

THE ROLES OF CULTURAL SPACES CHARACTERISING THE IDENTITY OF
HISTORIC TOWNS IN MALAYSIA

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To my beloved father, mother, twin sister and siblings.

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ABSTRACT

Culture is the widespread substances to delineate people's thinking, performing, and the practice of way of life, custom, event and festival inherit from one generation to another. Consequently, people interactions within the spatial entity by accomplish cultural activity to establish the cultural space. Cultural spaces are constituted by the physical and social attributes to amalgamate with individual perceptual in perceiving the cultural phenomenon and the place's meanings to express the identity of a place. However, the alteration of space significant, function, and the physical transformation in the historic town ultimately caused to the lost of identity or 'placelessness'. Thus, this research examined and assessed the roles of cultural spaces that characterising the identity of historic towns in Malaysia. Case study method is selected by the supporting of literature reviews, site inventory, site observation and the questionnaire survey (n=60) to investigate the main physical and social attributes and peoples' viewpoints of the cultural spaces in Kuala Dungun and Taiping. Both historic towns are selected accordance to the rich historical backgrounds, significance of socio cultural and economic vitalities. The main findings revealed the cultural spaces are depend on site historical background, socio-cultural activity, spatial pattern, legibility on visual and accessibility, the architectural form and historical structures to create the varieties of cultural spaces in historic towns. Subsequently, the study has identified interpreted of cultural spaces with the prominent socio-cultural and socio economic factors impetus to the placemaking for trading, social interactions, recreational and workplace which to enliven communal lifestyles and fulfil people needs. Eventually, the indication of the most significant cultural spaces in Kuala Dungun and Taiping embraced the marketplaces, waterfronts, and Lake Gardens are imposed by the sense of place, space characters and activity experiences in assigning the identity to each historic town. In sum, the cultural spaces are important for people to conduct the way of life as well as to strengthen the urban fabrics, heritage and cultural identities of historic towns.

ABSTRAK

Budaya merupakan asas yang luas bagi menggambarkan pemikiran manusia, pelaksanaan, amalan cara hidup, adat, upacara, dan perayaan yang diwarisi dari satu generasi ke generasi seterusnya. Sehubungannya itu, orang yang berinteraksi dalam entiti ruangan dan aktiviti kebudayaan telah mewujudkan ruangan budaya. Ruangan ini terbentuk hasil daripada atribut-atribut fizikal dan sosial serta gabungan persepsi individu yang mengamati fenomena budaya dan makna setempat bagi mengekspresi identiti setempat. Walau bagaimanapun, perubahan kepentingan ruang yang ketara, fungsi, dan transformasi fizikal bandar bersejarah telah menyebabkan kehilangan identiti setempat atau *placelessness*. Oleh itu, kajian ini meneliti dan menilai peranan ruangan budaya yang mencirikan identiti bandar-bandar bersejarah di Malaysia. Kaedah kajian kes yang dipilih disokong oleh ulasan kepustakaan, inventori, pemerhatian tapak dan tinjauan soal selidik (n=60) untuk mengkaji atribut-atribut utama fizikal dan sosial pandangan orang ramai mengenai ruangan budaya di Kuala Dungun dan Taiping. Kedua-dua bandar bersejarah ini dipilih berdasarkan latar belakang yang kaya dengan sejarah, kepentingan sosio-kebudayaan, dan vitaliti ekonomi. Penemuan utama menunjukkan ruangan budaya adalah bergantung kepada latar belakang sejarah, aktiviti sosio-budaya, corak ruang, kebolehbacaan pada visual dan akses, bentuk senibina dan struktur sejarah untuk membentuk kepelbagaian ruangan budaya di bandar-bandar bersejarah. Seterusnya, kajian ini telah mengenal pasti penafsiran faktor-faktor sosio-budaya dan sosio-ekonomi yang ketara mendorong *placemaking* untuk aktiviti perdagangan, interaksi sosial, rekreasi, dan tempat kerja yang memeriahkan gaya hidup masyarakat dan memenuhi keperluan orang ramai. Sesudahnya, petunjuk ruangan budaya yang signifikan di tempat kajian merangkumi pasar, persisiran air, dan Taman Tasik yang diperkukuhkan oleh *sense of place*, ciri-ciri ruangan, dan pengalaman aktiviti yang memberi identiti kepada setiap bandar bersejarah. Ringkasnya, ruangan budaya adalah penting bagi orang ramai untuk mengendali cara hidup dan mengukuhkan fabrik bandar, warisan, serta identiti budaya bandar-bandar bersejarah.