011). The pros and cons of these effects should be studied in order to optimise the implementation of policies towards a sustainable urban future.

The negative effects of this process of urbanisation will directly or indirectly impact the city (Mathema, 2013). Therefore, in order to mitigate the negative impacts resulting from the upgrading or redevelopment of an area, integration strategies and policies need to be implemented. is the gentrification process can be a dangerous

game, as observed in the ward of Barnsbury, an urban area within the borough of Islington in London, the United Kingdom. This is because gentrification can only be seen as present to some people, as observed from quotations from respondents, without any interaction with them (Slater, 2006). Gentrification uncovers the existence of social equality, which needs to be addressed and eradicated. Thus, the review will highlight main arguments surrounding gentrification in both the historical and contemporary contexts.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENTS

Gentrification can be beneficial to the physical environment, where it introduces a new face to the town, in respect of the rehabilitation and revitalisation of the area by incoming middle-class and upper-class residents. These affluent gentrifiers have washed over the area, raising property values. A previous study has indicated that this has resulted in “successively upgrading the neighborhood's aesthetic, class and property value position” (Baion Amy, 2009).

Gentrification also results in benefits to the local community as an increase of purchasing power within the area may generate income to the existing community. However, this profit is only confined to the middle and upper-class residents. For example, residential lots may have been converted into commercial lots, possibly consisting of cafeterias, boutiques, salons, grocery stores and electrical shops, which are conquered by the upper and middle-class. This ultimately leads to further social inequality between upper and middle-class people with the existing lower-class community.

However, in conjunction with the negative impact faced by the lower-class community in terms of profit, it is perceived that urban revitalisation has positively

increased property values, tax revenue, historic preservation, as well as led to the attraction of service economy-gentrification, which also creates very harmful effects. Residents of the existing community receive much greater negative impact compared to the new incoming residents as the existing low-middle class residents are not able to afford to live in their original homes due to the escalated cost of living. As a result, they are indirectly displaced to areas outside of the gentrified neighbourhood in search of more affordable living conditions.

A previous study found that members of the lower income community, consisting of ethnic minorities, saw the affluent community, consisting of a Caucasian majority, bidding up prices for urban housing to levels that these fiscally deficient families were forced to move away from the neighbourhood. This is because there had been no more affordable housing for them to stay in, and the character of the neighbourhood had changed from one that reflected distinct ethnic and class needs, as well as cultural traditions, into a bland emporium for expensive consumer goods (Byrne, 2003). In addition, the originally private residential area had lost this level of privacy as a result of gentrification, and further experienced traffic congestion due to an increase of the neighbourhood's population. The impact of gentrification is seen to have predominantly detrimental and negative effects and social costs. Social problems seem to be more likely to occur rather than a nett gain either through local taxes or improved physical environment, as well as a reduction in the demand for urban sprawl (Slater, 2006).

The phenomenon of urban gentrification appears to contribute too many problems, especially towards members of the community who are urban dwellers, as they are directly impacted by the effects of urban gentrification. This study therefore investigates the impacts of urban gentrification towards the social, physical and

economic fabric within the study area. The technique to identify the gentrified area is also to be investigated in order to suggest a recommendation to overcome these problems.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the problems discussed, several possible research questions have been identified for the study in Petaling Jaya, as follows:

1. What are the types of land use activities that have the potential to be gentrified?
2. How to calculate the type of land use activities in determining urban gentrification?
3. What are the approaches of land use planning that can be recommended in order to address gentrification problems within urban areas?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This study aims to identify the method of urban gentrification. Based on the research questions above, the following objectives have been identified:

1. To determine the type of land use activities that enable the urban area to be gentrified.
2. To identify the land use types that have undergone gentrification in Malaysia by using the land use activities calculator.
3. To formulate strategies and recommendations to address gentrification issue in the urban area.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The output of this research is aimed at solutions that are able to overcome the problems that are triggered due to the urban gentrification process in Petaling Jaya.

Neighbourhood and Community

This study aims to contribute towards the advancement and improvement of the neighbourhood and community near the study area by recommending steps towards attaining better standards of social living. This would in turn lead to economic growth within these areas. Furthermore, members of these communities would be able to obtain information pertaining to urban gentrification that leads to implications in the social, environmental and economic aspects of their community. With this, the local community would then be able to instill awareness on how to overcome and take action towards the negative impacts of urban gentrification.

Local Authorities and Planners

This study will also provide to the local authority bodies and planners. Further, the information gathered from this study would also be able to assist urban developers and local authority bodies to formulate policies, regulations and strategies towards overcoming urban problems caused by urban gentrification, whether pertaining to social, economic or environment aspects.

Research & Development and Knowledge to Handle Urban Issues

As for members of academia, they would have the opportunity to improve upon the research findings by extending the research to a broader scale, such as from economic and social aspects, where more samples could be taken as a measure of how to

implement urban gentrification without harming the surroundings, whether physically or mentally. Data resulting from a broader and more thorough research of this issue will then be able to be used by the related authorities in resolving urban issues.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The parameters of this study are established from the research questions posed in Section 1.4. However, certain limitations were faced throughout the completion of this study, which will be further detailed in this section.

The first scope of this study is to identify the types of land use activities that have the potential to be gentrified. With that, two sites have been chosen to be further analysed.

The first site is in Jalan Maarof, which is located in the urban area of Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur. The second site is located in the neighbourhood of SS2 in Petaling Jaya, Selangor. The study concentrates on identifying a suitable method that is able to measure whether the chosen area has undergone gentrification, or whether the area has the tendency to be labelled as a gentrification area. A quantitative method will be used in this study.

The second scope of this study is to produce a method of calculation based on previous studies that will be able to aid on whether to label the study area as an area of urban gentrification site.

The third scope of this study is to formulate strategies and recommendations that will be able in a way to alleviate the problem of land use. Furthermore, these strategies and recommendations will also be able to act as guidelines so that precautionary measures can be taken. The limitation faced in respect to this scope is

the process of building a recommendation that is based on results of analyses and to support this with literature.

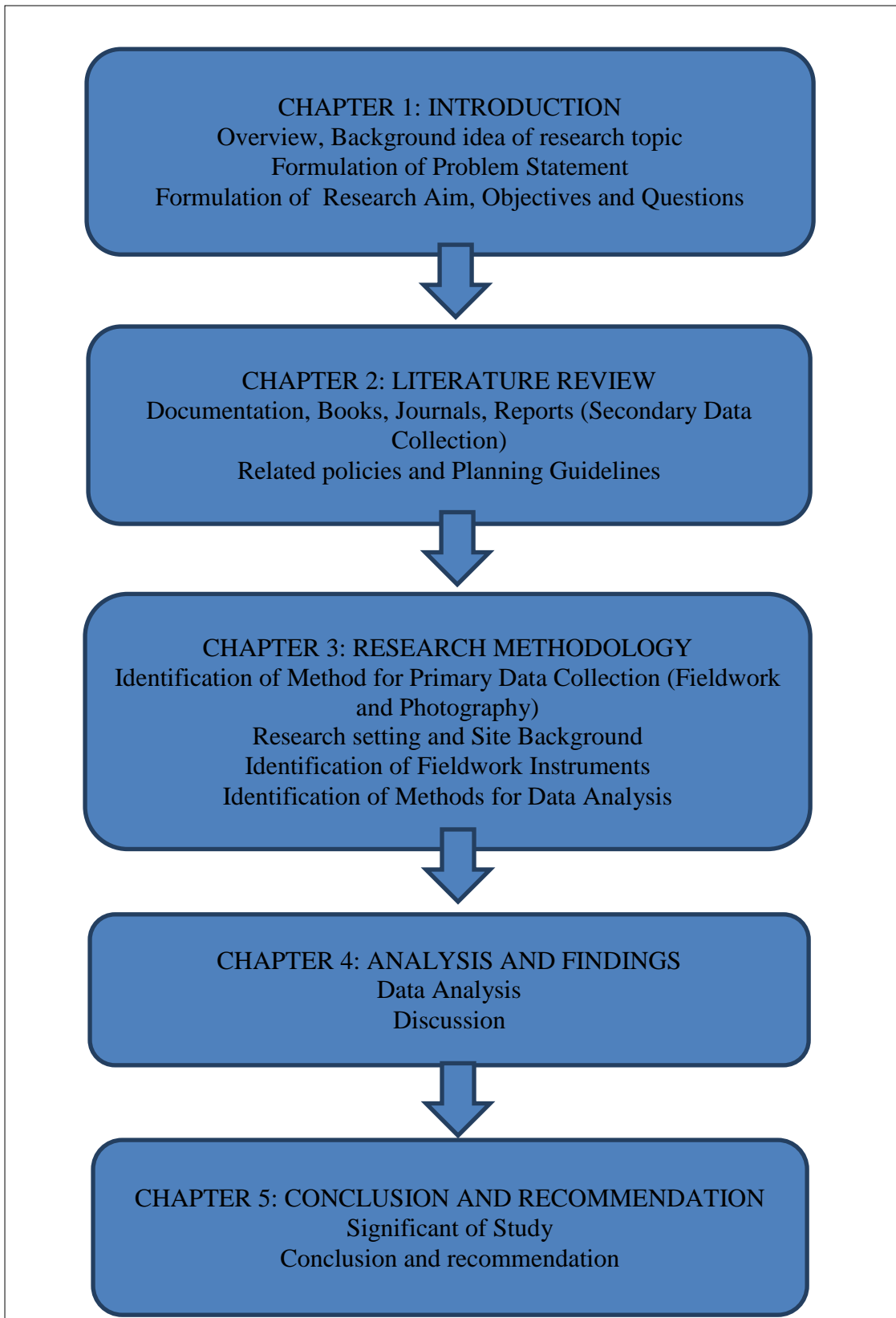


Figure 1.1 Research Methodology Framework