



URBAN LANDSCAPE CHANGES IN KAMPUNG BARU, KUALA LUMPUR, FROM 1969 TO 2004 AS OBSERVED ON MAPS

Nor Rasidah Hashim¹ and Naziaty Mohd Yaacob²

¹Faculty of Environmental Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43400 Serdang, Selangor, Malaysia

²Department of Architecture, Faculty of Built Environment, University of Malaya, 50603 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Corresponding Authors: ¹rasidah@env.upm.edu.my; ²naziaty@um.edu.my

Abstract

Kuala Lumpur has undergone massive development since Malaysia gained its independence in 1957. Our map analysis describes how Kampung Baru, which is a little pocket of traditional Kuala Lumpur, has changed in two different post-Independence periods: 1. The mid-20th century (1969) and 2. The early 21st century (2004). The maps used are published by the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia at the scale of 1:50,000 for the 1969 map and at 1:10,000 for the 2004 map. Our observation shows that in both maps, Kampung Baru is having a historical-spatial relationship with Sungai Klang but the importance of the river to the people has changed over time as does the surrounding areas. The spatial patterns of Kampung Baru at the map scales appeared to be relatively regular, and the natural topography in and around Kampung Baru is clearly shown to be impacted by anthropogenic activities that have been driven by rapid population growth. This map-based analysis adds to our understanding about the on-going process of urban development in Kampung Baru.

Keywords: Kampung Baru, map analysis, urban development

Introduction

Kuala Lumpur is a growing city and has been the capital of Malaysia since the country gained its independence in 1957 and as the leading city Kuala Lumpur has been undergoing rapid development since the later half of the 20th century and well into the 21st century (Gullick, 1994; KLCH, 2003). Much of our current understanding about Kuala Lumpur's urban development comes from socio-

economic analysis (Gullick, 1994; Shaw et al., 2009; Suleiman and Lokman, 2000; Khairil Azhar, 2009; Yasmin Mohd Adnan and Md Nasir Daud, 2010) and there is still a considerable lack of studies on the historical-spatial analysis despite the abundance and diversity of maps of Kuala Lumpur (see Shaw et al, 2009; KLCH, 2003). Therefore in this paper we use map analysis to understand the urban morphology of Kuala Lumpur by observing changes occurring in the city's

traditional village, Kampung Baru. The significance of this study is two-fold: 1. Describing how traditional villages (old settlements) in the middle of a growing city such as Kuala Lumpur evolved over time, particularly in relation to land use. 2. Demonstrating the usefulness of map analysis in providing an important layer of information for 1 above.

Our study is guided by the following questions:

1. Within 35 years (from 1969 to 2004), how did the landscape features and land form patterns changed in Kampung Baru as observed in maps?
2. Any visible or discernable spatial patterns of land use? Are the land use patterns regular or haphazard?
3. What were the significant effects of the changes to Kampung Baru?

Materials and Methods

Kampung Baru

Kampung Baru¹ was chosen as a case study to illustrate the subject matter due to its historical and cultural significance as an urban entity with its close proximity to the Kuala Lumpur city centre in the face of rapid development and escalating property prices (KLCH, 2003; Shaw et al., 2009; Suleiman and Lokman, 2000; Khairil Azhar, 2009). Much of this enclave is full of traditional houses, with the earliest dating back 100 years at the least and a majority were built from the

1950s to 1970s (Shaw et al., 2009). Due to the socio-political conundrum particular to the Malay Straits Settlement, the British administrators decided and made a legislation that Kampung Baru was to be developed and owned exclusively by the Malay ethnic group, who in turn mainly kept to the traditional status quo and this resulted in the difficulty of obtaining the many plots of lands due to different ownership, by large corporations for massive development (see LPMAS, 2009; Sundaily, 2011).

Map analysis

Map analysis can be done by “reading” a map (in hardcopy or softcopy versions), i.e. qualitative analysis and/or by quantitative spatial analysis in geographic information systems (e.g. Goodchild, 2008; Knowles, 2008). In both map analysis techniques, spatial changes can be detected by comparing maps of different time periods (e.g. Goodchild, 2008; Knowles, 2008). Although maps do not tell the entire history, but when used in combination with textual documentation, our story telling will become more powerful and evocative (Knowles, 2008; Rumsey, 2004; Woods 1992). This means that map analysis can provide not only the explicit spatial records, but also certain embedded socio-economic information contained in the maps or even the incomplete knowledge about a particular place. In this study, the maps were scanned and the uploaded into a computer and then analysed by in a graphic software. The software allowed

¹ Written sources do not agree on the year of Kampung Baru’s establishment; Hands (1941) and Shaw et al. (2009) stated it to be in the year 1899, whereas Gullick (1994) wrote down 1902, and 12 January 1900 according to the LPMAS (2009).

for zooming in or out of the original map scale for better focus (to pick out the map details) or overall perspective (to see the connection with surrounding areas).

The maps being used in this study are published by the Department of Survey and Mapping Malaysia (DSMM), which is the country's mapping authority since 1885 (DSMM website). The earlier map (hereafter called "1969 map"; Figure 1) was published in 1969 at the scale of 1:50,000 (map unit in inches), whereas the later map (hereafter called "2004 map"; Figure 2) was published in 2004 at the scale of 1:10,000 (map unit in centimetres). These scales are appropriate to study the landscape-level geography of the study area, which is the middle part of the maps that corresponds to the area covering Kampung Baru and its immediate surrounding areas (see Figures 1 & 2). The map analysis results are then interpreted with the help of secondary data obtained from the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (KLCH), published literature and online sources.

Results and Discussion

The summary of our map analysis can be found in Table 1. Firstly, Kampung Baru is indicated in both the 1969 and the 2004 maps as being a part of the urban sprawl on the northern bank of Sungai Klang. In the 1969 map, the entire study area was denoted by one place name,

"Kampung Baharu". We noted here that "Kampung" is the older spelling for "Kampung", and "Baharu" is another spelling for "Baru" (Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2005). In comparison, the same area is spatially divided and labeled with four place names in the 2004 map. The four place names are: 1. Kampung Baharu – two places (however the old spelling "Baharu" is being used in the map), 2. Kampung Periok, 3. Kampung Chendana and 4. Kampung Kolam. Clearly in the 2004 map, Kampung Baru is shown as being spatially distinct from these other villages.

There are a number of questions that arise from the map analysis: 1. Which area on the map is exactly "Kampung Baru"? 2. Why do the place names on the two maps differ? 3. Why are the place names in the 2004 map more in keeping with the literature than in the older 1969 map? Such cartographic irregularities as well as the map-literature mismatch might be due to either inadequate expertise² in place history or changing political boundaries. In the first instance, it is learnt from written sources, Kampung Baru was a name given by the government at the time to call a cluster of smaller villages that each already had their unique names. Originally nine villages, but the number (and areal size) was reduced to seven by the 1960s: 1. Kampung Hujung Pasir, 2. Kampung Periok, 3. Kampung Masjid, 4. Kampung Paya, 5. Kampung Pindah, 6. Kampung Atas A, and 7. Kampung Atas B. In the second instance,

² Caveats to this effect were provided on the maps as follows: in the 1969 map, on the lower left side: "THIS MAP IS NOT AN AUTHORITY ON BOUNDARIES"; in the 2004 map, below the scale bar we can see: "This map is NOT an authority on boundaries" and "Users noting errors or omissions on this map are requested to inform the Director of National Mapping, Malaysia".



Figure 1: A section of the 1969 map of Kuala Lumpur showing Kampung Baru. Kampung Baru (“Kampong Baharu”) is indicated in full lined circle and the muslim cemetery is indicated in dotted circle.



Figure 2: A section of the 2004 map of Kuala Lumpur showing Kampung Baru. All the Kampung place names are circled. Note there are two places labeled Kampung Baru on the map (thick circles). In addition “Rizab Pertanian Melayu” and the muslim cemetery are also indicated on the map (dotted circles).

Table 1: Comparison of mapped features between the 1969 map and the 2004 map

Mapped features	1969 map	2004 map
Place names	Only “Kampung Baharu”	- “Kampung Baharu”, “Kampung Periok”, “Kampung Chendana” and “Kampung Kolam” are indicated - “Rizab Pertanian Melayu” (Malay Agricultural Reserve) is also indicated
Natural topography (rivers, swamp)	- Sungai Bunus - Sungai Klang	Sungai Klang
Spatial patterning (regular/ haphazard)	- Road networks appeared to be constructed according to a plan - Houses along the roads and rivers	The same as in previous
Public transportation facilities	- many roads	- More roads - LRT station near the Pasar Minggu
Noteworthy social/ cultural features	- 1 mosque (“masjid”) - 3 schools (“sekolah”) - 1 health clinic (“klinik”) - 1 weekly bazaar location (“Pasar minggu”) - the Chief Minister of Selangor house in the northern section of Kampung Baru - 1 social club (“Kelab Sultan Sulaiman”) cemetery - access bridge to and from across the river	- 2 mosques - 6 schools - 2 health clinics - 2 flats - cemetery - highway running along the river; no bridge connecting the cemetery and Kampung Baru
Surrounding areas	High-rise buildings concentrated in areas to the left of Kampung Baru	High-rise buildings have spread to nearly all areas around Kampung Baru

confusion could easily arise because the boundary of Kampung Baru in the early days was not clearly demarcated (no early map could be located) and that the boundary had changed over time as inferred from written sources as follows: Hands (1941) stated that Kampung Baru is “an area of about 223 acres of land lying between the Klang River and Batu Road” but Shaw et al. (2009) suggested that Kampung Chendana (“the area Chandana”), which is located on the other (south) side of Sungai Klang and therefore is outside of the Hands’ boundary, was also a part of Kampung Baru until ‘Kuala Lumpur City government’ bought off the area for high-rise buildings in the 1960s.

Secondly, our map analysis shows that the spatial patterns of Kampung Baru at the map scales appeared to be relatively regular, that is following some kind of proper planning. In particular, the road networks are dense and linear. Obviously, by 1969 the roads had been constructed to provide access to nearly all of the houses, which had been built in multiple rows. Living in the urban sprawl, Kampung Baru area residents used these roads for walking, cycling as well as for their motorised vehicles. The roads were also used by public transportation (buses and taxis) to ferry the residents to work or schools. Written sources confirm that Kampung Baru is a top-down initiative from its beginning (e.g. Hands, 1941; Gullick, 1994). This means that the establishment and development of Kampung Baru had been “planned” from the beginning, although the plan is refined over time (Hands 1941; LPMAS, 2009; see also Wong, 1991). In the period of 1899 and 1900s, the British government

had intended for the people of Kampung Baru to be “Malay” (excluding Javanese but including Sumatrans) so as “to educate the children of Malays (1) to take a part in the administration and (2) to enable them to reap some of the advantages of the present prosperity” (Hands, 1941, p.1). But the settlers were subject to settlement tax and contract rules, e.g. fines for failing to cultivate plots. Only in 1965 that the settlers were given land titles (“Qualified Title”; LPMAS, 2009).

Thirdly, the public transportation facilities in Kampung Baru are seen to be changing with the times. In the 2004 map, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) station located in the southern part of Kampung Baru, on the northern bank of the Sungai Klang, was opened in 1998 to provide access to Kampung Baru and connectivity to the rest of Kuala Lumpur for both visitors and residents (LPMAS, 2009; Siti Yusrime Yusuf, 2010). The LRT line and stations in Kampung Baru is constructed underground (clearly indicated in the 2004 map) so commuters would have to take the escalators or stairs to get to the road level.

The next anthropogenic feature that we will describe is the cemetery. In both the 1969 and 2004 maps, the religion for those buried is indicated by the given place name “perkuboran Islam” or Islamic cemetery. Further map analysis revealed that in the 1960s there was an access bridge across the river from Kampung Baru to the cemetery but none was available in 2004, instead a highway, which is running along some lengths of Sungai Klang, obstructs access to the cemetery from Kampung Baru (Figure 2). As a result, the living relatives could no

longer visit the graves as easily as the time before the highway construction (LPMAS, 2009; Siti Yusrime Yusof, 2010).

Other social and cultural features clearly indicated on the maps include mosques, schools, health clinics. Apart from community facilities and amenities, those found particular to only the 1969 map were: 1. the Chief Minister of Selangor's residence, 2. a social club and 3. a weekly bazaar (Figure 1). The official residence of the Chief Minister had been moved to its present location in Shah Alam some years ago since Kuala Lumpur was annexed from the state of Selangor and made a Federal Territory in 1974 (LPMAS, 2009). The social club called "Kelab Sultan Sulaiman" is now a community hall, whereas the weekly bazaar is still existent but nowadays the bazaar takes places every day (Siti Yusrime Yusof, 2010). The map analysis shows that in 2004 social housing which are high-rise flats were built by the government and are located in the outer edge of Kampung Baru (Figure 2).

Next we describe the natural topographical features shown on the maps. In terms of elevation and slope, the contour lines in the 1969 map show that much of the Kampung Baru areas are low lying and relatively flat, that is the entire area including the rivers are below 125 feet (40 m) and that part closest to Sungai Klang is below 100 feet. Similarly, in the 2004 map the lowest contour elevation is 35 m (105 feet). Two rivers (Sungai Klang and its tributary, Sungai Bonus) were clearly shown to be flowing through the study area in the 1969 map. However, the 2004 map shows that only Sungai Klang is flowing through. Moreover, in the 1969 map,

embankments could be seen along the riverbanks, especially on banks of the larger Sungai Klang, which suggested that river flooding was a concern. Although much of the riverbanks was low lying and swampy, such conditions were actually suitable for wet rice growing and it is widely known that in the past the villagers planted rice along Sungai Klang until as late as the 1960s (Hands, 1941; LPMAS, 2009; Shaw et al., 2009). Back then, the irrigation for paddy fields depended on the river and rainfall, and river flooding was periodic because heavy rain in Peninsular Malaysia used to fall during the rainy seasons (LPMAS, 2009; Hill, 1974; Hashim 2006). However, in the intervening years between 1969 and 2004, the massive development in Kuala Lumpur had affected the rivers and thus the types of land use along the riverbanks also changed (Shaw et al., 2009; Yasmin Mohd Adnan and Md Nasir Daud, 2010). On the studied maps, we can see the evidence of how the smaller Sungai Bonus was modified during which it was straightened and redirected and eventually covered by pavement and buildings. The bigger Sungai Klang has also gone through different types of river management for flood mitigation, drainage and irrigation (KLCH, 2003).

The natural topography has been modified by the physical development, which is driven by the rapidly increasing population of Kampung Baru. In 1960 the estimated population was 19,030 people and in 2000, the population had reached 45,000 people (KLCH, 2003; Siti Yusrime Yusof, 2010), or 200% increase in less than 50 years. More housing is required to be built in Kampung Baru as elsewhere in the city, thus resulting in more flats

and linked houses (see above; Siti Yusrime Yusuf, 2010). Although we do not investigate how the living conditions of the residents in Kampung Baru have changed over time, we refer our readers to studies conducted at the ground level which found that most ordinary city folks in Kuala Lumpur have to cope with air and noise pollutions daily (Sumiani et al., 2002; Abdul Azeez et al., 2010).

Finally, the surrounding areas around Kampung Baru have also changed with the times (see KLCH, 2003; Yasmin Mohd Adnan and Md Nasir Daud, 2010; Figures 3 & 4). In the 1969 map, most of the high-rise buildings were concentrated in the left side of Kampung Baru. In the 2004 map, high-rise buildings could be seen to have spread to other areas around Kampung Baru.



Figure 3: A photograph of Kampung Baru in the 1960
(Source: www.macamnilahkita.com)



Figure 4: A photograph of Kampung Baru in the 2011
(Source: www.macamnilahkita.com)

Conclusion

Located within the heart of fast-growing city of Kuala Lumpur, Kampung Baru has struggled to keep up with massive urban development while preserving its traditional heritage. This struggle was highlighted in our findings, e.g. in the (mis)management of natural topographic features (rivers, swamps) and in providing or hindering access for public use and enjoyment (cemetery, transportation, rivers). We feel that this map analysis has contributed to our understanding about the on-going process of urban development in Kampung Baru. We also hope that urban landscape planners and architects, who routinely use bigger scale maps (e.g. 1:1,000) to focus on smaller areas in their projects, will find the findings of this study useful.

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