CHAPTER 6

Discussion and conclusions

This is the last of this dissertation’s six chapters. Its task is to bring together key elements from all previous chapters, to be assembled into an overall picture and to draw a final conclusion to the study. I organize the present chapter in three sections. The following first section recapitulates the overall structure and work of the previous chapters. The second section presents a discussion on the main findings and, accordingly, reflects upon the limitations of the study and upon potential future research directions. In the last section, I present an overall conclusion to the study.

6.1 Recapitulation

In Chapter 1, I introduced the multi-racial society of Malaysia in general and the multi-community city of Kuala Lumpur. This sets a context for urban planning and design for walkability in Kuala Lumpur, especially in relation to the sometimes tense relationships among communities and to questions of community identity in urban spaces. These raised a question of how is walkability of the city centre spaces of Kuala Lumpur to be understood, and how has it evolved? There is a second level to this question: does observation of the city’s walkable spaces and of behaviour within them suggest any effect of facilitating some intermingling of the communities, even of relaxing inter-community tensions? This question has provided the motivation for this research, the task being to seek an appropriate answer to this question, which will be revisited at the close of the present Chapter 6.

Accordingly, two review chapters have tested the literature on questions of the cultural embeddedness of ideas of walking and of ideas of community; these are
Chapters 2 and 3. In Chapter 2, I discussed conceptual issues around the intersection between ideas of walking and understandings of community as a framework in which to consider the question of walkability in Kuala Lumpur. It thereby underpinned the theoretical dimension of the research question, particularly exploring the present understanding of walkability in the context of Gordon Allport’s contact hypothesis.

In Chapter 3, I investigated the evolution of Kuala Lumpur, especially in relation to its multi-community establishment and the issue of its walkability. The history of the planning of Kuala Lumpur served as important background that could depict the development of the city from the past to the present day, physically and demographically. It provided a detailed historical account of the context for this research project. More importantly, I documented the move in Malaysian public policy to active support for an automobile-based society and the shift from a society where there was social contact between ethnically-based communities to one where such contact was greatly reduced. This research on the history of the planning of Kuala Lumpur helps to locate the questions of walkability and community identity in a planning context.

In aiming to understand walkability in the present situation of a multi-community Kuala Lumpur, I approach the study with two more specific sub-questions in mind. First, how can micro-design and micro-management make the city a more pleasant place in which to walk? Second, how do the ethnic claims erect barriers in the city against the walking of some people (i.e., social exclusion) and how might these be overcome so as to lead, somehow, to a better walkable space (i.e., provide more contact opportunities and promote social inclusion)? Therefore, I analyzed the everyday spaces of Kuala Lumpur at two levels: the city in general and certain ethnically-claimed areas in particular.

First, I investigated the everyday spaces of Kuala Lumpur in general in Chapter 4. A few major streets and areas, several of the most important festivals, and a few special events or incidents in the city have been observed. I have reported where and when
the city can be a pleasant place in which to walk. Although for the most part, at most times, the city is not a pleasant, relaxing place for walking, nevertheless, during festival seasons the city can become friendly to pedestrians. More importantly, the social exclusion seems to break down when all communities are welcome to participate in the festival celebration, even though most festivals are ethnically-based.

Second, I observed the everyday life of three old, mostly ethnically-claimed areas within the city centre of Kuala Lumpur in Chapter 5. To seek an understanding of the present complex, multi-community relationships is one of the important aspects of the study; however, the city was planned for ethnic segregation, particularly in the old city centre area. Thus a more careful observation of its ethnically-claimed areas has to be an integral part of this project. Although the physical segregation seems to have remained, the present observation of the everyday life of such spaces suggests that the ethnic barrier seems no longer to hold as firmly as previously, yet the ethnic religious stereotyping, bigotry and suspicion seem hard to negotiate.

6.2 A discussion on the main findings of the study

In the final analysis, the project is to seek an understanding of the intersections between ideas of walking and ideas of community. At the level of policy and practice, this comes down to the intersections between, on the one hand, urban planning and ideas of ‘the well designed city’ (i.e., the pedestrian-friendly city versus design for the car, or Europe/Singapore versus USA/Malaysia) and, on the other hand, Malaysian preoccupations and policies related to ethnic diversity/tensions. An underlying issue has been: can walkability in a city – multi-community Kuala Lumpur in this study – somehow lead to a more tolerant, socially inclusive and open society?

The project has observed the everyday spaces of Kuala Lumpur and uncovered ‘the two cities’ of Kuala Lumpur. First is the city of the everyday, closed and private;
people are isolated in their cars and walking is an imposition rather than a celebration (the early part of Chapter 4 and partly in Chapter 5). Second, there is the city of ethnic celebration, highly pedestrianized and barrier free, displaying specific community identity but participated in by all communities (the latter part of Chapter 4 and partly in Chapter 5). These two cities are obviously a decreed division of the city of Kuala Lumpur. Although in a sense ‘opposite’ to each other, the incongruity provides something of an enrichment of people’s experience of walking in the city. More importantly, the latter (celebratory city) plays a bridging role in negotiating differences and in conciliating identities of the different communities. It is, at most times, able to draw together all communities in a space, to encourage some degree of interaction among them, more importantly with some degree of ease, and it shows no tension.

To repeat, Kuala Lumpur as a city of festivals has been mainly presented in Chapter 4 and partly in Chapter 5. Most of the festivals have been observed and reported, albeit at varying levels of detail. During most major festive seasons, particular roads or areas will be restricted or closed to vehicles. Buildings will be decorated according to the celebrated festival. Performance stages and tents will be installed in specific places. Temporary stalls will be permitted by city authorities to be put up for vendors, selling drink, food and the festival’s necessities. However, these also will be monitored by the city enforcement officers to avoid the transgressions of opportunists. At the same time, the city will be closely patrolled by police and vehicle flow will be closely supervised by traffic police. Hence, the city will be in the state of an extraordinary pedestrianization and thus drawing the attendance of all communities to those particular spaces. Although many will be participants, others are passers-by, tourists or people who are there out of curiosity; nevertheless, the main point is that the city can be transformed into a pedestrian-friendly space.

There is an extraordinary effect on the experience of walking in the city due to the vast number of festivals that are celebrated annually in Kuala Lumpur. There is at least one festival per month, while sometimes there are a few festivals in a single month.
The festivals could be celebrated continuously for several days. The annually declared festivals or holidays encompass all the major celebrations of all the main communities, thus mostly they are ethnically-based. Although some are imitated, imagined or re-invented from original celebrations by the different communities, adaptation to local values and customs has noticeably occurred (i.e., cross influences among different communities). As a result, the festivals are now localized and have become unique Malaysian ways of celebrating ethnically-based events.

Thus, there is a dilemma in defining and subsequently sustaining the ethnic identity and differences underlying present Malaysian multi-community society. On one hand, the festivals can be seen as a positive sign that different communities are accepting each other, although not in total. On the other hand, a wider question is whether the present coalition government that has ruled the country since independence allows ethnically-based festivals as a genuine approach to resolve differences among the communities, or as showpieces to promote an urban tourism industry, or as a political strategy to placate the minority communities (Figure 6.1).
The ethnic management dilemma in a multi-community society translates into everyday urban planning practice. Alongside celebratory events – the ethnically-based cultural festivals – there are also ethnically-based celebratory urban spaces in the form of the ethnically-claimed areas. The paradigmatic case is Jalan Petaling or Chinatown – displayed as a gift to the Chinese community. Then, there is Jalan Masjid India or Little India – officially portrayed as a gift to the Indian-Muslim community; also there is Brickfields, another manifestation of Little India – this time an alleged gift to the Indian-Hindu community (Baxstrom 2008, 2010, p.10; The Star Online accessed 28
October 2010. Interestingly, in more recent times, there is Jalan Silang, the emerging Little Nepal and Little Myanmar – an emerging terrain of the fast growing guest-workers. It is remarkable that there is no equivalent gift to the Malay community. This might be seen as the Malays being everywhere and that they ‘own’ the city (UMNO politics?); or, is one to see the Malays’ gift as Kampung Baru – a gift to Malay farmers by the British in the 1900s (Figure 6.2). Or, is it that only minority communities in a multi-community society are to be placated? And they must, in turn, be very grateful to the city authority dominated, as it is, by Malays (Figure 6.3).

Figure 6.2: A strategy from the 1900s to raise support

A gift to the Malay community by the British in the 1900s. The gateway was installed in recent times (above). Kampung Baru was an agricultural settlement but is now mostly residential. It was located at the periphery of the town in the past but now is next to the heart of the modern city centre of Kuala Lumpur (right).

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Furthermore, many spaces in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur are gifts to international cohorts and drivers who are traversing the city by car – Jalan Parlimen, Jalan Tun Razak and the highways are such instances. There are also gifts for bureaucrats and corporate executives who are attending their offices also by car, but desire some open spaces near their offices – Jalan Raja Laut and Jalan Sultan Ismail are the two examples discussed. These can be seen as a further manifestation of Malaysian planning towards a car-oriented society which has also yielded Mahathir’s national car industry policy.

Chinatown (Jalan Petaling) and both Little Indias (Indian-Muslim Jalan Masjid...
India and Indian-Hindu Brickfields) are, in a sense, gifts to the tourists. Central Market likewise is a gift to tourists who love crafts and art; in fact, it is a one-stop-centre for souvenir shopping. In a different sense, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman is a gift to elitist shopping, to be seen also as part of tourism promotion via the variety of ethnically-based activities. Or, the tourists visiting Kuala Lumpur may want to see and experience Malaysian Chinatown, Little India and also do a little shopping at Central Market and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman. Who, however, would be interested in the Malays (i.e., Kampung Baru, Chow Kit)? In other words, is there a sense of Malay inferiority running through Malay culture (and UMNO politics)?

In similar vein, it is noteworthy that the Chinese cultural festivals are spectacular (e.g., Chinese New Year – the performance of lion and dragon dances and the [illegal] burning of fire-crackers); likewise spectacle attaches to the Indian religious festivals (e.g., Thaipusam – the great street procession at midnight from the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple to Batu Caves) and to the Western celebrations (e.g., Christmas and New Year – the roadside gatherings and countdowns in Bukit Bintang and Dataran Merdeka). The Malay celebration, on the other hand, is private, calm and withdrawn (e.g., Ramadan, Hari Raya Puasa and Hari Raya Qurban – the back lane night markets in Lorong Tuanku Abdul Rahman, praying and performing sacrifice ceremonies only within the mosque areas and balik kampung). Malay celebration in the main streets and public spaces in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur might therefore be seen as more about Independence and The Nation – that is, about the Malay achievement of ascendancy. The wider question is: in the context of Malaysian politics, what is public space ultimately being used to represent, commemorate and celebrate? Against that, the simple fact that the other communities participate in 31 August (i.e., National Day) and other national celebrations of the streets may be seen as an indication of the success of Malaysia in achieving a measure of communal reconciliation.

This raises the dilemma of Putrajaya. National celebration is, in important aspects, transferred to Putrajaya; this, however, is overwhelmingly a Malay space and
accordingly the multi-community space of Kuala Lumpur becomes marginalized. The effect, one might speculate, is to hand the city over to the Chinese, the Indians and the more disadvantaged under-classes (e.g., guest-workers: Indonesians, Nepalese, Burmese, Vietnamese, Filipinos, Bangladeshis, Sri Lankans, etc.).

Turning to Kuala Lumpur of the everyday, this has been partly presented in Chapter 4 and mainly in Chapter 5. There are many interesting, everyday activities that have been observed in the city, especially in the ethnically-claimed areas as well as Kuala Lumpur in general. The provision for the everyday pedestrian in the city in general is obviously poor when compared to that for festive periods. Kuala Lumpur in general has low quality walkways that are narrow, uneven, broken apart, unshaded and next to heavy traffic without any buffer. Additionally, most pedestrian crossings are poorly designed. Pedestrians either have to wait long periods for the pedestrian traffic-light to turn green (although many pedestrian lights in the city will never turn green at any time), or else pedestrians have to walk up and down the steep and high pedestrian bridges or the poorly lighted, wet, dirty and smelly pedestrian underpasses. Furthermore, pedestrians in many cities, certainly in Kuala Lumpur, are reliant on public transport services. Accessibility and integration of the public transport stations are main concerns of public transport users as of pedestrians generally, as well as issues of comfort, efficiency and cleanliness. The integrated public transport services that are proclaimed by the service providers and authorities, and which are printed on the public transport route pamphlets or maps, are in most cases inconsistent with the reality. These failings due to poor planning, inconsistent implementation and lack of maintenance are periodically highlighted, in their effect, by the hot, humid and suddenly rainy climate, leading to the problems besetting pedestrians in Kuala Lumpur.

Kuala Lumpur’s regional rival is, rather obviously, Singapore. In the latter, pedestrianization is to be viewed through two linked concepts. There is first the production of a pedestrian-friendly ‘centre’ (e.g., Orchard Road, the Quays and, more importantly, the walkways or linkages to and from both the underground and elevated
MRT stations in order to create the myth of a city of consumer happiness – a paradise for sight-seeing, shopping and eating. Second is the imperative of limited space and the need to restrict car use and its dependence. So there has been a focus on tying public transport to pedestrian comfort. In Kuala Lumpur the focus has been more on automobile use and its efficiency. This seems linked to the Malaysian vision of modernization and industrialization – the highly questionable PROTON project as a manifestation. The rivalry between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur would appear to translate into rival views of ‘the modern city’ and thereby into rival ideas of movement in the city. In addition, it is instructive to observe the urban design lavished on the Singapore riverfronts in contrast to the relative neglect of the Klang and Gombak riverfronts (Figure 6.4). Further, the Singaporean Chinatown and Little India are in some contrast to the Kuala Lumpur Chinatown and both Little Indias, although detailed comparisons of these various realms will need to await further study.

151 Mass Rapid Transit (MRT): the first section of the MRT (Yio Chu Kang to Toa Payoh) in Singapore was officially launched by Lee Kuan Yew, the Prime Minister of Singapore, in 1988 (http://www.lta.gov.sg/public_transport/index_ptoverview.htm accessed 26 March 2010).

152 Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional (PROTON): Proton, the made-in-Malaysia automotive project, was officially announced by Mahathir Mohamed, the Prime Minister of Malaysia, in October 1982 (Jomo 1989, p.44; Jomo 1993, p.272).
The Malaysian Government’s multi-billion Ringgit Malaysia (RM) investment into Putrajaya was initiated by the 4th Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato’ Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamad who was also the ‘master-architect’ of the new city, the Malaysian Federal Government Administrative Centre. The pedestrian-alienating space of Putrajaya might well be seen as the logical extension of the planning culture of automobile dedication. Putrajaya is a space of spectacle for the visitor, with much grand architecture and urban display, or for the motorist passing through it, with its many grand vistas. The vast scale and unshaded spaces, however, render it impossible for the pedestrian (Figure 6.5).
Walkability and community identity in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur

Even when there is a finely designed pedestrian environment in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur, it seems to serve and accommodate the passing VIP motorcade or the arriving visitor rather than the pedestrian (e.g., Jalan Parlimen, Jalan Raja Laut and some stretches of Jalan Sultan Ismail) (Figure 6.6). Moreover, there are many wide carriageways or highways cutting through the Kuala Lumpur city that carry high volumes of automobile traffic which, in a sense, threaten the pedestrians. Inner Ring Road (IRR) and Middle Ring Road I (MRR-I) are the obvious examples, while Jalan Damansara dividing Muzium Negara from KL Sentral is another example that indicates planning that pays little attention to facilitate pedestrians.
Figure 6.6: The good walking spaces which only serve the passing motorcade

[a] Jalan Parlimen: good walking environment, yet it serves cars rather than pedestrians.

[b] Jalan Raja Laut: wide and partly shaded walkway, serves few pedestrians.

[c] Jalan Sultan Ismail: paved and partly shaded walkway with many public transport stops, but serves no pedestrians.

The everyday activities in the ethnically-claimed areas of Kuala Lumpur seemingly play an essential role in drawing people into those areas. Observations reveal such areas to be visited by all communities in general, albeit in various degrees and proportions. For instance, Jalan Petaling is visited by mostly Chinese, followed by tourists and other communities. Likewise, Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Jalan Masjid India are visited by mainly Malays and Indians followed by other communities and tourists. While the Central Market area is interesting, this planned mixed space is now visited by mostly Malays, although managed by a private Chinese company. However, most visitors to those spaces seemingly are the everyday passers-by (i.e., passing through the areas from the public transport stations or car parking areas to their work places and vice versa, or walking into the areas only during the lunch hour break). In that sense, one wonders if a contemplated relocation of bus terminals (Puduraya and
Klang Bus Terminals) would jeopardize the viability of Chinatown, Little India and Central Market. One also contemplates the effect if the physical characteristics of Chinatown, Little India or Central Market were imitated elsewhere (i.e., at Niu-Ze-Xui in Ara Damansara, Figure 6.7), in an attempt to draw the attendance of visitors.

**Figure 6.7: Niu-Ze-Xui in Ara Damansara**

[a] The entrance/exit of the roofed street market in a suburb near Kuala Lumpur city centre.

[b] The row of stalls under the roofed street; visitors walk in the covered pedestrian mall.

For all that, there is a ‘walked’ city centre of Kuala Lumpur. Overwhelmingly, however, it seems to be a walked city for, first, the visitors and the casual shoppers (e.g., Chinatown, Little India, Central Market, Bukit Bintang, etc.) and, second, the under-classes of guest-workers (e.g., areas near the public transport stations – the gathering places of the Indonesians, Nepalese, Burmese, Vietnamese, Filipinos, Bangladeshis and Sri Lankans) and of laborers from the rural communities visiting the city once in a while in groups. Even would-be elitist space can be appropriated by these groups (e.g., the park at KLCC).

Linked to these under-class groups is an urban geography of prostitution. One surprise from the fieldwork must be the differentiation of the various locales of prostitution and the modes of illicit trade (e.g., pirated goods, opportunist street vendors who hold no official trade permits, prostitutes, etc.).

Returning to the notion of managing ethnic diversity and the idea of a well planned city associated with the ‘two cities’ of Kuala Lumpur – of celebration and of
the everyday – one can observe the festivals. The displays of festive decorations and the multi-cultural celebrations are important keys to managing ethnic diversity. The ethnic based decorations and cultural celebrations are typically used to signify the communities as the authorities try to negotiate and manage the balance between different communities. In a multi-community city, these strategies are important politically. A Malay political ascendancy is dependent for its legitimacy on appearing to be also pro-Chinese or Indian. This is achieved partly by allowing a community to ‘claim’ the city, albeit briefly, through festive decorations or cultural celebrations and a pedestrian ‘claim’ on its streets.

One can also observe the Kuala Lumpur city of the everyday. There are places that are meticulously maintained for international visitors and tourists; however, there is a lack of consistent effort to provide high quality spaces for the everyday lives of local communities. It is understandable that, as the capital city of a nation, Kuala Lumpur needs to have some showpieces for its international visitors. It is equally understandable that, as the tourism industry nowadays contributes a great amount to national income, to maintain and enhance tourist spots is essential in order to support the tourism industry. The local communities, however, receive far less attention in their day-to-day activities and movement. Although there have been some plans by the city authorities that incorporated public participation, the implementation of these has been decidedly uneven.

**Limitations and future directions**

Acknowledging that research, in almost all instances, is a circular process, this project can be seen as an unfinished work. Nevertheless, most importantly, the above discussion on the main findings has thrown some light on the initial object of curiosity. This study certainly has its limitations but, in turn, the limitations also provide possible future research opportunities. The following paragraphs are to reflect on the limitations and future directions of study.
The project was designed to observe – to participate in the life of the streets and public places, to observe that life and to describe it. While there were limited conversations and informal interviews with small numbers of the denizens of those streets, a program of extended, in-depth interviews was beyond the scope of the study. The consequence of this limitation was that the ‘second level’ of the research question – whether present forms of community contact and inter-mingling in public places are transforming attitudes and relationships between communities – remains untested. While this might be seen as disappointing, I must defend the present project as it has been designed and executed: its strength has been in establishing the ‘observed city’ as a platform on which an understanding of evolving community attitudes and behaviours beyond the public gaze of the streets and public places. What occurs after the encounters in the streets, whether chance or planned? What is said and done in the home and, if indeed there are transformations, to what extent might the participants attribute such changes to the encounters in public space?

This further stage of the research would be problematic. There would be difficulties for a Chinese Malaysian to approach a Malay with the purpose of an intimate dialogue on his attitudes to the Chinese and the formation of those attitudes. Likewise to approach Indian. There would seem to be two ways over this difficulty: first, the project could be seen as a group effort involving researchers of diverse backgrounds. It might be a worthy project to be funded by a research centre in one of Malaysia’s top universities. Second, it could feasibly be carried forward by an overseas researcher who has the benefit of good friends and contacts in the various KL communities – one only has to observe the ethnographic abilities of ‘uncommitted’ researchers like Joel Kahn, Anthony Milner, Tim Bunnell or Richard Baxstrom to realize that a ‘foreigner’ can elicit information that is barred to a ‘local’.

Insights into how people speak and behave in the private discourses of ‘their own community’ or their own home are the seriously lacking element in any research to test, for example, the Allport hypothesis. Their lack has also, to some extent, left the
project somewhat ‘one-dimensional’ – the depth or richness that I would have wished has remained elusive. To repeat, the present project has nevertheless provided a platform on which to build the next stage of what is certainly a uniquely important program of research for urban Malaysia.

It is certainly acknowledged that this next stage is dependent on either action from a major Malaysian university or the interest of a committed foreign Malaysianist. There are still, however, other project that other local researchers could most usefully address. Time and budget are always limited and, in the present case, several streets/areas (e.g., Jalan Bukit Bintang, Pudu, Chow Kit, Kg. Baru, KLCC) and festivals (e.g., Hari Wesak) could not be observed comprehensively. Their study at a future time could surely be rewarding. Further, the two fieldwork periods had gathered a considerable, rich and diverse set of data about the past and present of Kuala Lumpur city (e.g., maps, photographs, texts). These data have demonstrated that the city of Kuala Lumpur is very dynamic, constantly evolving and changing in both positive and negative ways. Therefore, a revisit to Kuala Lumpur in the future, say in five or ten years time, may yield an update that would likely uncover different scenes from those of the present observation.

Further, the geographically-focused study has provided several future research opportunities. The present study considered Kuala Lumpur which is only one of several major cities in Malaysia; there are other Malaysian cities yet to be studied (e.g., Georgetown, Johor Bahru, Ipoh, Kuantan, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu), which could lead to other observations due to different ethnic configurations and geographical settings. Additionally, study of cities in other countries within the Southeast Asian region (e.g., Singapore, Jakarta, Bangkok, Manila and Hanoi), either isolated by themselves or to compare and contrast them with Malaysian cities, also presents interesting opportunities to uncover new perspectives on walkability as these cities are inhabited by different ethnic groups with different cultures and they are also different in geographical settings. Moreover, the methodology, approach and techniques used in
this study could be transferable to study multi-community or mono-community cities outside the Southeast Asia region.

6.3 Conclusion

The research question revisited

One can at this point return to the guiding question posed in Chapter 1, which the research reported here sought to answer. That question was posed at two levels. At the first, rather simply: how is walkability of the city centre spaces of Kuala Lumpur to be understood and how has it evolved? It was hypothesized in Chapter 1 and re-stated in Chapter 2 that walkability will be a function of four inter-linked factors and the following chapters have confirmed that this hypothesis holds, albeit with some reservations:

(1) The activities and services that the space provides. On any day-to-day basis and on the evidence of the present study, these seem mostly linked to commerce, both formal and informal (even illegal), also to public-transit access points. The more disruptive failures of walkability, correspondingly, relate to public-transit interchanges.

(2) The way in which a communal identity associates with the space. Communal identities, however, are not immutable: so, as Chinese have left community areas for the suburbs these have become Malay (Chow Kit) or, more recently, Nepalese and Burmese; Chinatown will periodically mutate to Indian; the barriers in most community areas seem no longer to hold. Walking in such spaces similarly mutates.

(3) The time of the day, the time of the week, and the time of the year. Especially at festival times the automobile city dissolves into a walking city. The extent of this – the frequency of the festivals – may come as a surprise.

(4) The physical conditions of the space. While fine conditions may make space walkable, they do not thereby entice walking (Jalan Parlimen); poor conditions,
on the other hand, can always inhibit activity. Whereas the evolution of the walkable city can be seen mostly as a function of the growth and metamorphoses of the old ethnically-claimed precincts, its destruction is largely to be seen as a function of the city’s permitted physical deterioration – the growth of an automobile culture.

At this first level, the outcome of the project has therefore been a considerable enriching of the understanding of walking in Kuala Lumpur and of the walkability of the city.

The second level of the research question related to the effects of walkability – whether observation of walkable spaces and of people’s behaviour there suggests any effect of facilitating some intermingling of the communities or transformation of attitudes. Reference was especially made, in Chapter 2, to the Allport contact hypothesis of conditions to achieve good contacts between communities and consequently to ease tense relationships effectively. While it was observed in Chapter 2 that these “essential conditions” may be met in the case of Kuala Lumpur, albeit in varying degrees, the real test of the Allport argument will be in the outcomes of contact – is there any evidence of the relaxing of tense relationships? As the physical dimensions of the ethnic barriers are clearly though slowly breaking down (as Chapters 4 and 5 explore), can this lead to friendship-based contact rather than the mere contact of visibility? Nevertheless, this study remains inconclusive on this point – little real evidence has emerged of contact transforming to engagement, and the Allport hypothesis has not been demonstrated with any real conclusion. As observed in 6.2 above (under the heading of Limitations and future directions), the gathering of evidence to explore these effects was, sadly, beyond the achievable scope of the present project and must await a future project.

Other questions, other findings
There were always other questions running through the project, for example to do with issues of public policy and, in the final analysis, deriving from the research question
discussed immediately above. Walkability has something to do with the pleasantness of walking in a place. This pleasantness has much to do with both the micro-design and micro-management of public places – it therefore links to issues of both urban design and public priorities for the pedestrian vis-à-vis the motorist. In this regard there are two main findings. First, Kuala Lumpur will fall behind other developed, world cities unless it is made a more pleasant place in which people can stroll, wander, enjoy their day, meet their friends, etc. This will require something beyond the planning practices of the present city; rather, it will require a commitment to aggressive, innovative, culturally sensitive urban design interventions. Second, the old ethnically-segregated areas are now breaking down (as Chapter 5 has observed) – the areas are becoming more mixed and the city’s ‘ownership’ becomes less defined. This, surely, is an advance for Malaysian society, or a positive measure of success of Malaysian public policy regardless of effectiveness in the terms of Allport’s argument.

I also return to the more epistemological question raised in Chapter 2: are we to see a *Malaysian* construction of knowledge-of-community (as distinct from Malay, Chinese or Indian) as focused on the search for consensus (Allport, Habermas), or on the movement towards the acceptance of difference and dissent (Lyotard)? While the focus here has been on the former (arguably the more optimistic of the two perspectives), the evidence from the study could support the building of theory within either view of the world. Indeed, that evidence might reasonably support an argument that both ways of thinking inevitably co-exist in any attempt to come to an understanding of an evolving *Malaysian* understanding of the society and the city. A nuanced reading of the spaces and life of the city will most likely be coloured by uncertainty and ambivalence.

**Finally:**

In this final paragraph, I wish to highlight the two main themes in this study – community identity and walkability. First, what does community identity mean in
Kuala Lumpur at this moment in its history? It is manifested in a different way in urban spaces from what would have been the case in 1969. In other words, the relationships between communities are managed well. Second, what does walkability mean in present Kuala Lumpur? The city is manifestly based on the car; the authorities are building far better roads (highways) than walkways. In that sense, Malaysian communities are not handling walkability well enough. Therefore, although I do not have any solution to breaking down the non-physical barrier (nor even the physical, geographical barrier) between communities’ territories, I can suggest that, if the place is more physically pleasant for walking, there will be a better chance of people seeing each other and coming to accept each other. Thus, if Malaysian public policy is to improve community relationships and/or walkability in cities (particularly in Kuala Lumpur), it has to alter the balance of focus, from the automobile to walkability.
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### JADUAL HARI KELEPASAN AM PERSEKUTUAN DAN NEGERI 2009
#### SCHEDULE OF 2009 FEDERAL AND STATE PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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<td>Pesta Kaumatin (Pesta Menusai)</td>
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<td>Hari Raya Qurban (Hari Kedua)</td>
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**Conventions/Note:**

(P): Hari Kelepasan Am Persekutuan or Federal Public Holiday

(N): Hari Kelepasan Am Negeri or State Public Holiday

The original table is in Malay language.

Appendices

Appendix B

Human Ethics Advisory Group Approval

18 August 2008

Professor Ross J. King
Architecture, Building and Planning
The University of Melbourne

Dear Prof King,

I am pleased to advise that the Architecture, Building and Planning Human Ethics Advisory Group has approved the following Minimal Risk Project.

Project Title: Walkability and community identity in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur
Researchers: Professor Ross J. King (Student Researcher: Wong Seng Fatt)
Ethics ID: 0824549

The Project has been approved for the period: 18-Aug-2008 to 31-Dec-2008.

It is your responsibility to ensure that all people associated with the Project are made aware of what has actually been approved.

Research projects are normally approved to 31 December of the year of approval. Projects may be renewed yearly for up to a total of five years upon receipt of a satisfactory annual report. If a project is to continue beyond five years a new application will normally need to be submitted.

Please note that the following conditions apply to your approval. Failure to abide by these conditions may result in suspension or discontinuation of approval and/or disciplinary action.

(a) Limit of Approval: Approval is limited strictly to the research as submitted in your Project application.

(b) Amendments to Project: Any subsequent variations or modifications you might wish to make to the Project must be notified formally to the Human Ethics Advisory Group for further consideration and approval before the revised Project can commence. If the Human Ethics Advisory Group considers that the proposed amendments are significant, you may be required to submit a new application for approval of the revised Project.

(c) Incidents or adverse affects: Researchers must report immediately to the Advisory Group and the relevant Sub-Committee anything which might affect the ethical acceptance of the protocol including adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the Project. Failure to do so may result in suspension or cancellation of approval.

(d) Monitoring: All projects are subject to monitoring at any time by the Human Research Ethics Committee.

(e) Annual Report: Please be aware that the Human Research Ethics Committee requires that researchers submit an annual report on each of their projects at the end of the year, or at the conclusion of a project if it continues for less than this time. Failure to submit an annual report will mean that ethics approval will lapse.

(f) Auditing: All projects may be subject to audit by members of the Sub-Committee.

Please quote the ethics registration number and the name of the Project in any future correspondence.

On behalf of the Ethics Committee I wish you well in your research.

Yours sincerely,

[Signature]

A/Professor Qinghua Guo - Chair
Architecture, Building and Planning Human Ethics Advisory Group

The University of Melbourne Victoria 3010 Australia
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Appendices

Appendix C

Plain Language Statement

The project HREC number (Ethics ID): 0824549
Date: 18-Aug-2008 to 31-Dec-2008
Version of the Plain Language Statement: IR0818

1 October 2008

Dear Sir/Madam/Miss,

Project Title:
Walkability and community identity in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

You are invited to participate in the above research project, which is being conducted by Professor Ross King (Responsible Researcher) and Mr Wong Seng Fatt (Student Researcher) of the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning at the University of Melbourne. This project will form part of Mr Wong Seng Fatt’s PhD research thesis, and has been approved by the Architecture, Building and Planning Human Ethics Advisory Group (HEAG).

The broad aim of this research is to understand ‘walkability’ in the context of the city centre of Kuala Lumpur. Should you agree, we would ask you to participate in an informal conversation at a time and place that is convenient to you. With your permission (via verbal agreement or signing a consent form), the conversation will be noted and/or audio-recorded (the latter to be transcribed if necessary) for the project analysis purposes. Nevertheless, you may request formally to the researchers for a copy of the transcript, which will enable you to verify the information and make corrections and/or deletions.

We intend to protect your anonymity and the confidentiality of your responses to the fullest possible extent, within the limits of the law. Your name and contact details (if you provide) will be kept in a separate, password-protected computer file from any data that you supply. This will only be able to be linked to your responses by the researchers, for example, if you request the transcribed conversation. In the final report, you will be referred to by a pseudonym. We will remove any references to personal information that might allow someone to guess your identity. However, you should note that as the people we seek to interview is unique, it is therefore possible that someone may still be able to identify you.

Once the thesis arising from this research has been completed, a brief summary of the findings will be available to you on application at the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the University of Melbourne. It is also possible that the results will be published in academic journals and/or presented at academic conferences. The data will be kept securely in the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the University of Melbourne for five years from the date of publication, before being destroyed.

Please be advised that your participation in this project is completely voluntary. Should you wish to withdraw at any stage, or to withdraw any unprocessed data you have supplied, you are free to do so without prejudice. The researchers are not involved in the ethics application process. Your decision to participate or not, or to withdraw, will be completely independent of your dealing with the ethics committee, and we would like to assure you that it will have no effect on any applications for approval that you may submit.
The project REEC number (Ethics ID): 0824549
Date: 18-Aug-2008 to 31-Dec-2008
Version of the Plain Language Statement: 081018

If you would like to participate, please indicate that you have read and understood this information by giving a verbal agreement and/or signing and returning the consent form to the researchers. The researchers will then contact you to arrange a mutually convenient time to complete the interview.

Should you require any further information, or have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either of the researchers (as contact details are provided below). Should you have any concerns about the conduct of the project, you are welcome to contact the Executive Officer, Human Research Ethnic, the University of Melbourne, on ph: + 61 (0)3 8344 2073, or fax: + 61 (0)3 9347 6739.

Yours sincerely,

.......................
Professor Ross King
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning
The University of Melbourne
Parkville 3010 Victoria, Australia
Ph: + 61 (0)3 8344 4880
Email: rossjk@unimelb.edu.au

.......................
Mr. Wong Seng Fatt
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning
The University of Melbourne
Parkville 3010 Victoria, Australia
Ph: + 61 (0)4 3340 9808
Email: s.wong4@grad.unimelb.edu.au
Appendix D

Consent Form

The project HREC number (Ethics ID): 0824549
Date: 18-Aug-2008 to 31-Dec-2008
Version of the Consent Form: 080818

Consent form for persons participating in research project

Project Title:
Walkability and community identity in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Name of participant: ........................................................................................................
Name of researcher(s): Professor Ross King and Mr. Wong Seng Fatt

1. I consent to participate in the project named above, the particulars of which – including
details of the interview and/or informal conversation - have been explained to me. A
written copy of the information has been given to me to keep.

2. I authorize the researchers to use for this purpose the interview and/or informal
conversation referred to under (1) above.

3. I acknowledge that:
   (a) The possible effects of the interview and/or informal conversation have been
       explained to me to my satisfaction;
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time
       without explanation or prejudice and to withdraw any unprocessed data
       previously supplied;
   (c) I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will
       be safeguarded subject to any legal requirements;
   (d) The project is for the purpose of academic research.

4. I consent to give permission to the researchers to record the interview and/or informal
conversation by using any reasonable recording procedure such as audio and/or video
recorder, and I acknowledge that I in the interview and/or informal conversation to be
referred to by pseudonym or identified by name in any publications arising from the
research.

Participant signature: ..............................................  Date: .............................

Contact (address / phone number / e-mail/ etc.):

........................................................................................................................................

Note:
1. Participant must be over 18 years of age.

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The University of Melbourne Victoria, 2013 Australia
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Appendix E

Schedule of Fieldwork Data

The project HRDC number (Ethics ID) 0824549
Date: 18-Aug-2008 to 31-Dec-2008
Version of the Schedule of fieldwork data: 006818

Project Title: Walkability and community identity in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Critical review of records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This is a list of address and a general checklist of the categories of materials will be gathered; however, it is depending on their availability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**National Archives of Malaysia**
Arkib Negara Malaysia, Jalan Dutia, 50568 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 6201 0688 Fax: +60 3 6201 5679

**National Library of Malaysia**
Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, 232, Jalan Tun Razak, 50572 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 2687 1700 Fax: +60 3 2692 7502

**State Library of Selangor**
Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Selangor (Perpustakaan Raja Tun Uda)
Persiaran Bandaraya, 40572 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 5519 7667/7682/7679/7685/7691 Fax: +60 3 5519 6045

**Kuala Lumpur City Library**
Perpustakaan Kuala Lumpur, No. 1, Jalan Raja 50050 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 2612 3500 Fax: +60 3 2693 7313

**National Museum of Malaysia**
Muzium Negara Malaysia, Jalan Damansara, 50566 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 2282 6255 Fax: +60 3 2282 6434

**State Museum of Selangor**
Muzium Sultan Alam Shah, Persiaran Bandaraya, 40000 Shah Alam, Malaysia.
Tel: +60 3 5519 0050 / 5510 3190 Fax: +60 3 5510 1799

**Kuala Lumpur Museum**
Maps
Photographs
Text descriptions
"Special events/festivals" in the past at site (1, 2, and 3)

**Newspapers Archives Centres**
Photographs
Text descriptions
Reports on the "events" related to the site (1, 2, and 3)

**Planning Agencies (DBKL, JPBDB, Lembah Klang JPM, etc.)**
Recent past and current/future planning interventions of the site (1, 2, and 3)
Planning guidelines
Planning proposals

**Underlying Questions:**
What is the genealogy of the place (site 1, 2, and 3)? How has it evolved?
What is the role and function of the site (1, 2 and 3)?
What is the future planning (physical conditions) of walkability of the city?
Appendix E  continued

2. In-field observations
The following list will need to be elaborated depending on the characteristics of the specific site. Maps, lists, digital photography etc will be employed.

Site:  1 / 2 / 3

Date: (time of day, day of week, event/festive):
    e.g. 25.12.2008 (10am, Monday, Christmas)

Weather conditions:
    e.g. sunny, cloudy, rainy, etc.

Access to this site (pathways):
    Where do people park cars?
    Where do people park motorbikes?
    Where are public transport points (LRT, Monorail, buses, taxis, etc)?

    Trace the pedestrian pathways to the site. (Map)
    Obstacles on the way? (Map)
        Heavily trafficked roads
        Interruptions to pedestrian paths
        Impediments to wheelchair etc access
        Other e.g. exposed to hot sun or rain, flooding

Activities, facilities, services along pedestrian pathways to the site. (Map)
    Ethnic community indicators? e.g. signage, clear identity of shops, etc.

Activities, facilities, services at the site:
    Map and describe
    Physical conditions: shading, seating, etc?

Pedestrian activity:
    Why are people there? (guessing … but check where possible)
    Who is there?
        Ethnicity, gender, age groupings, families or couples or singles or groups
        of friends etc
    What are their activities? What are they doing? (Map, sketch, list, etc)
    What ‘dramas’ seem to be played out?
        Competition for space (stallholders, etc)
        Meetings, gatherings
        Courting

Underlying Questions:
    Is there a ‘time economy’ at play? How might it be characterised?
    Is the identity of the place segregating in its effect? Is it integrating?
Appendix E  continued

3. **Interviews (conversations): Shopkeepers, stallholders, loiterers, etc**

Not all of these categories of questions will be addressed to every respondent, as the list will be curtailed depending on circumstances.

*(observe)*

Where interviewed?

**Who is interviewed?**
- Role (activity, occupation)?
- Community (ethnicity)?
- Gender?
- Age group?

*(ask)*

Why are you here? Activity?

How did you come here?

How often do you come here?

What do you especially like/dislike about this place?
- e.g. let the interviewees talk (conversation)

What do you think of its physical conditions?
- Shading?
  - As a place to walk?
  - As a place to sit, relax, meet, shop, etc

Do you feel that this area ‘belongs’ to just one community? What is your view about that?
- e.g. let the interviewees talk (conversation)

**Underlying Questions:**
- What is the ‘profile’ of users, visitors, etc of this place?
- To what extent is it seen by its users as ethnically appropriated?
- To what extent does it attract/exclude particular people?
Appendix E  continued

4. **Interviews (conversations): Planners**

Not all of these categories of questions will be addressed to every respondent, as the list will be curtailed depending on circumstances.

*observe*

Where interviewed?

Who is interviewed?
- Role (activity, occupation)?
- Community (ethnicity)?
- Gender?
- Age group?

*ask*

What department/unit are you working with?

Where do you live? How do you come to work?

How often do you walk in the city centre? Where do you often walk to? Why you walk there?

How often do you go to the sites (1, 2, and 3)? Do you think the sites (1, 2, and 3) are interesting to walk?

What do you especially like/dislike about the sites (1, 2, and 3)?
  e.g., let the interviewees talk (conversation)

What do you think of their physical conditions?
  Shading?
  As a place to walk?
  As a place to sit, relax, meet, shop, etc

What is your view about the past/current/future planning interventions on the sites (1, 2, and 3)? Did/will they attract more people to walk there?

Do you feel that this (site 1, 2, and 3) area ‘belongs’ to just one community? What is your view about that?

What do you think the planners can do to improve the walkability of the city?
  e.g., let the interviewees talk (conversation)

**Underlying Questions:**
- What is the planners comment to improve walkability of the city?
- To what extents are the planners committed to improve the walkability?
- What do the planners mean by walkability (in Kuala Lumpur)?
Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:
Wong, Seng Fatt

Title:
Walkability and community identity in the city centre of Kuala Lumpur

Date:
2011

Citation:

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/36386

File Description:
Ch.6

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