

Research Proposal

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TOPIC

Padang as public place in historical cities in Malaysia

INTRODUCTION

This research sets out to explore the role of public place in historical city play in investigating resident's sense of attachment. While investigating the significance of meanings in the people-place relationship, the study argues that the existence of public place is one of the important urban fabric components contributing to the place identity. Accordingly, the distinctiveness of historic urban fabrics results from local cultural expressions that are reflected as self-presentation in urban design and socio cultural interactions. The urban forms and life within urban fabric such as public place constitute sense of attachment affecting well being, quality of life and life sustenance. However, current planning approach in many historical cities overlook local residents perceptual response and their needs in undertaken any action or development to these urban fabrics particularly the public place. Such approaches are not only jeopardizing the cultural and physical sustainability of historical city but also lead to a loss of distinctiveness- the important qualities that formulate identity of place.

This study implies that the public place in a historical city is part of a historical place and it should be preserved for people enjoyment and comfort. The padang or a turfed square

within the historical city in Malaysia have been identified as the public place appropriate to be examined. Literatures in urban design and urban landscape planning suggest that public place like padang is a domain that affords residents to establish bonding or rootedness to a town (Green,1999; Hammit, 2004; Child, 2004). Moreover, because of the long existence of padang, predates pre-colonial periods (Muhammad Salleh, et al., 1992), may affords affection and sense of attachment to the urban residents. The attachment may come in forms of denotative, communicative and symbolic meanings (Lynch, 1960; Carmona et al., 2003; Moughtin, 2003; Child, 2000; Nasar, 1997; Nursidah and Shuhana, 2008). The meaning is directly influenced by (1) physical properties: structures (padang as void and buildings as solid) and transaction of people, (2) perceptual and social attributes: familiarity, sense of belonging, rooted, identity, event and activities. Evaluating these factors would determine the symbolic meaning of padang as perceived by the urban residents. Therefore, an evaluative study on the meaning of padang would lead to an empirical finding that justify for its preservation as a public, social place in historical cities and towns in Malaysia.

ISSUES AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Global concern on urban public space

Urban heritage relates to the elements of the past positioned in towns and cities should be treasured and handed over to the next generations in good condition as it enriches all of our lives and provides us with a sense of identity and community (Lowenthal, 1999; Steinberg, 1996; Tweed, 2007). Beyond the role as historic documents, the urban heritage also embodies the value of traditional urban cultures that constitute the memory of mankind. The heritage in this context is often defines as monuments, buildings, urban areas, historic centres and quarters together with their natural and man-made environments (ICOMOS, 1987). Today many of such properties are being threatened, physically degraded, damaged or even destroyed as well as less tangible features of urban fabrics such as street patterns, people's activities, historic residential areas, open spaces and natural features (ICOMOS, 1987; Tauseef, 1993; Steinberg, 1996; Tweed, 2007).

The less tangible features are normally excluded in the process of defining urban heritage and implementation of urban conservation. This dramatic situation has contributed to the adverse effects on the character of historical cities and the weakening of their place identity (Tweed, 2007).

This research concerns on the preservation of public places particularly open spaces and playfields pertaining to urban conservation. It is evident that cross-reference is seldom made between urban heritage and public place which are of historical significance in urban areas and part of the urban fabric. As a result, many public places in historical cities like streets, squares, parks and old trees have succumbed to rapid commercial development (Bowen, 1996; Tweed, 2007). In certain areas public place has become either unrecognizable or it has been 'dissolved'. Besides losing the physical and natural attributes, the changes have led to a major effect on the loss of traditional urban form and localized identity (Mohammad, 1998). It is unfortunate to mention that people have worried so much in recent years about the distinctiveness of our nation landscapes and our buildings but very little attention has yet been paid to public places that are culturally appropriate patterns of urban landscape design and use (Thompson, 2002). Inasmuch, this kind of urban landscape changes is seen as a menace and negative evolution because they also cause a loss of diversity, coherence and identity (Antrop, 2005). This kind of breaks which have been resulted in wiping away the existing landscape can be found in the transition of the 19th century which has still preserved many remnants towards the globalization and urbanization era.

Studies by Eng (1996), Dewar (2003) and Nicholson (2003) recognize that character of historical towns and cities is lost due to incompatible developments including construction of new buildings on open space sites. One of the significant incompatibilities is ignoring existing social activities and sense of attachment or bonding of residents to the open space (Low, 2006). As such, new developments including shopping malls and corporate plaza often destroyed routine patterns of people activities and movement, leaving less opportunity for social interaction (Banerjee, 2001). New open space provided by the new development is termed by Banerjee (2001) as pseudo-

public space that is, owned by private realm and thus less opportunity for public use. In turn, vitality and vibrancy of city vanishes due to the removal of the old open space or creation of the pseudo one (Nicholson, 2003).

These changes are harmful to other democratic practices that depend on public open space and active public realm for cross-class and multicultural contact countries. Green (1999) and Rogan et al. (2005) explained that once the character of a town is threatened, the meaningful environmental features, the community's sense of attachment, identity, continuity and permanence with the environment may also be lost. The failure to acknowledge the people's feelings, awareness and perception of change would have impact for both place identity and place attachment. Studies of the psychological impact of changes in familiar and significant places have articulated feelings of grief, loss and mourning to the loss (Rogan et al., 2005). Furthermore, people in affected communities can become alienated from their familiar local surroundings. As a result, these would undermine the depth of meaning and diversity of place experience in many parts of historical urban areas.

Recognition should be made that conservation can never succeed if limited only to the element or area in question in isolation from its surroundings (Bowen, 1996). Conservation should be seen as a process to safeguard the urban environmental quality where the preservation of public place, natural features and people's activities should become an integral part of the implementation. Neglecting some of the aspects suggest lack of understanding on the concept of 'place-making' and 'place meaning'.

Local concern on padang as public space

The modernization movement in Malaysia started in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and by mid-1990s Malaysia succeeded developing its economy (Narifumi, 1998). During this period, tourism based on historic cities and scenic natural setting was promoted as an industry in the states of Penang, Melaka, Kelantan, Johor and Sarawak (A. Ghafar, 1998). There was an invasive view in the city planning that the essential ingredients to make a

functional city become a norm and was considered as a prerequisite to any planning processes (Idid, 2004). Standards of living were generally upgraded and life styles gradually changed due to the involvement of rapid development which in turn created gradual changes. However the existing characters of the city are somewhat less preserved which finally mess up the image, form and character of historical cities in all the states.

Growing concern in Malaysia on the destruction of the urban environment and the threat to some of the city's familiar and historical landmarks with the consequent alteration and demolition was raised in the early 1980's (Wan Hashimah and Shuhana, 2005). As a result, the government started to implement the Antiquity Act and few enactments in order to prevent the destruction. However, after more than 30 years, the scenario of conservation and planning movement in Malaysia remain almost unchanged. The effort of conservation in many historical cities in Malaysia is still concentrating on the two main methods of identifying and protecting built heritage like monuments and buildings. As a result, 181 buildings and monuments were listed by the Malaysian Heritage Department since 1977 to 2004 but not a single historical site was listed so far (Museum and Antiquity Department, 2008). It means that the effort is still unable to deal with less tangible physical properties of the historic urban areas including public spaces and the natural environment and people's activities especially within the old city centre. Consequently, all features that give a city its unique character and provide the sense of belonging to its community are continuously disappeared (Shuhana, 1999; Idid, 2004).

Practice has shown that the handling of the monitoring mandate in accordance with the existing legal protections does not have the desired result in maintaining the public space of historical parts in many Malaysian cities (A. Ghafar, 1998; Idid, 2004). The pressure for development and inability to preserve these properties and attributes has taken its toll on the sustenance of public spaces of historical cities in Malaysia. Many of these places have increasingly demolished, for example the famous Benteng (outdoor eating area facing a river) that had for so long been synonymous with night life in Kuala Lumpur is now just another commercial building's back yard (Ismawi, 1992). Bukit Nanas or known formerly as Weld Hill, the only piece of virgin tropical rainforest in Kuala Lumpur city

centre is known as a platform for Kuala Lumpur Tower one of the highest structures in city.

The problem was made worse by the failure in appreciating and maintaining of *padang*, an open space, which is of historical and cultural significance for public usage in many Malaysian city. Padang Maziah in Kuala Trengganu, Padang Merdeka in Alor Setar and Padang Kalumpang in Kota Bharu are examples of padang located in front of Malay sultanate palace which have been converted into vehicle parking zone. Meanwhile, there are few upgrading projects on the padang which follow the concept of a European plaza or roof top garden. The padang was paved while pavilion and concrete stage was included at the central end of padang like Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur. The most dramatic case for a historical public place is evidenced in Bandar Hilir in Melaka, where Padang Pahlawan which used to be the ground for the first proclamation of independence in 1957 was actively promoted and demolished for commercial development. The famous padang is now seen as a rooftop garden that become stage for singing contest and concert; a far cry from its role in the past.

The interaction between new development and design of the public spaces within historical surrounding context often has no or only limited effect. One will find the form of new development established at the demolished site has generally been of a poor design. The sterile look and standardized design are often having been lacking in character, individuality and identity (A. Ghafar, 2002; Shuhana and Ahmad Bashri, 2002). The 'privatization' of public space in Dataran Merdeka and Dataran Pahlawan has resulted to the declining of their sense of place. In both cases the public were informed that the new development would not change the usage of the space. However, in actual condition and without many of the public realize, the owner of the premise has all the legal prerogatives to exclude someone from the space circumscribed by sometimes subtle and the invisible property boundaries. These spaces are closely monitored by security guards and closed circuit television cameras. In sum, more often than not the privatization are not to be construed as a place for recreation, contemplation or for a

ground for public forums but the public is welcome as long as they are patrons of shops or restaurants while the access and use of the space is only privilege, not a right.

Collectively, these changes which were labeled in the name of development and modernization are the creation of illusion of the old public space, from which the risks and uncertainties of everyday life are carefully edited out. Besides having adverse effect on identity of place, these changes also influenced the way users experienced, perceived and felt about places within the urban area (Nurshidah, 2007). Long existed public spaces in a city are more than mere backdrop to acknowledge; the residents always have complex and intimate relationship with them. Such spaces were instilled with highly personal meanings and were vehicles for personal and community growth. The public spaces in the older part of a city always provide places for spiritual significance and emotional regulations. This is happening due to the bonding established between people, places and long experiences at the place. However, generating people's opinion and feelings toward the changes are aspects that are overlooked in the redevelopment of city centre (Shuhana and Ahmad Bashri, 2000).

The statement in an article *Leave the Ipoh Padang alone* (New Straits Times, September 2002) suggesting how do changes and new development proposals made by city council affected people's emotions and their daily life. In this article the Ipoh residents through one of their representative expressed their gratitude for having padang as their source of pride and heritage of Ipoh and did not agree and allow for any changes to be carried out. Another local scene on resident's response to changes in the physical setting of a public place is evident in an article *My heart cried at Bandar Hilir* published in Harakah—English Section (August 2008). The author grieved for the lost of Padang Pahlawan that used to become one of the prominent national landmarks, the ground of the first independence proclamation and the ground where he spent much of his childhood days, now has been transformed into international hypermarket.

To elucidate meanings amongst residents suggesting their place attachment for a padang, the author has conducted preliminary survey on padang in four historical cities in

Malaysia. They are Padang Kota Lama in Georgetown, Padang Pahlawan in Bandar Hilir, Padang Merdeka in Kota Bharu and Padang Ipoh in Ipoh. Another purpose of this study was to search for conceptual support of the four proposed dimensions in place attachment (Hammit. et al, 2006); 1) place familiarity, 2) place belongingness, 3) place rootedness, and 4) place identity that people may associate meaning padang.. The selected padangs were chosen for it long history as well as massive social, economic and environmental changes happened to them. The preliminary survey was based on the premise that place attachment conceptualization has a significant relationship between the residents and the changing physical conditions and roles of the padang.

Semi-structured interview was conducted on 29 respondents at the four padangs. In aspect of place familiarity, the questions include length of residence, meaning and knowledge on the padang. On place rootedness, the respondents were asked on their perceptual feeling toward padang’s history and development and impact of padang on their life. In aspect of place belongingness, the questions include whether the padang is part of the respondent, proximity to padang, and willingness to protect and fight for preservation of padang. Finally, on place identity, the respondents were asked on what are physical properties that what make a padang, and anticipated feeling living without the padang.

To identify affection and cognition of respondents, words and phrases of the respondents were interpreted and categorized (Denzin, 2002) into the four dimensions of place attachment. The result is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Perceptual responses of respondents (n=29) on padang

| Dimension of Place attachment | Affective and cognitive responses |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <u>Place familiarity</u> | |
| Length of residence | 15 to 84 years |
| Meaning of padang | A place for recreational and cultural activities as well as a place to remember history of the city. |
| Knowledge on padang | Most respondents knew the history of the padang from the era of British to present situation. |
| <u>Place rootedness</u> | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Feelings toward the place's history and development | All were proud of being related to the padang, feeling happy being in it and concern on its present condition. |
| Changes impact in life | Most were unhappy and a few grief on the changes of the padang. |
| <u>Place belongingness</u> | |
| The padang is mine | All responded positively yes. |
| Ways of connection to the padang | Most of them work and live nearby the padang. |
| Willingness to protect and fight for preservation of padang from modification | All were positive to protect the padang from being modified or change to other land use. |
| <u>Place identity</u> | |
| Essential physical properties and social attributes | In rank of importance of creating a padang, the properties were (1) openness, sport activities, cultural activities (2) old colonial buildings, trees, scenic view towards the sea, and wind, (3) presence of river, music and fragrance. |
| Padang became part of life | All said yes. |
| Imagining living in the city without the padang | All said unacceptable. |

The findings from the preliminary survey suggest that:

1. Place attachment on padang is not depending on age and ethnicity.
2. Physical properties such as openness of padang, buildings, trees, hills, sea, river, scenic views, and wind contributed to positive affections and inspired sense of rootedness among residents.
3. Respondents would be honored to be given opportunity in fighting for the protection of the padang
4. For respondents in Padang Pahlawan, if given a choice to go back to the past, they would prefer to choose for the old padang.
5. Majority perceived that they were forced to accept the changes as it bring a negative impact in their economic and daily life.

The findings indicate that people perceived padang as a public space comprising of buildings, natural environment and the people's activities that become an attribute of a

successful city district. The findings thus support the aim of urban conservation could not be achieved if the conservation effort is implemented on a single attribute as the urban heritage is a combination of built natural and cultural properties. The findings also suggest that character of a place is a continuous field, the disturbance of one element in some way affecting all others. Incompatible development and design within historical area in a city may disrupt the whole urban environment. The changes and the loss of memorable public places which marked a city a special character has directed to the weakening of place identity and at the same time affected the people's who live in the area for number of years. This scenario should not be prolonged as both scenarios will result to the loss of place meaning. In response to these concerns the need for preserving a stable framework of familiar and valued places within the historical city should become important concerns in town planning and urban design practices.

Issues in the current state of research

The body of research on urban conservation has grown parallel with the effort undertaken in many historical cities in Malaysia. Much of the research is subject to the progress, management, issues and threats involved in the conservation of the historic cities. This include literature on tourism and cultural heritage management and marketing (A. Ghafar, 1998, 2004, 2002; Amran, 2007, 2004; Steinberg, 1996; Badan Warisan Malaysia;1990; Sanday, 1987). Some studies look at the role of activities and cultural aspects in historical urban areas like streets activities, commercial and traditional cultural events (Idid, 1995, 2004, 2006; Shuhana & Ahmad, 2002a, 2002b, 1999; Shuhana and Wan, 2005). These research offer valuable insight into what urban heritage in Malaysia is all about beside enrich people's information on this. However, it seems that all of the research continues to grow in a broader context. They were shedding the light on the preservation of building and monument in historical area or archaeological site instead of looking at the activities and other special attributes like public spaces and natural environments in the historical urban area. Even there is research done to address such topic all were done internationally. For example research by Low et al (2006) presenting the need to preserve urban open spaces based on different historical moments. The

findings showed that public place like parks beside able to become a place to strengthen the community and the democratic of the society but also a place with inhospitable to certain groups of people. Yet the research was concentrating on cultural diversity and modest study on place meaning without having a combination of two other dimension concerning the identity and structural elements of a place.

In urban design and conservation and place quality research, much has been discussed on the significance of the physical elements and activities in creating the sense of place, however, the role of the place attachment as a component that gives place meanings has not been adequately explored (Nurshidah and Shuhana, 2008; Silva, 2007). For instance, although Lynch (1960) acknowledges the importance of meaning in representing imageability of a place, however study only focused on identity and structure as variable in order to achieve his research aim. In fact, there are numbers of literature which focused on image of a place but still neglect the meaning, if subsist the study is more toward denotative and connotative in nature (Nasar, 1998; Lewicka, 2008; Manzo, 2005). Thus the deep meanings of the detail subject still remain unknown.

Shuhana and Bashri (1999) notified place meaning in their study on public perception of identity of place in one of the town in East Cost of Malaysia. The research showed that residents' perception of identity of place is stronger in the older part of the town. This was based on the larger number of elements considered distinctive labeled by the residents in the old town as compared to the new town centre. A similar research conducted in southern and northern part of Peninsular Malaysia also displayed similar result. Even though the research ended with some guidelines to preserving the urban heritage through developing the sense of place and how it may lead to better quality of life, sense of attachment was not demonstrated comprehensively in tying the meaning of each place.

There were another attempts made towards filling this theoretical gap in environmental cognition research conducted by Nurshidah (2007) on streets in the commercial hub of Kuala Lumpur city centre. In her research, Nurshidah (2007) developed a theoretical

framework on place attachment in relation to its types and street as the setting. The significance of positive and negative feelings and experiences of street as a place are suggested in the research. The framework is significant in the theoretical understanding of generic place such as the street, however the research was developed in a more generic context and not focusing into thematic place such as historical area.

AIM OF STUDY AND OBJECTIVES

This research commences with a major premise that place bonding of people towards urban open space. It applies a dual concept of identity and place attachment on urban resident's participation with padang as the open space. This exploratory research takes stride to determine the preservation of padang as a historical public space which may contribute to the evocation of place identity in Malaysian historical urban area.

- (1) To study the typology of padang as public place in a cityscape
- (2) To explore the evolution and role played by padang as public space in a cityscape
- (3) To recognise a meaning amongst residents suggesting their place attachment for padang as a public place
- (4) To suggest a theoretical framework for assessing the social values of padang as a public place contributing toward a place making of the historical city in Malaysia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public space brings so much meaning in urban design where it was defined by Carr. et al. (1992) as a stage which the drama of communal life unfolds. Public space is also identified as urban space (Heckscher and Robinson, 1977; Krier, 1979). According to Krier (1979) this type of space is geometrically bounded by a variety of elevations. They are divided into two; internal space, that is shielded from weather and environment and the external space which is seen as open, unobstructed space for movement in the open

air, with public and semi public. According to Moughtin (2003) public space is meant by the streets, boulevards, squares and public parks together with building facades that define them. Child (2004) identified this kind of space a civic place with the squares, threshold areas and the markets are among the great advantage of life in town and the architecture of civic places can support or frustrate the livability of the area. According to Child (2004) such spaces are considered as a place of joyful celebration, heartbroken communion, civic discussion and also as a place to exercise the rights of assembly and free speech. They are the place of essential for participatory democracy and the good life. Apart from many public spaces, Child (2004) and Moughtin (2003) anticipated the square as a vital civic place whilst Jacobs (1961) categorized streets and their sidewalks as the main public space of a city. This is in the sense that both serve many purposes, besides carrying wheeled traffic in the middles. According to Jacobs (1961) streets and sidewalks are city's most vital organ, if the street looks interesting, the city looks interesting but if the city looks dull then the city will looks dull.

The distribution of public space should not only be seen as a ground for recreation and access. Additional public space benefits are obtained through the very form and nature of the city. Each city is a place of its own, its uniqueness determined in large measures by pattern created by the alternation of structure and void, of buildings and spaces between (Lynch, 1960; Conzen, 1960; Heckscher and Robinson, 1977; Nassar, 1997). Both act as spatial or pattern relation of the object to the observer and to other object. Nassar (1997) identified the recognition of the pattern relationships in organizing the objects as the structure, where the aesthetic quality of each elements of public space is characterized by the structural interrelation of the detail (Conzen, 1960; Krier, 1979).

Public spaces such as squares, parks, hills and rivers which lie in the middle of a town are the essential structure for city image. They are basic components of a town. Lynch (1960) confirmed that a clear image through a coherent and clear spatial relation of structures and other objects enables one to move about easily and quickly. Not only this, it may serve as a broad frame of reference, an organizer of activity or belief or knowledge. This mean that based on the form and condition of the structure one may also know the

evolution engaged with the place. The larger green spaces, parks and parkways, riverbanks and waterfronts give to a city distinct character and coherence that allows the urban resident to have a feeling for the whole. Such public space may be viewed as the city's skeleton. They are the underlying structure from which depend neighborhoods, institutional complexes and business centers. People who know his parks, streets and squares can tell where he lives and should not easily get lost. And because public spaces are so often the product of a basic topography (Heckscher and Robinson, 1977) people should not be ignorant of how his city is related to land, to river, to hill and the sea.

Public space is therefore associated with pleasure, recreation, human encounters and communal celebrations. It also plays a significant role in renewing and stabilizing the cities social and economic base. In other word the public space is intended to support the creation of convivial places which is defined by Child (2004) as togetherness, enjoyment of festive society and the vibrant sense of belonging to a settlement. They are the elements that commonly noted with pleasure and care (Lynch, 1960). The people will sharply aware of their city's public space such as green oases, streets and squares. It is also believed that there was an emotional delight arising from a broad view in the context of public space and it's surrounding which had created a panoramic experience and urban enjoyment (Lynch, 1960).

A city can become an extremely livable place with due to the high quality, well designed and managed public spaces (Carmona and Tiesdell, 2007) and the proper use and planning of it (Heckscher and Robinson, 1977). For a historical public space, due to its long existed in history it provide the sense of continuity, sense of place identity, sense of security and become a restorative environment (Lowenthal, 1985; Kaplan, 1989). However, this kind of process required a high degree control of the maintenance and the preservation of public space especially in the historical city which frequently came to bear a symbolic value and of social, historical and cultural significances. In preserving these, the ultimate process is then to retain the memory of certain meanings and the features of the public space which are of valuable in the historical city.

For the purposes of the research the role public space may contribute to the evocation of place identity is carried out. Lynch (1960) in his book 'The Image of the City' considers imageability as a study which concentrates with one particular subject that is the apparent quality of the cityscape. Its image has three components: structure, identity and meaning. The definition of structure as noted by Lynch (1960) is the spatial relation of the urban features while identity was defined as a workable image which requires the identification of an object which implies its distinction from other things and its recognition as a separable entity. It is also being defined as oneness. In another definition on identity, referring to Carmona (2003) is element surrounded on what a place is actually like, and 'image', a combination of this identity with perception of the place by the individual with their own set of feeling about and impression of it. There is another definition with due to place identity but rather in a different subject where identity involves: distinctiveness, continuity, sameness. This sub-set is actually inclined to the group of environmental psychology where place identity becomes a substructure of the human, where people's self-esteem and self-efficacy become its additional dimensions.

If identity and structure deal more with physical characteristic in the city, meanings as discussed by Lynch (1960) are other dimension which engages with non-physical characteristics that enhance the imageability of a place. Meaning refers to the symbolic content and associational connotations of the place. According to Nasar (1997) meaning and associations, whether social, historical, functional, economic or individual, constitute an entire realm lying beyond the physical qualities. Nevertheless, this also suggests that evaluative response and meanings have probabilistic relationship to physical attributes of the place or setting (Nasar, 1997).

Place meaning is valuable to understand, particularly in the context of a historical city since meaning connect people with place. Without consideration of meaning, authentic places like the historic city can be easily destroyed and inauthentic one can be produced (Boyko, 2004). Potentially the meaning of the city is in itself the powerful symbol of a complex society. Strong expressive meaning can be well set forth since every city citizen has had long associations with some part of his city and his image is soaked in memories

and meaningful places. Names of a place for instance, can become important variable in crystallizing the identity of a place. They occasionally give locational and occasional clues. Place meaning is also achieved sometimes by the aid of kinesthetic quality of a path which makes the place memorable such sense of motion are like falling, rising and turning. This is called motion perception (Lynch, 1960).

The relationship between identity, structure and meaning can be observed through the differentiated landscape built by various structures with different identity that may simply exhibit the presence of other groups or symbolic places with deep meanings. This means that if the process of place meaning and attachment need an interaction between the people and environment to complete the whole process. However, the practice of preservation so far is only focusing on the aspect of structure and identity of the cityscape as a whole. Few have been done on public space. Nevertheless, it seems that the notion on the meaning's or the people's perceptual study's contribution to place identity has not been fully understood and less emphasized. This conflict of exercise is pervasive and crucial in historic preservation (Silva, 2007). A holistic exercise which should cover all three aspects needs to be undertaken.

In this research, the residents' respond come more important as they are the people who live in the preserved or changed environment and be largely responsible for its maintenance and sustenance. Any incompatibility between the identities of their city with the new developed or up grading projects for the public space would lead to a stressful situation (Silva, 2007). Another aspect that need to be carried out in relation to the above is the need to deal with the effect from changes happened in the public space and it surrounding area and to achieve compatibility between change and continuity as to ensure the identity of the place remain intact. For this purpose, it is necessary to identify what are the physical properties and social attributes for a public space of a historical city and to distinguish between what need to preserve and to change for posterity.

In order to examine the role played by public space of historical city, both qualities arise from the person and the environment and the ongoing interaction between the two (Nassar, 1997) should be evaluated. This evaluation may of various types of attributes in

which Carmona (2003) described 'environment' as a mental construct, an environmental image, created and valued differently by each individual. Images involved are the result of processes through which personal experiences and values filter the barrage of environmental stimuli. This process requires mental activity to firstly recognize the place, then draw inferences about it into a mental framework whether the area is safe or not and finally evaluate the areas as beautiful, ugly, interesting or boring. In short, people filter their evaluative response through the lens of perception and cognition of the environment (Nassar. 1997). Lynch (1960) also works with identity and structure in constructing the sense of place identity. Five similar elements were identified by Lynch (1960) in creating meaning of a place considered as: paths, nodes, districts, nodes and landmarks with some considered as likable and few others as disliked (Nasar, 1997). It is observed through Lynch's study that districts and paths received least preference which suggests for another component influenced their preference: emotional meaning.

Subsequently, Nasar (1997) added another variable into this concept as he believed that people always make inferences or evaluative judgment to every single element they see which he called as likability. It was agreed that a favorable image, features must stand out as both memorable and likable. As public space comprises of many built and natural attributes, thus list of likable features developed by Nasar (1997) may be considered appropriate in determining it's meaning. In this study Nasar (1997) categorized the likable features into five groups: naturalness, upkeep/civilities, openness, historical significance and order or coherent. The list may be expanded as the research proceeds further. In further direction, Lynch (1960) agreed that meaning may be achieved through the name of place, sense of familiarity, furnishes material for common memories and symbols which bind the group together and allow them to communicate with each other. This mean that manifestation of place meaning requires one process ahead which accounts for the values people, place and experiences or personal bonds factors, called theory of place attachment.

The theory of place attachment can be elaborated as affective bonds between people and places or extends to which people's values or identifies with a particular place. In this context, Low and Altman (1992) perceived the places as repositories and context with in

which interpersonal, community and cultural relationship occur, and it is to those social relationships, not just to place qua place, to which people are attached. Research by others noted place attachment as a bonding to a place which is often closely related to people's sense of personal identity upon where they live and the experiences they had (Relph, 1976; Proshansky et al. 1983; McAndrew, 1998). When used broadly, this theory refers to the positive emotional bonds (Altman and Low, 1992; Williams et al., 1992). Giuliani and Feldman (1993) identified the diversity of place attachment definitions as an important challenge to further progress in 'place' study field. In their view, it would be useful to tighten up on the definition of place attachment while considering it in the broad framework of multiple affective, cognitive and behavioral relationships between people and socio-physical environment.

Furthermore, Proshansky et al. (1983) observed at the core of the physical world, cognitive relationship is the 'environmental past' of a person which consist of the past of places, spaces and the properties which have served instrumentally in the satisfaction of the persons' biological, psychological, social and cultural needs. Williams and Vaske (2003) suggest that this cognitive relationship can be systematically identified and measured using a two dimensional scale of place attachment based on place identity and place dependence. However Hammits (2006) had expanded the dimension with another three senses as place belongingness, place familiarity and place rootedness.

According to the above dimensions, place identity here refers to the mixture of feelings about specific physical settings (Proshansky et.al, 1983) and 'combination of attitudes, values, thoughts, beliefs, meanings and behaviour tendencies reaching beyond emotional attachment and belonging to a particular place (Proshanky et al., 1983; Lalli, 1992; Félonneau, 2004). It concerns who we are; places in which we live, work and play that define our selfhood, rather than only familiarity. In a more latter works, Twigger-Ross and Uzell's (1996) suggested four essential principles on place identity scope-distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem and self efficacy. Yuen (2005) enlarges this perspective by supporting that place identity can help to provide a sense of stability and continuity, it helps to construct and preserve people's identity. Like old buildings which

give a sense of history and permanence, these suggested to us that elements and times are together live within our daily lives.

Place familiarity involves the pleasant memories, achievement memories, cognitions and environmental images that result from acquaintances and remembrances associated with places (Robert, 1996). McAndrew (1998) refers to the concept of 'rootedness' as similar to the concept of 'sense of place' constructed by using a bi-polar structure; positive and negative components. This concept also defined the social boundaries of 'us' and exclude the 'others'. The familiar environment in this study is the padang and it surrounding, becomes a place in which the people makes emotional (Félonneau, 2004) and physical investments.

Affiliation to place or place belonginess expresses a more social bonding than familiarity, in that people feel as though they connected, satisfied (Yuen, 2005) and hold 'membership' with an environment (Mesch & Manor, 1998; Milligan,1998) with satisfaction as additional dimension which have close relationship with belonginess. Place belonginess may also entail a spiritual connection toward social and communal environments shared by individuals or in the case of leisure (Proshansky et al., 1983). Similarly, according to Canter (1977) a sense of belonging is acquired through people's experience and attachment or long term involvement in geographically locatable places. These places signify special location where the specialness holds meaning and significance for the persons or groups of people.

Place rootedness described by Tuan (1980) as a psychological state of being a mood, or a feeling resulted from long habitation at one locality. He characterized place rootedness as a very strong and focused bond that in its essence means being completely at home-that is unreflectively secure and comfortable in a particular location. Similarly, according to Shumaker and Taylor (1983), people with strong place attachment are firmly rooted, less motivated to seek change, have greater feelings of privacy and control in their homes and are more satisfied with their place of residence.

The above mentioned concept by Hammit which centered to five dimensions of place attachment is by no mean a regular thinking process about the past and adoring the place. By applying this dimensions it is hoped that that study of place attachment and meaning toward public space in historical city are of significant value and justifiable. Nevertheless, for a historical public space which is located in the heart of the most valuable old town centre plus vulnerable condition of development pressure, no achievement is more precious rather than its preservation. A similar study on heritage protection by Yuen (2005) confirmed these types of places are of importance as it often comprises of special niche in the hearts of people and has the intangible effect of increasing resident attachment to place. Even though public space like streets and squares are seen as too straightforward form of urban design elements, they have activities and background that create diversity and augment place meanings and are inexorably tied up with cultural roots and place identity. Yuen (2005) added that with its lengthy historical background and distinctive built and natural features such places are textured by memories which are important in collective identity, belonging and rootedness or in a simple word it provide of the feeling that 'this is our place'.

Despite the positive attachment due to the profound attachment to places, where people share familial, communal and ethnic or cultural bonds with the community the study will also look into changes and alteration on attached places that entails widespread grief and mourning (Fried, 2000). In a study by Fried (2000) it was also affirmed that forced displacements or changes are among the most serious forms of externally-imposed psychosocial disruptions and discontinuities toward people whom familiar to the attached places. These feelings obviously can inform intimate links between people and places and may extend to what condition a historical public space should receive an alteration or changes.

The literature reviews revealed that there are many subsets of perceptual level/dimensions in place attachment study, however with regard to public space as the main subject the researcher decided to focus with the work of William Hammits (2006) to become the central literature. It seem evident that Hammit's concept and findings assist

in understanding the people-place relationship in recreational context which all were hauled out from the place attachment theory. The literature also suggests for relationship between place identity and preservation can be assumed to operate in a linear fashion (Chang and Huang, 2005) where collective memory binds people together under a shared identity as ‘no memory; no identity, no nation’. Yet implicit with this notion, what need to be preserved is not only the physical function and characteristic of public space but the preservation should also encompass the social and symbolic content that is presented by public space of historical cities in Malaysia.

Public space in historical city of Malaysia

There are ranges of public spaces introduced by the British in Malaysia. All are formed through the garden, the square, the hill, the lake, the garden and park and the esplanade. These public spaces acted as a ‘microcosm’ of colonial society and as their political, military, social and recreational hub (Goh; 1990; Ismawi, 1993; Zalina, 2005). Their establishments were on sites which function as centre of administration, commerce and European settlement (Loukaitou et.al, 1998). The establishment of public spaces in the colonial town in Malaysia completed around 1930’s. Penang, Taiping and Kuala Lumpur are among the example of town with comprehensive public space establishment. A good description about the town and the public space in Malaysia can be referred to a report by Goh et.al (1990) mentioning the words by Charles Compton Read, the first government town planner for the Federated Malay State in 1921 as:

“ The conditions of the towns during the early 1920’s were very favorable compared to the towns and the cities in the younger British overseas Dominions. The early foresight and conscious laying out of the central areas of most places with liberal provisions for padang, sites for and open space about public buildings, government offices, quarters and in the certain cases, of large areas of state and park lands.”

In the case of public spaces available in the Malaysian cities, the esplanade of known locally as *padang* is the most common and located in the city centre surrounded by prominent public buildings. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, *padang* is selected as public space to be reviewed in detail. This research is undertaken to explore the role played by *padang* as well as its historical development as public space in a cityscape.

Padang is a Malay word which means a large field turfed with grass. According to Hoyt (1993) the *padang* is an expanse of green known as a large closely trimmed lawn alien to pre-colonial, equatorial Malaya. It was also regarded as a green nucleus of a town (Khoo, 1994; Anbalagan, 1999). The development of *padang* or also known as an esplanade started from India and extended to South East Asia, (Hoyt, 1993; Lim and Wong, 2000). There is other *padang* referred from local literatures on history of Malaya where it is evidence that the existence of *padang* was long time before the British colonialisation (Muhammad Salleh, et.al, 1992). The said *padang* was located in the palace compound of Malays Kingdom such as *Padang Maziah* in front of *Isatana Maziah* in *Trengganu*, *Padang Kalumpang* in front of *Istana Jahar* and *Istana Balai Besar* in *Kota Bharu* and *Padang Court* in front of *Istana Balai Besar* and *Masjid Zahir* in *Alor Setar*.

The *padang* was originally created as military ground for the police and army throughout the British colony (Shiang, 2002; Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, 2005). The first *padang* built by the British in Malaya was located in *Georgetown, Penang*. Its development was then spread through all over the colonial towns like *Kuala Lumpur, Taiping* and *Melaka*. Like *Padang Kota Lama* in *Penang*, *Dataran Merdeka* in *Kuala Lumpur* and *Padang Pahlawan, Melaka* housed army barracks, church and town hall at one time. The *padang* also acted as the civic square for the British administration. It was where official occasions were staged (Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, 2005).

In certain areas like in *Taiping* and *Georgetown* the *padang* also known as parade grounds or the esplanade. It eventually became the centre for sports and recreation for the British and the elites group, often complemented by a clubhouse. Cricket and football

were played on regular basis and the padang evolved as the social and recreational centre while serving its civic duty as the administration hub. Perak Club in Taiping, Melaka Club, Penang Club and Selangor Club in Kuala Lumpur founded in the 1880's are examples of earliest recreational club located on the padang (Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, 2005). Parade and special ceremony like celebration of Golden Jubilee, Christmas Eve and formal gathering often took place in padang. The flexible use of the padang for important civic functions also has, in particular, led to the utilization of adjacent roads as part of the open spaces as a parade ground (Federal Department of Town and Country Planning, 2005). The function and activities often held in padang still continues in most of historical cities until today. In short, padang was a centre for colonial life and a place to promenade and place where the British expose their power and dignity through activities held at the padang. Hence, it is regarded as a **green nucleus of a town** (Khoo, 1994; Anbalagan, 1999) beside **a place for historical and functional importance**. The function of padang resembles square in Europe, a place for public to socialize in premier and daily events. It is the ground for joy with vibrant and colourful activities. It was once a centre of exercising nation's rights of assembly for democracy and good life.

Based on the history and development process, it is difficult to conceive the padang as being without social content and without a spatial milieu. The relationship is therefore best conceived as a continuous two-way process in which people create and modify spaces while at the same time being influenced by various ways by those spaces. Being surrounded by historical buildings or structures and huge matured trees which this physical scene may symbolizes the passage of time for certain people. All of these elements, public space, buildings, vegetation and other structures became remarkable in terms of their setting in the whole. From the above descriptions the researcher assumed that the padang and it surrounding area may convey various architectural and social categories of meanings according to the urban design and place attachment dimensions.

Public space like padang in the city may be looked on as a story, a pattern of relations between urban structures which lead to a production and space distribution, a field for

physical and emotional force or an arena for changes. Values that are embedded in this scene are diversity, distinctiveness, accessibility and livability. Certain actors become the influential elements of its transformation. One of the actors is the residents which experience; live and works within the public space. From the above discussion it is evident that the three subjects; public space, place identity and people (residents) are interrelated and inseparable. Therefore this research aim to determine the preservation of padang which represent the public space of historical city in Malaysia as built cultural heritage. It is hoped that this will contribute to the preservation of place identity and meaning posses by the public space.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aims to study the role played by padang as public place pertaining to people's perceptual responses particularly place bonding. This research is exploratory and semiotic in nature applying a mixed method, qualitative and quantitative. The study involves the physical and spatial aspects of place and the descriptive and affective aspects of environmental experience and meaning. Its major research question is why does padang in historical cities need to be preserved. This process involves three steps. First, it is necessary to identify the significance of padang of a historical city; second, to identify type of activities held in the padang, and finally, the social and landscape architectural meaning of padang to the evocation of place identity. The primary research question, therefore, has been formulated in the form of three more specific research questions:

1. Why padang is considered as a public place in historical city in Malaysia?
2. How do urban residents interact with the padang result to place attachment?
3. How does padang play roles in contributing to a meaningful place?

Research Design

The conceptualization of this research comprises of four stages: literature review, pilot study, data collection, and data analysis.

Stage 1: A literature review on

- Meanings and significances of historical cities
- Typology of urban open spaces in historical cities
- Social and planning developmental process of padang
- Evolution and historical development of padang in Malaysian historical cities
- Form, structure and the various physical (structural and natural) components of open spaces (Lynch, 1960; Santa, 2003, Walker and Ryan, 2008) including padang
- Role of open spaces including padang towards people’s bonding to public place
- Dimensions of place attachment: place identity, place familiarity, place rootedness, place belonginess, place dependence (Giuliani and Feldman, 1983; Shumaker and Taylor, 1983; Proshansky et al , 1983; Low and Altman ,1992; Hammit et al, 2006; Walker and Ryan, 2008)
- Variables of a successful place such as; accessibility, distinctiveness, continuity, diversity and livability (Lynch, 1960: Lowenthal, 1975; Park Lee, 2001; Antrop, 2005; Nursidah, 2007)
- Variables of place attachment; (Refer table 1)
- Signification of current condition and physical changes caused by new development on padang (Fried, 2000; Yuen, 2003; Félonneau, 2004; Rogan et al, 2005; Walker and Ryan, 2008)

From a review of 56 theoretical and empirical studies of environmental psychology, environment and behavior, urban design and urban planning, landscape architecture, and physical and human geographies, the relationship between people bonding to place is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Disciplines of studies, dimensions of place bonding and parameters of place bonding

| Discipline of study | Studies | Dimension Applied | Parameters or Variables |
|---------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------------|
|---------------------|---------|-------------------|-------------------------|

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| Environmental Psychology, and Environment and Behavior | Proshansky (1982); Giuliani and Feldman (1983); Shumaker and Taylor (1983); Proshansky et al (1983), Low and Altman (1992); Twigger and Uzel (1996); Mc Andrew (1998); Korpela (2003); Yuen (2003); Kyle. et al (2005), Jorgensen and Stedman (2005); Hammit et al (2006); Brown and Raymond (2007); Hernandez et al. (2007); Walker and Ryan (2008); Lewicka, (2008). | place identity, place belongingness, place dependence, place rootedness, place familiarity | age, experience, familiarity, memory, satisfaction, length of residency, mobility, frequency and length of use, level and type of involvement in the community, naturalness, upkeep/civilities, openness, historical significance order, safety and security, knowledge on history, social and cultural features of the setting, changing development; well being, demolition or alteration, self-esteem, self efficacy. |
| Urban Design and Urban Planning | Lynch (1960); Conzen. et.al. (1960); Tuan (1972), Heckscher et al. (1977); Krier (1979); Jacobs (1985) Moughtin (1987); Nasar (1997); Child (2004); Loukaitou et al. (1998); Smaldone et al (2001); Shuhana Shamsuddin and Ahmad Bashri Sulaiman (1999,2001& 2002); Moughtin (2003); Santa (2003); Frick (2007); Maruani and Cohen, (2007); Nursidah (2007); Tweed and Sutherland (2007). | Place identity, structure; urban heritage, public space, urban conservation, quality place | Distinctive or unique, accessibility, legibility, diversity, permeability, conviviality, livability, essential, continuity, delightful, difference, historic, culture, natural features, built features, cohesion, morphology, evolution, public participation |
| Landscape Architecture | Heckscher et al. (1977); Gobster (2001); Smith et a. (2001), Ward-Thompson (2003); Antrop (2005); Low et al. (2006); Low et al. (2006); Barbosa et al (2007). | Place identity, Sense of place | Livability, Coherence, Variety, distinctiveness, diversity, character, connection, openness, naturalness, open space design and management, social and cultural values |
| Physical and Human | Burgess et al (1988), Lane (2000), Shamai and Ilatov | Sense of place, place dependence, | Distinctiveness, Continuity, sociability, cultural diversity, |

| | | | |
|-------------|--------|----------------|--|
| Geographies | (2005) | place identity | |
|-------------|--------|----------------|--|

Sources of Literature

- Journals including Landscape and Urban Planning, Habitat International, Journal of Urban Studies, Environment and Behavior, Journal of Environmental Psychology, Landscape Research, Journal of Economics and Social Geography Planning perspectives, Journal of Urban Design, Geographical Review, Journal of Environmental Management, Planning Perspective, Landscape Research, Leisure Studies and Applied Geography
- Unpublished studies including doctoral theses and governmental reports
- Archival records on old maps, newspaper column, drawing, photographs, survey data of towns and cities during and after colonial eras.

The types of research design, number of sampling, methods of eliciting data and methods of analysis is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Research Design and methods of eliciting and analyzing data

| Discipline of study | Research design | Number of respondents | Methods | Analysis method |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Environmental Psychology and Environment and Behavior | Green (1999): Case study Manzo (2005): Case study Smaldone (2005): Case study | n = 688 n = 40 n = 29 | Open ended questionnaires In-depth interview In-depth personal interview | Content analysis Multi variate statistical procedure Multi dimensional scaling Qualitative analysis- open coding Qualitative analysis-open coding |
| Urban Design and Urban Planning | Mazumdar et al. (2000): Naturalistic Field Research/ Qualitative social research | | Observation: Physical setting, social interaction, ceremonial public events and | Qualitative analysis |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| | Nursidah (2007): Case study Frick (2007): Descriptive study | n=330 (Q for 3 sites) n=30 (i) | religious ritual. Participant as observer Interview Archival material Field observation Urban character appraisal Solid and void plans | Qualitative analysis Qualitative analysis |
| Landscape Architecture | Tweed & Sutherland (2007): Case studies (3 areas) Barbosa et al. (2007): Case study | n=262 160km² | Survey questionnaire (with extensive use of photograph and maps) Ordnance survey and MasterMap topographic data | Qualitative analysis - open coding One way ANOVA |

Stage 2: Pilot Study

- A preliminary survey to elicit place-bonding responses of urban residents on four padangs in the cities of Ipoh, Georgetown, Bandar Hilir and Kota Bharu
- Results of preliminary survey help to formulate survey questionnaires and semi-structured interview for the data collection stage (Berg, 2001).

Stage 3: Data Collection

- A comparative study on two padangs: (1) Minimal modification that is Padang Kota Lama in Georgetown, and (2) Massive modification that is Dataran Pahlawan at Bandar Hilir in Melaka.

Criteria of site selection:

Padang Kota Lama in Georgetown and Dataran Pahlawan in Melaka are appropriate study sites because they are part of UNESCO World Heritage Sites based on the lifestyle, history, architecture and varied cultures in these areas. Besides of their long histories and special attributes such massive social, economic and environmental changes, Padang Kota Lama and Dataran Pahlawan attracted numerous controversies on their preservation. Dataran Pahlawan faced the wrecking ball in the early 2000 to 2004 when the proposal to build a commercial buildings on it site were opposed by many parties including the residents and Museum and Antiquity Department. Unfortunately, these strong resistances failed to stop the proposed development. Unlike Dataran Pahlawan, Padang Kota Lama which lies in the central part of Georgetown still maintains its original structures and layout. These situations suggest that residents in both cities possess very strong sense of attachment which can be defined as a positive affective association towards both study areas.

- The methods are: (1) Evaluation of archival maps and photographs of site's existing condition and land use in city planning, (2) Survey questionnaire on minimum of 240 respondents (120 respondents per padang), (3) Field observation, and (4) open-ended interview for minimum of 30 respondents for each padang.
- What data to collect?
 1. History of cities and town in Malaysia, history and development of padang,
 2. Spatial arrangement of padang in relation to building, urban spaces or land uses,
 3. Residents' perceptual responses on place attachment toward padang,

Sampling

In order to achieve a fairly representative sampling of residents in each city, participants are obtained through random selection while they are at the site and are interviewed during their walking, sitting, jogging and watching games around the padang area. These participants are also chosen by looking into the criteria of place familiarity (Hammit et.al, 2006) due to their length of stay and frequent visit to the research setting. Semi structured interviews

are used because it allows for the respondents to discuss his/her answer within a defined framework (Twigger, Ross and Uzell, 1996).

4. Landscape properties and attributes of padang, and
5. People's activities.

Stage 4: Data Analysis

- **A** Solid and void analysis: information derived from archival maps and photographs
- **B** Inferential statistics on data gathered from survey questionnaires using SPSS Version 15
- **C** Content analysis of data from pilot study and open-ended interview (Denzin, 2002; Weber, 1992; Patton, 2002)
- **D** Overlay maps and photograph selection of data gathered from field observation (Yuen, 2003; Moughtin, 2003; Child, 2004)
- Triangulation of results of A, B, C and D

Table 3: Summary of Data Collection and Data Analysis

| Method | Information gathered | Analysis method | Parameters or Variables |
|----------------------|--|---|--|
| Literature review | History of cities and town in Malaysia, history and development of padang | Document analysis | Historical process of formation , evolution of the role and purpose |
| Solid and Void Plan | Spatial arrangement of padang in relation to building, urban spaces or land uses | Systematic assessment of the qualities associated with such forms, circulation and structures | Form, structure and character, physical evolution, accessibility, legibility, physical transformations |
| Survey questionnaire | Perceptual responses | Inferential statistical analysis: percentage, cross-tabulation, Chi square | Distinctiveness (character & identity), diversity, coherence, accessibility, safety and |

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | | | security, |
| Content Analysis - Interview | Perceptual responses | Descriptive statistical analysis and interpretation of meanings | Experience, familiarity, memory, satisfaction, self-esteem, self efficacy. |
| Field observation | Record actual scene and availability of physical properties/ physical spatial elements People activities & events | Document analysis- photograph, behavior plan and map transformed into text | Diversity and variety of use, legibility, accessibility |

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

Previous literature reveals that variety of theoretical positions and frameworks have been advanced to account urban conservation in many historical cities in of Malaysia and also for how the significant places in the urban area become ‘places’ or how these places become meaningful. It is evident that most existing frameworks on ‘place’ study share the idea that a place is a complex concept, given life by people attaching meaning to a physical setting in a variety of ways (Smaldone et.al, 2005). However there are still very limited social researches directed to determining multiple dimensions such as the physical attributes and place identity and their meanings perceived by residents. In addition, research with due to urban historical open space combined with people’s feelings which may create strong bonding to it relatively unstudied, if happened to be some the studies were concentrating in the outside of Malaysian context. While there have been some noteworthy, but very little, attempts at bringing open space contribution to urban image formation. Therefore this study would fill in a void in the literature of environmental cognition by bringing together knowledge derived from different disciplines such as urban design, environmental psychology and cultural geography/ sociology.

The study is hoped to develop a survey technique that lays the groundwork for an assessment tool that local authorities can use under their supervision at the scoping stage of Social Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process. It is to help them to determine the value perceived by urban residents toward public spaces of the historical city. Furthermore, this method may also work as the basis of assessing the value of urban heritage to residents within a city and together with appropriate consideration for urban image especially when it comes to deal with new development proposals. As this research is also engaged with the physical properties of open spaces, thus it may appropriately used in assisting planning, designing, reconstructing and managing historical sites where the findings from the case studies are anticipated to answer specific questions and solve problems in specific urban environments.

Beside benefited the planning departments, the research is noticed to have an advantages on the residents themselves in recognizing that changes necessarily create loss. As new buildings and social relationships emerge, old patterns and relationships are lost. Therefore by protecting a special place which contribute to the retention of city's identity will contribute both to sociological understanding of place attachment as well as to fuller understanding of the emotional responses changes made to certain favorite public spaces like padang. It is also hoped that it will be of interest to those people who struggle in their daily life to make sense of their own attachment to place and reactions towards change of the urban environment.

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