



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***SOCIAL AND ETHNIC INTEGRATION THROUGH SHAPING CULTURAL
LANDSCAPE IN URBAN RESIDENTIAL AREAS TOWARDS ACHIEVING
ONE-MALAYSIA CONCEPT***

NURUL 'AQILAH BINTI AZIZ

FRSB 2014 17



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**MASTER OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

2014



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By

NURUL 'AQILAH BINTI AZIZ

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

March 2014

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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NURUL 'AQILAH BINTI AZIZ

March 2014

Chair: LAr. Nor Atiah binti Ismail, PhD

Faculty: Design and Architecture

The cultural landscape is a reflection and evidence of human responses to the environment, including the elements of imaginative and spiritual vitality embedded in their way of life. In a modern residential setting, the cultural landscape plays the role of representing an impression of the natural environment, a green component for people in the form of serenity, calmness, aesthetics, edible products and meaningful values in addition to giving natural resources for health. The majority of residential areas in Malaysia are populated by three major ethnicities, namely the Malay, Chinese and Indian communities. The literature shows evidence of cultural landscapes to encourage socially and environmentally harmonious living environments. This potential to address the various issues and gaps between ethnic groups in local neighbourhoods that lead to integration, which however still not being fully explored in Malaysia. At the same time, the contributions of a cultural landscape in an urban residential area are not well-established. These green areas are perceived as having designs that are behind the times, outdated, old-fashioned and not relevant in a modern technological world as one of the ways to enhance the physical character of the residential area. On the other hand, evidence from various studies also indicate the contrasting theory on cultural landscape which highlights this type of garden as promising to be one of the ways to elevate social and ethnic integration in semi-private gardens in urban residential areas.

This qualitative research is adopted with case study in medium-cost housing in Saujana Puchong, Selangor. A pilot study was conducted which is Focus Group Discussion (FGD) among professionals in order to capture their review and strengthen the issues of this research. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to discover the landscape characteristics of medium-cost housing to foster ethnic integration. The findings of this research provide the evidence that there are ethnic influences residential landscape characteristics which refer to cultural landscape. These cultural landscapes embedded with high values and potential to be used as elements to bridge important national issues pertaining to ethnic integration, while at the same time stimulating the

feeling of neighbourliness and caring for the environment. Due to the limited open spaces provided for each unit houses, this research provides the design for multi-ethnic community garden that can be implemented in urban residential areas.



Abstrak tesis dipersembahkan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

**INTEGRASI SOSIAL DAN ETNIK MELALUI PEMBENTUKAN LANDSKAP
BUDAYA DI KAWASAN KEDIAMAN BANDAR DALAM MENCAPAI KONSEP
SATU MALAYSIA**

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Landskap budaya merupakan refleksi dan bukti gerak balas manusia terhadap persekitaran, termasuk elemen-elemen imaginatif dan kesegaran rohani yang tersemat dalam cara hidup mereka. Dalam persekitaran kediaman moden, landskap budaya memainkan peranan dalam menggambarkan tanggapan terhadap persekitaran semula jadi, sebuah komponen hijau bagi manusia dalam bentuk ketenangan, ketenteraman, estetik, produk edibel dan nilai-nilai bermakna di samping menyediakan sumber semula jadi untuk kesihatan. Majoriti kawasan kediaman di Malaysia didiami oleh tiga etnisiti utama, iaitu komuniti Melayu, Cina dan India. Kajian menunjukkan bukti landskap budaya menggalakkan persekitaran kehidupan yang harmoni dan sosial. Keadaan ini berpotensi untuk menyelesaikan pelbagai isu dan jurang antara kumpulan etnik dalam kejiranan setempat yang membawa kepada penyepaduan, akan tetapi ia masih belum diterokai sepenuhnya di Malaysia. Kawasan hijau ini dianggap mempunyai reka bentuk yang ketinggalan zaman, sudah lapuk, kuno dan tidak relevan dengan dunia teknologi moden merupakan satu cara untuk mempertingkatkan ciri fizikal kawasan kediaman. Sementara itu, bukti daripada pelbagai kajian juga menunjukkan teori yang berbeza mengenai landskap budaya yang menyerlahkan taman jenis ini berpotensi untuk menjadi salah satu cara untuk meningkatkan penyepaduan sosial dan etnik dalam taman separa peribadi di kawasan perumahan bandar.

Kajian kualitatif ini menggunakan kajian kes bagi perumahan kos sederhana di Saujana Puchong, Selangor. Kajian rintis telah dilaksanakan, iaitu Perbincangan Kumpulan Berfokus (FGD) di kalangan profesional untuk mendapatkan ulasan mereka dan mengukuhkan isu-isu kajian ini. Temu bual separa berstruktur telah dijalankan untuk mengetahui ciri-ciri landskap perumahan kos sederhana untuk memupuk penyepaduan etnik. Dapatan kajian ini memberikan bukti terdapatnya pengaruh etnik terhadap ciri-ciri landskap kediaman yang mana merujuk kepada landskap budaya. Landskap budaya ini

tersemai dengan nilai dan potensi yang tinggi untuk digunakan sebagai elemen-elemen bagi menghubungkan isu-isu negara penting berkaitan penyepaduan etnik, dan dalam masa yang sama memupuk semangat kejiranan dan mengambil berat terhadap persekitaran. Oleh kerana ruang terbuka yang terhad disediakan kepada setiap unit rumah, kajian ini menyediakan reka bentuk bagi taman komuniti pelbagai etnik yang boleh dilaksanakan di kawasan perumahan bandar.



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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (date of viva voce) to conduct the final examination of Nurul ‘Aqilah binti Aziz on her thesis entitled “Social and Ethnic Integration through Cultural Landscape in Urban Residential Area towards Achieving 1Malaysia concept” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VIII
TABLE OF CONTENTS	XIII
LIST OF TABLES	XVI
LIST OF FIGURES	17
 CHAPTER	 19
1 INTRODUCTION	19
1.1 Research Background	19
1.2 Problem Statement	21
1.3 Research Goal	22
1.4 Research Questions	22
1.5 Research Objectives	22
1.6 Significance of Study	22
 CHAPTER	 23
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	23
2.1 Cultural Landscape	23
2.1.1 Cultural Values Model	25
2.2 Ethnic Cultural Landscape	28
2.2.1 Malay Cultural Landscape	28
2.2.2 Cultural Landscape Of The Chinese Community	33
2.2.3 Indian Cultural Landscape	35
2.2 Garden As An 'Ideal' Place For Integration	40
 CHAPTER	 43
3 METHODOLOGY	43
3.1 Introduction	43
3.2 Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	43
3.2.1 Process of Focus Group Discussion	43
3.3 Case Study	44
3.3.1 Criteria of site study	44
3.3.2 Process of Selection	45
3.3.3 Site study	45
3.3.4 Site Location and Boundary	46
3.4 Research Method & Process	47
3.4.1 Documenting Physical Traces	48
3.4.2 Semi-structured Interview	49

3.4.3	Appropriateness of Research Questions	50
3.5	Analysis of Data	52
3.5.1	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	52
3.5.2	Documenting Physical Traces	52
3.5.3	Semi-structured Interview	53
CHAPTER		55
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	55
4.1	Introduction	55
4.2	Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	55
4.3	Documenting Physical Traces & Semi-structured Interview	57
4.3.1	Types of plant species	57
4.3.2	Significant of plant selection	59
4.3.3	Landscape composition	60
4.3.4	Ethnic Influences categories	63
4.3.5	Percentage of respondent according to ethnicities	64
4.4	Establishing themes	66
4.5	The Garden As Emblematic Of Spiritual And Cultural Values	67
4.5.1	Expression Of Belief And Culture	67
4.5.2	Reflection Of Ethnic Values In Decoration	71
4.5.3	A moment to Remember	73
4.6	The Beneficial Garden	74
4.6.1	Products of Gardening	74
4.6.2	The Beauty and Aesthetic	78
4.7	The Garden as The Locus for Social Need	80
4.7.1	A Beautiful Garden to Spread	80
4.7.2	Adopted Area	83
4.8	Summary of the findings	87
4.9	Multi-ethnic landscape design	89
CHAPTER		93
5	CONCLUSIONS	93
5.1	Conclusions	93
5.2	Recommendations	93
5.3	Implications	93
5.4	Contribution of Knowledge	94
REFERENCES		95

APPENDICES	102
BIODATA OF THE STUDENT	128
PUBLICATION	129



List of Tables

Table 3. 1 : Statistic data indicate the number of population according to three ethnicities at three different sites (source: Malaysian Statistic Department)	45
Table 3. 2 : The design process for Inventory plans	49
Table 3. 3 : Semi-structured list of questions as a guide for Interview session	51
Table 3. 4 : Summary of data collection procedures.....	51
Table 3. 5 : The example of coding frame derived from the FGD output	52
Table 3. 6 : Summary of data analysis procedures	54
Table 4. 1: Recurrence of the plant species in resident's garden	58
Table 4. 2 : Landscape characteristics in Malay respondents' house	61
Table 4. 6 : Example of coding frame that resulted to categories.....	64
Table 4. 7 : The percentage of respondent according to ethnic influence categories	65
Table 4. 8 : Summary of findings	88

List of Figures

Figure 2. 1 : Natural Landscape and Cultural Landscape (after Sauer 1925/1963)	23
Figure 2. 2: Three fundamental categories and the range of landscape values express	25
Figure 2. 3 : Temporal dimension of landscape comprising three fundamental components.....	26
Figure 2. 4 : The surface values and embedded values in Cultural Values Model	27
Figure 2. 5 : Theoretical framework to indicate the cultural and ethnic values that influences the residential landscape	28
Figure 2. 6 : <i>Cymbopogon nardus</i> (serai wangi).....	29
Figure 2. 7 : <i>Pandanus amarylifolius</i> (pandan)	29
Figure 2. 8 : <i>Mangifera indica</i> (Mangga).....	30
Figure 2. 9 : <i>Cocos nucifera</i> (kelapa).....	30
Figure 2. 10 : <i>Musa</i> spp. (Banana).....	30
Figure 2. 11 : Environment of traditional Malay house	31
Figure 2. 12 : Typical Malay house in rural area	32
Figure 2. 13 : Hard landscape element associated with Malay culture	32
Figure 2. 14 : Landscape characteristics of Malay house at urban residential area	32
Figure 2. 15 : Example of typical Chinese house in rural area with red plant material	34
Figure 2. 16 : Landscape character shown in the Chinese house at urban area	34
Figure 2. 17 : Percentage of Malaysia citizens according to ethnicities	35
Figure 2. 18 : Rubber plantation	36
Figure 2. 19 : Rubber tapping is one of the major incomes for the Indian community	36
Figure 2. 20 : Chitty community area in Malacca.....	37
Figure 2. 21 : Chitty or Indian Hindu Peranakan.....	37
Figure 2. 22 : Indian community house with the mango leaves and symbolic picture frame	38
Figure 2. 23 : Symbolic statue and sculpture represents the Indian cultural values at urban residential area	38
Figure 2. 24 : “Sacred lotus”	39
Figure 2. 25 : <i>Thulsi</i> plant which is familiar with medicinal purposes.....	39
Figure 2. 26 : Jasmine flower	40
Figure 2. 27 : Community garden	41
Figure 3. 1 : Map of Malaysia shows the location of Selangor state	46
Figure 3. 2 : Maps show the site location and boundary which located at Saujana Puchong, Selangor, Malaysia.....	46
Figure 3. 3 : Location of respondents’ houses at Taman SP 10, Saujana Puchong, Selangor	47
Figure 4. 1 : Common perspectives by professionals from Focus Group Discussion	56

Figure 4. 2 : Example of Inventory Plan	57
Figure 4. 3 : Usage of plants in Saujana Puchong	59
Figure 4. 4 : Arrangement of categories into themes	66
Figure 4. 5 : Mini temple in the garden of house Respondent 18	69
Figure 4. 6 : Modern mini temple for prayers.....	70
Figure 4. 7 : Basin to burn sins and palace lantern for decoration besides as Chinese cultural practice.....	70
Figure 4. 8 : Lion dog to guard the house	70
Figure 4. 9 : Symbolic water features and statue as garden decorations.....	71
Figure 4. 10 : The artwork reflects Buddhist beliefs.....	72
Figure 4. 11 : One of the elements in a home garden, carved with Chinese word.....	73
Figure 4. 12 : Landscape setting replicating rural cultural landscape.....	73
Figure 4. 13 : Grated coconut placed on bench for drying process.....	75
Figure 4. 14 : Traditional cakes called ‘Putu Piring’	76
Figure 4. 15 : Edible plants (curry and kunyit leaves, ‘limau purut’, and pandan leaves	76
Figure 4. 16 : Special garden for vegetables species	77
Figure 4. 17 : Flowers purposely planted for prayers uses	77
Figure 4. 18 : Organised potted plants to express the aesthetic perception	79
Figure 4. 19 : Landscape design for decoration	79
Figure 4. 20 : Edible plants that being shared with neighbours	81
Figure 4. 21 : The gardens owner with his jackfruit tree	82
Figure 4. 22 : ‘Kantan’ flowers.....	82
Figure 4. 23 : The garden that attracts people.....	83
Figure 4. 24 : Respondent create a space for social activities.....	84
Figure 4. 25 : ‘Kampong’ style home garden setting.....	85
Figure 4. 26 : View of the illusionist open space in the Respondent garden	85
Figure 4. 27 : Corner lot unit with wider open spaces for social activities.....	86
Figure 4. 28 : Findings shows the existence of cultural values at Saujana Puchong residential landscape using Cultural Values Model.....	87
Figure 4. 29 : Multi-ethnic community garden design that can be implemented in urban residential area	90
Figure 4. 30 : Example of Gazebo design which combine the values from each ethnic.....	91
Figure 4. 31 : Design of Pergola with climbers and creepers plant species.....	91
Figure 4. 32 : The planter box with plants species for the community garden	91
Figure 4. 33 : Example of community garden design	92

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Malaysia is a multicultural country with total population over than 27 million people from various ethnicities. The population comprises three major ethnic groups including Malays (50.3%), Chinese (23.8%), and Indian (7.1%) while the rest represent others ethnic (Rozita Ibrahim, Nazri Muslim, and Ahmad Hidayat Buang, 2011). Zaid Ahmad (2007) stated that Malaysian society often associated with plurality of ethnicity and religious.

Malaysia which has variety of ethnicity is not being exempted from facing challenges on social and ethnic issues since its independence in 1957. Historically, during the colonial period, policy of “divide and rule” by British has lead to separation among various ethnic groups (Zahara Aziz et. al., 2010). Due to the little social contacts among the ethnic groups, the attitudes of prejudice and ethnic identities occur (Mahli, 1988). Azmah (2001) added that this phenomenon lead to the formation of divisions, groupings, and competition between ethnic groups. The unforgettable incident highlighted the racial issues and led to bloodshed and destruction of property was the 13 May 1969 riot¹. The tragedy have shows the weakness of unity and ethnic relation among the Malaysian (Zahara Aziz, Amla Salleh & Hardiana Ema Ribu, 2010). In early 2001, the ethnic clash present sparked violence between Malays and Indians, caused by a misunderstanding which arose during the preparations for a wedding ceremony at the same time that there was a funeral procession, as reported by Kalinga (2001) via Inter Press Service (IPS). Nowadays, the challenges that contribute to racial issues may arise from education, economic, politics and social aspects. In the education sector, for example, interaction among multicultural students is still lacking and the preference to be among one’s own ethnicity is greater (Mustapha, Azman, Karim, Ahmad, & Lubis, 2009). Economic issues were debated on when people realised that there was uneven economic distribution for economic development among ethnicities (Zahara Aziz, Amla Salleh & Hardiana Ema ribu, 2010). From the political and social aspects, racial issues can be seen in the struggle for political power. Recently, the battle of the eagerness among political parties towards the leadership through the Malaysia’s 13th General Election lead

¹ The racial riots sparked after the result of federal elections on May 1969. As a result, 184 people were killed, and houses, shops and vehicles were torched. The Malays were afraid that the changed results of the elections did not guarantee their privileges as indigenous people (Saad & Jacob, 2012) since most of the business sector was owned by the Chinese.

to ethnic relation remains intimidating (Abdillah Noh, 2014). Zahara Aziz, Amla Salleh & Hardiana Ema Ribu (2010) stresses the vital of measuring the unity periodically to evaluate the effectiveness of policy and programs conducted by government. Despite all the challenges faced, Malaysia remains as one of the world's successful developing countries. Nevertheless, continuous attention to social and ethnic issues is still required to maintain the harmony and success of the country, especially on improving the integration of multicultural residents in an urban neighbourhood area.

The government of Malaysia has conducted a number of efforts in order to improve integration among its citizens. For example, from the educational aspect, in order to ensure integration, school curriculum and examinations were centralised, aside from teaching tolerance and national consciousness (Mustapha, Azman, Karim, & Lubis, 2009). In higher level of education such as in university also play the role to improve integration through the activities held that contribute to creating awareness and motivation among students towards interaction within various ethnic groups (Zaharah Hassan et. al., 2010). From the social aspect, ICT and community networking play the main role as enablers to improve integration (Hashim, Abdul Rahman, Md. Jahi, & Marzuki, 2011). Nobaya et al. (2008) supports this notion and believes that through television broadcasting media, youths are seen as agents of integration using ICT. Mohd Sofian and Hussein (2013) argue that the media coverage that did not manage wisely can contribute to racial tensions (Yong and Md Sidin, 2010).

Another approach taken by the Malaysia's government is through a housing scheme as one of ways to improve integration because the majority of residential areas in Malaysia comprise mixed ethnicities, namely, Malays, Chinese, and Indians, who live together in one neighbourhood. Local researcher Nobaya Ahmad (2003) suggests that people who live in mixed residential neighbourhoods tend to socialise and integrate with other ethnic groups, compared to people who live in mono-ethnic neighbourhoods.

Wirth (1947) says that housing is one of the platforms that are able to encourage social integration. This understanding is supported by Mann (1958), Gans (1972), Bassett and Short (1980). Besides housing, the surrounding context of a neighbourhood also impacts the residents' social behaviour (Kuo & Sullivan, 2001). Their theory explains that people who live in environments which do not have greenery, such as parks, trees, forests or meadows, will be more aggressive compared to people who live in green surroundings. Hanhoster and Molder (2000) support this idea by explaining that conflicts between cultural groups can be avoided in residential areas when intercultural communications occur. Gardens with attractive environments can improve residential areas and enhance the interactions between different cultural and social groups (Hanhoster, 2001). This finding shows the effectiveness of residential area to promote the integration within community. In this study, an attempt to explore one part of residential

area's element which is residential landscape as medium to foster integration among various ethnic group.

1.2 Problem Statement

A numbers of effort have been implemented towards improving the integration in Malaysia. However, the level of integration in Malaysia is still average (Zahara Aziz et. al, 2007). The researchers revealed that the current level integration in Malaysia is at level 3 which is compromise and cooperation among ethnic groups. In addition, the findings indicated the deterioration of ethnic unity from 1993 to 2007 among Chinese and Indian, while Malay shows no improvement (Khalim Zainal & Norshidah Mohamad Salleh, 2010). Further extension study on level of integration enhances that Malaysia should achieve level 4 of integration "collaboration level where the various groups had agreed to create one identity to become one nation". (Zahara Aziz, Amla Salleh & Hardiana Ema Ribu, 2010). A previous study on youth in Malaysia resulted the similar finding which shows that the level of tolerance is average (Ezhar et al, 2006). Khalim Zainal & Norshidah Mohamad Salleh (2010) stressed the needs of more serious effort towards multi-ethnic unity among the youth to be done as they play important role for the future of the country. Rozita Ibrahim (2007) also agreed that ethnic issues are still remaining crucial especially in multicultural country like Malaysia.

Integration can be promoted through different approach and perspectives such as educational, economic, social and environmental. A few studies on the effectiveness of environmental approach contribute towards integration have been proved. For example, research on gardens that can stimulate social cohesion by Teig, Amulya, Bardwell, Buchenau, Marshall and Litt (2009); variety in activities held in the garden as one of the ways to promote social integration (Sempik & Aldridge, 2005); gardens as 'playscape' for children by Mohd Suhaizan (2008) & Marcus and Sarkissian (1986); and a study on how gardens provide opportunities for social activities among adolescents (Makinen & Tyrvaenen, 2008; Seeland, Dubendorfer & Hansmann, 2009). However, most of the studies focus on wide scale of landscape as part of environmental approach towards integration. There is minimal study have been carried out in smaller scope of landscape which is residential landscape that fit the local surrounding context that can foster ethnic integration. This begs the question what is the residential landscape characteristics that have potential towards integrating different ethnicities in a mixed neighbourhood. Thus, this study is part of effort on fostering integration through environmental aspect specifically on residential landscape characteristics in urban areas.

1.3 Research Goal

This study aims to explore the cultural influences in landscape characteristics of medium-cost housing in Saujana Puchong that have the potential to foster ethnic integration.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. How the ethnic influences on residential landscapes in urban medium-cost housing areas?
- ii. What are the landscape characteristics that can help to foster ethnic integration in medium-cost housing?
- iii. What is the landscape design that can be implemented in urban residential area to foster ethnic integration?

1.5 Research Objectives

The research objectives were structured to address the outlined research goal and research questions:

- i. To identify ethnic influences in landscape characteristics of urban medium-cost housing;
- ii. To determine the potential of landscape characteristics that can foster ethnic integration in medium-cost housing; and
- iii. To recommend the multi-ethnic landscape design that can be implemented in urban residential area to foster ethnic integration.

1.6 Significance of Study

This study was conducted to explore the residential landscape characteristics that have potential to foster ethnic integration. The landscape characteristics are expected to have influences of cultural values which provide the understanding of Malay, Chinese and Indian ethnics and to be a great medium to foster integration.

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