"STUDENTIFICATION" IS IT A KEY FACTOR WITHIN THE RESIDENTIAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IN KUALA LUMPUR?

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ABSTRACT Studentification is the process that generates from residential concentration of Higher education students and accompanied by spatial structure transformations which has social, economic, cultural and physical impacts in districts enclaves of university campuses or higher education institutes. This process is believed to have some influences like gentrification and can stimulate social segregation and the widening socio-spatial polarization of different social groups, via the displacement of established residential groups. Studentification has been represented as a British phenomenon; although; recent evidence suggests that it occurs within other international contexts. The important key factor in this regard is the government-sponsored expansion of higher education to foster global economic competitiveness and innovation via knowledge-based economies and societies. In this paper we wish to scrutinize the meaning, causes and consequences of studentification and raise questions about some of underlying influences and effects of current and future forms of urban change in Kuala Lumpur city. We do this by focusing upon the relationships between national agenda in terms of economic and knowledge development and regional as well as local plans and strategies, and consider how process of studentification may be instrumental to the production of gentrifiers within Kuala Lumpur city context. The outcome of this study will support the residential decision making process.

Keywords

Studentification, Higher Education Students, Residential Decision Making.

1. INTRODUCTION

Gentrification was first understood as the rehabilitation of deteriorated, disinvested and low-income housing by middle-class outsiders in central cities (Ley, 1996; Lees et al., 2008). A broader conceptualization of the process began to emerge in the late 1970s, and by the early 1980s a far broader meaning of gentrification was developed by scholars. The linkage of the process with saptial, social and economic restructuring attempts had been done during this period. It was evident in the redevelopment of waterfronts (Ergun, 2004; Guzey, 2006), the rise of demand for third economic sector which leaded to employment boom in service sector and consequently rise of hotel and convention complexes in central cities (Weber et al., 2007), large-scale luxury office and residential developments, and stylish, high priced shopping districts (Smith & Williams, 2006).

Lees et al. (2008) in their recent book about gentrification point out to mutation of gentrification. They argue that: [C]apturing the temporal and spatial changes to the gentrification conveys the mutation of the process. The derivatives of the term "gentrification" has certainly changed and the term's meaning expanded to include the middle-class (re)settlement of outside urban areas (changing the spatial determinism of inner-city gentrification), 'new-build' developments (questioning the historic built environment of gentrification), and super-gentrification (questioning the assumptions in stage models of an endpoint to gentrification).

New definitions of gentrification according to Lees et al. (2008), introduces new gentrifiers and new places rather inner-cities. Students according to Smith (2005) are the new gentrifiers who invade particular areas of the cities and towns in which popular universities are located. This will lead to the process

of social, environmental, and economic change that is named as "Studentification". The process like gentrification originated in Britain, but it has also recently adopted in American English to refer to similar problems arising from the overpopulation of many U.S. 'college towns'.

It is assumed that such processes can be seen even in second tier cities and or the cities in developing countries that desire to follow the global restructurings in terms of economy, politic and culture. This is the motivation of the current research on studentification in developing countries. We are going to search for the exact meaning, cause and consequences of process and evaluate whether it can be a considerable issue in city like Kuala Lumpur. The appraisal of phenomenon through literature and future plans certainly can support our future work on modeling and simulation of the residential dynamics, which needs to focus on dominant residential groups and categories in order to better figure out the future social, economic and spatial structure of the areas.

The rest of this paper is divided into four sections. In following section the meaning of "studentification" is outlined. Its impacts from different points of view are highlighted. In sections 3 and 4 the Malaysia National plans and agenda as well as Kuala Lumpur structural plan 2020 are studied to find the evidence of studentification in contemporary state or in future situation of the study area. The final section suggests thinking and anticipating of the studentification in spatial structure of Kuala Lumpur city and considering its significance in residential decision making process.

2. STUDENTIFICATION

Studentification is associated with seasonal, in-migration of higher education (HE) students often generating a distinct social, cultural, economic and physical transformation within university towns (Smith D., 2005).

According to D Smith (2005) the Processes of studentification imply urban changes which are tied with commodification of 'single-family' or the repackaging of existing private rented housing, by small scale institutional actors (e.g. property owners, investors and developers) to produce and supply houses in multiple occupation (HMO) for HE students.

He defines the process of studentification in the same vein of gentrification that in the 1980s and 1990s, dramatic transformations associated with the processes which have captured the interest of the Britain media. The term "Studentification" was listed in the top 100 new words of 2002 (BBS 2002), and has seep into numerous national media articles. Chrisafis (2000) described the effects of the process in Leeds. She outlines the replacements of families by students in past three years. The dramatic rise of

home prices which knocked first-time buyers out of market. The shortage of children in the area caused school closure. She also pointed out to the political impacts such as electoral role-over which its percentage in a studentified area is about 7 times more than the average of other city wards.

There are cultural and social changes that are outlined by Harris and McVeigh (2002), the conversion of pubs to theme bars, which often close during the time of returning the students to their homes. The significant existence of fast-food takeaways and off-licences selling cheap alchohol which dominate the shopping streets, all are the main aspects of studentified areas.

The four key dimensions of studentification by which we can distinguish the process from the other urban changes are as follow:

Economic: studentification involves the revalorization and inflation of property prices, the seasonal demand for houses turnes the economy to seasonal manner, which is vital for many small shops. Similarly, employment too would be seasonal, and much in part-time. Knock-on effects can be investigated in high service costs, including policing, environmental health, cleansing and so forth. Insecurity is the other reason which means high insurance premium, for property, contents, and vehicles.

Social: Normally the transformation of population in studentified areas means the influx of chattering classes (from the universities) which will change the balance and coherent feature of previous settlers.

The social impact of studentification happens when loss of amenity and high house prices make a considerable emigration. The loss of services such as school closure can affect on failure of social networks, the one that is a consequent of transient population also. The owners are not occupiers anymore; this is regarded as "Absenteesm" (UK National HMO Lobby, 2005).

During term-time the evidences of Low-level antisocial behavior, noise and minor vandalism are common. This will be scrutinized in next section.

Cultural: The student presence is often supposed to bring 'dynamism' to the area, but we cannot digress from consequences like noise. The presence of a mass group of young population can be the reason for some areas to become the focus of a pub culture; based on the student market, this then will attract youth from all over the other areas. The 'night-time economy' definitely annoys residents. The central Headingley in Leeds on Friday and Saturday nights; and on major sporting occasions (especially international football) experiences this condition, the pub clientele has several times spilled out during the day, and brought traffic to a complete standstill (UK National HMO Lobby, 2005) . The participatory programs have not sound appearance in studentified areas. And they play no part in public debate:

studentified areas have lowest electoral turnout (National HMO Lobby, 2005). The need for presence of older active people to keep alive the area's past history can not be provided. Certainly activists can sustain the present community but this would be in threat by a few numbers of them. Moreover, the number of children- who are the community's future is essential in these areas.

Physical: Mostly in affected areas no property is immune from conversion to student accomodation, not only mansions, semis and terraces, but also shops, offices and even outhouses and garages. Good quality buildings would be vandalized by poor quality dormer additions, basement conversions, and outward extensions. The fabric of the buildings will be left to deteriorate, or patched up by cowboy builders. Curtilages (gardens, yards), once the pride of their owners, will left to run wild, or razed to the ground, or concreted over. The incidence of burglary has leads to installation of security grills over doors and windows.

Fig. 1: One of studentified neighborhoods in Cork, Ireland.

Environmental: The neglected feature of streets will happen through lack of care which is more evidnt in neigborhoods that residents don't feel the belonging sense (Sabri & Mosharzadeh, 2005). D Smith (2005) points out to litter and large-scale waste are strewn over streets and cartilages. The misused and abused rubbish bins and virtually collapsing of waste recycling in studentified areas of Leeds are complained by residents. The ubiquitous flyposting and discards flyers can be easily investigated in these settlements. The general neglect encourages graffiti. The start of each academic year, as students return, the streets are congested and it will be remained so during term-time. Cleansing and maintenance are blocked. Road surfaces (and marketings) suffer erosion, especially as on-street parking is frequently on-pavement- which obstructs pavements for pedestrians, and breaks down kerbs and verges.
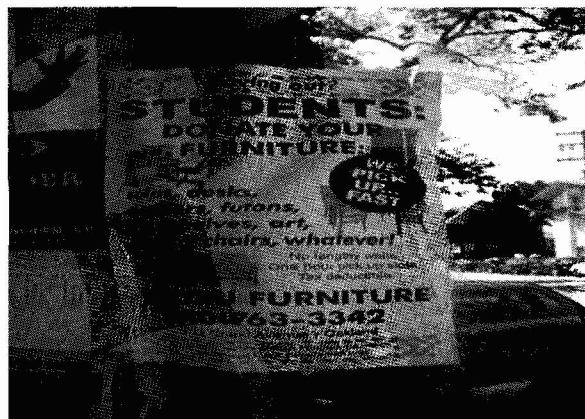

Fig. 2: The ubiquitous flyposting in Berkley, California

All the mentioned general impacts can normally happen in studentified areas in all around the world as nowadays its pace is traced in US college towns (lobbystudentif.htm, 2005). But the question is that what is the main reason behind the vast orientation towards the higher education? In line with long-standing theorisation of gentrifiers production, it can be argued that the promotion of HE (and thus the increase of HE students) is closely connected to reproduction of post-industrial service-based socio-economies, and the dramatic rise in the total number and percentage of the labour force with higher educational qualifications (Smith P. D., 2005). Post-industrial nations developed participation in higher education as a new establishment and ongoing agenda, and this is linked to the professionalization of the occupational and employement structures in metropolitan and global cities.

The existence of a growing opportunity for HE students highlights a braoder cultural and ideological change within society about the view and situation of higher education. One of considerable outcomes of this transformation is individual and familial middle-class attitudes and perceptions that an important phase of the 'typical' lifecourse of middle-class individuals and households involves the movement away from the parental home to study at a higher education institute.

Relating to theorisations of causes of gentrification, this manifestation can bring a broad change in gender relations and demographic patterns (Bounds & Morris, 2006), lifestyle preferences and reproductive orientations, such as postponment or rejection of marriage, family formation and childrearing (Smith P. D., 2005). These are called "apprentice gentrifiers" (Smith & Holt, 2007) which is going to extend the meaning of gentrification. Hence, we are facing with a new significant process that can produce gentrifiers whose behaviors as agents should be considered (Jackson et al., 2008), especially in growing and developing areas that

have globalize-oriented plans for their future (Denholm, 2006; chatterton, 2000).

3. NATIONAL PLANS AND AGENDA

"Raising the Capacity for Knowledge and Innovation and Nurturing a First-Class Mentality" this is the second key trust identified in National Mission 2006-2020 (NM) of Malaysia. Putting emphasize on knowledge-based economy as the key determinant of country's future success and raising the capacity of its people by five strategies (Bruton, 2007) are the main reasons that can be considered as stimulators of new urban phenomena in city context of Malaysia and especially in KL as the Capital city.

The five strategies are based on holistic human capital development programme, comprehensive improvement of the education system at three levels (primary, secondary and tertiary), producing universities of international aiming to fulfill the needs of employees, encouraging top quality R & D, science and innovation environment and achievement of national growth and development by empowering youth and women for their full participation.

The Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010 amplifies the policies and key objectives of the NM's five main trusts which the second one was outlined above, the NM statement provide the basic structure for the Ninth Malaysia Plan. Thus for the second thrust the plan indicates that the country's human capital will be developed in order to a transform to a knowledge-based economy. Imropvement of education system will be achieved by new programmes and projects. The enhance of tertiary education quality to international standards, nurturing top quality research and development, scientific and innovation capability as well as empowering the youth and women can be succeed through the provision of more education and training opportunities (Bruton, 2007).

In line with National Malaysia Mission 2006-2020 and Ninth Malaysia Plan 2006-2010, ministry of higher education has visions and missions that can notifies the evidence of emerging the new urban phenomenon in terms of changing the urban feature by higher education students and the related functions: The ministry vision is " To Turn Malaysia into a Center of Excellence for Higher Education" this would determine the mission of ministry to develop and put in place a higher education environment that encourages the growth of premier knowledge centers and individuals who are competent, innovated with high moral values in order to meet national and international needs. The objectives which are defined based on the vision and mission can further convey the significance of

anticipation for influx of higher education students into cities in Malaysia and especially in Kuala Lumpur that most of state and private higher education institutes are located inside or in the periphery areas of Kuala Lumpur City.

Internationalization as well as democratizing higher education and producing sufficient graduates to meet the countries manpower requirements are the main aspects of these objectives. The higher education capacity in Malaysia has grown from the formation of the country's first university, Universiti Malaya in 1961, to the 2007 enrolment of 942,200 students in 20 public universities, 32 private universities and university colleges, four branch campuses of international universities, 21 polytechnics, 37 public community colleges, and 485 private colleges (Ministry Of Higher Education, 2007). The long-term Strategic Plan of Ministry encompasses four phases. The fourth phase is more ambition and depends on the first three phases which are going to be implemented up to 2020. Figure 3 illustrates the transformation trend of objectives, trusts and strategies.
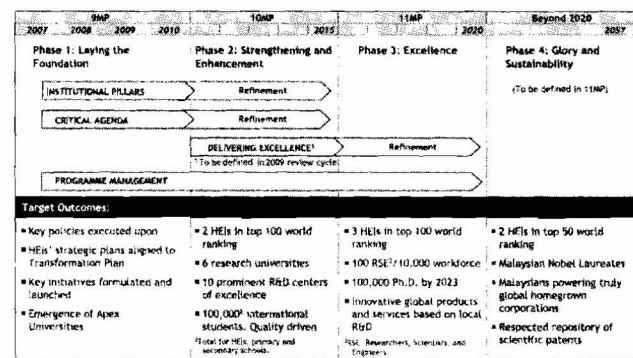

Fig. 3: The transformation Roadmap of Higher Education in Malaysia. Source: (Ministry Of Higher Education, 2007)

Noteworthy, the number of international students will rise to 100,000 in second phase which is known as "Strengthening and Enhancement". Moreover, in phase three "Excellence" the division of Researchers, Scientists and Engineers in workforce that should be 100/ 10,000 along with 100,000 Ph.D by 2023 can outline the future trend of the Malaysia towards a developed country and consequently the new urban phenomena like Studentification, Gentrification and so forth. Malaysia began welcoming foreign students in the early 1980s, but the rapid increase indicates the enrolment of 66,000 international students in the country's schools and universities. This comprised of about 14,000 in public universities and more than 33,600 in private universities. The top five sources for international students in Malaysia are: Indonesia, China, Iran, Nigeria and Bangladesh (Insider, 2008).

4. LOCAL PLANS AND CONTEMPORARY SITUATION IN KUALA LUMPUR

Looking at finer scale plans like Kuala Lumpur Structural Plan 2020, The city is proposed as the premier city and the capital of a nation with a highly trade oriented economy that aspires to be fully developed by the year 2020, city's vision, goals, functions and growth directed towards a national and the broader global perspective (CHKL, 2004). The aim of "Knowledge-Based Economy" (K-economy) in addition to the globalization trend, is one of key factors in KLSP 2020, especially those are relating to the development of information and technology (ICT). Moreover, industries that generate knowledge such as research and development in biotechnology, computer science and related industries are encouraged in this plan.

The development of Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) which is a corridor with 50 * 15 kilometers is another influential plan in the process of attracting the higher education students to this area. Although the MSC corridor emphasizes on the R&D centre for academic institution and corporate research and development in Tele-suburb as one of its six main centers (CHKL, 2004; Bruton, 2007), but there can be anticipated that the shadow of such service sections can be seen in inner parts of city. The reason is that the scope of successful development of the MSC is likely to meet a significant increase in the job growth within Kuala Lumpur and faster migration rate of foreigners especially those with specialized skills.

Noteworthy, there are policies and strategies in different parts points of view as economic, social and quality of life that convey the integration of education in variety of diciplines in future of Kuala Lumpur city:

- [EC1]: CHKL shall implement measures to develop Kuala Lumpur as a centre of the Knowledge-Based Economy.
- EC7: CHKL shall encourage, promote and facilitate the development of education and health as commercial services.
- EC8: CHKL shall facilitate the restructuring and sustenance of the manufacturing sector in favor of Knowledge-based and high skills industries.
- EC10: CHKL shall implement measures to attract more people to live in the City Centre.
- CO3: CHKL shall permit K-Economy activities in residential premises
- TO10: CHKL shall, together with the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Action Counciland medical and educational organisations, develop and promote educational and health-care tourism.
- IN1: CHKL shall encourage the development of high technology and knowledge-based industries.
- HO20:CHKL shall implement measures to increase the number of medium and high cost residential units in the City Centre. (CHKL, 2004)

Looking at contemporary situation of education in Kuala Lumpur can highlight the importance of Higher education role in this city. According to a desck top study about 100 University and HE institutes are located in Kuala Lumpur city. These are comprised of 3 public universities, 7 private universities and 90 private colleges. Table 1 shows the distribution of these institutes based on six strategic zones that are defined in KLSP 2020.

The critical situation of City Centre zone of Kuala Lumpur is obvious regarding to locating the most institutes in this zone 51%. Damansara-Penchala zone that comprised of Universiti Malaya, the first public university in country, has 17% of all higher education institutes same as Wangsa Maju-Maluri zone. But the distribution in the other three zones are almost same and considerably lower than the first three mentioned zones.

Table 1: Distribution of Higher education institutes in Kuala Lumpur

Strategic Zone	Number of HE institutes
City Centre	51
Wangsa Maju-Maluri	17
Sentul-Menjalara	4
Damansara-Penchala	17
Bukit Jalil-Seputeh	5
Bandar Tun Razak-Sungai Besi	6
Total	100

Source: Authors, 2008

Furthermore, there are 186 HE institutes in periphery areas around Kuala Lumpur that can have signifanct impacts on the city. These are comprised of 4 public universities, 2 polytechnics, 1 technical and vocational, 4 government support colleges, 20 private universities, 2 foreign univeristies and 153 Private colleges.

The social impacts of international students in Kuala Lumpur seems to be more significant aspect of studentification. Sen (2008) mentioned the residents' complaints about foreigners misbehaving and being nuisance in the city. In one action the immigration enforcement officers detained 15 Africans which most of them were students from private institutions. There have been some complaints in Wangsa Maju and Cheras area by residents that mostly points out to cultural and social impacts of foreign students.
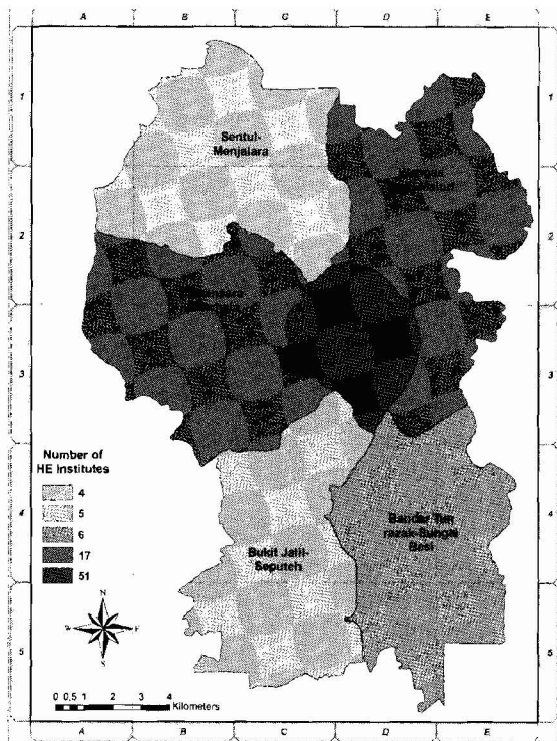
Fig. 4: The distribution of HE Institutes in
Kuala Lumpur city

5. CONCLUSION

The essence of reviewing the "studentification" process is outlined in this paper. The causes and consequences of studentification phenomenon in it's original location was explored. This is what considered in recent gentrification studies and regarded as part of mutation in gentrification process (Smith & Holt, 2007; Lees et al., 2008; Jackson et al., 2008). There are a few research in other countries especialy in developing countries that are conducted on such a new urban phenomenon. The global competition of the cities (Guzey, 2006) and the new urban ideologies such as smart growth and compact city concepts (Sabri & Yakuup, 2008 a) make us to anticipate the future spatial structure based on agenda and plans and current trend of urban developments.

The evidence of studentification impact on Kuala Lumpur city was also outlined in this desktop study. Moreover, the critical role of City Center as one of 6 strategic zones that consisted of 51% of Kuala Lumpur city and 10% of country's HE institutes was highlighted.

In conclude, the studentification as new urban phenomenon should be considered in college towns as well as the urban areas that are in pace of globalization. The process definitely has influences in urban spatial structure so the consequences should be anticipated in the residential decision-making process of the cities.

Kuala Lumpur is anticipated to face with influx of higher education students and young profesionals

based on national and local plans. The City Center has a critical situation in this regard that should be taken into consideration in finer scale plans.

There is a strong need for further studies about social transformation of cities based on current plans and agenda which can feed up the decision-making process.

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