MANAGING AND PLANNING FOR URBAN SUSTAINABILITY IN MALAYSIA: CHALLENGES FOR THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY

Terry McGee
Department of Geography
University of British Columbia
"Urbanization in China cannot copy the patterns of other countries, and we must take a road to urbanization with Chinese characteristics according to the conditions of our own country."
Premier Zhu Rongji (2005)

".. it is futile and indeed meaningless to attempt to create a sustainable city in isolation from it broader hinterland area"
Haughton (1999)
ORGANISATION OF PRESENTATION

Introduction. Clearing the decks

Part 1. The Nexus between Urbanization, Development and Sustainability.

Part 2. The Importance of CONTEXT Urbanization in West Malaysia 1957-2010

Part 3. “Soft Planning” Urban Sustainable Policy

Conclusion
INTRODUCTION

a) Engaging Malaysia. Positioning the researcher

b) Definitions

• Extended urban regions. Includes cities and hinterland form a functionally linked region.

• Extended urban spaces. Urbanizing areas outside cities

• Diffusing urbanization - process of urbanism extending into territorial space outside cities.

• Sustainability condition represents the end product of creating a secure environment for the present and future generations.
World Mega-Urban Regions 2015
SPATIAL TRANSFORMATION: A MODEL
Spatial configuration of an Asian mega-urban region (circa, 2000)
JAKARTA CITY
PART TWO
THE NEXUS BETWEEN URBANIZATION, DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY. 2 VIEWS

a) Above Ground Knowledge

1) Urbanization drives economic development
2) Creates institutional loci as the catalyst of economic development
3) Privileges the city in urban knowledge dominate paradigm

b) Grounded Knowledge based on experience

of urbanization as it is “actually occurring”
Privileges diversity of spatial scale
Recognizes local knowledge at difference spatial scale (local etc.)
DEVELOPMENTALIST

1. Urbanization is a major "driver of development and economic growth.
2. Urbanization provides the environment to facilities the generation of wealth.
3. Urbanization is the catalyst for the knowledge that will shape urbanization in the future.
4. This urban knowledge that is created privileges the role of core cities.
5. This leads to a city-centered approach to that is tends to see EUSs as a drag on development.
B. GROUNDED KNOWLEDGE

1. The grounded knowledge approach is based on the analysis of the process of Urbanization as it is actually occurring at different spatial scales of its impact.

2. It recognizes the diversity, hybridity and variations that exist in this impact which creates major challenges to the environment, eco-systems cities and external spaces.

3. This is recognized by International Agencies Agencies (UNO) and stimulates this meeting.
PART THREE THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTEXT: URBANIZATION IN WEST MALAYSIA 1957-2010

The Malaysian Urbanization Process Post 1970

1. Level of urbanization of Peninsular Malaysia rose from 33% (1957) - 73% (2014)

2. Sharp reduction in agricultural employment but agricultural productivity grew.

3. In general rural-urban inequity declined but still regional differences. Level of urbanization:
   “Old P. Malaysia” (K+T+P+K+P) = 38% (2000)
   “New P. Malaysia” (P1+P2+WPKL+S+NS+J) = 70% (2000)
4. Radical change in social structure of urban areas. Bumiputera now are largest component of the population of urban areas as compared to Chinese and Indians. This create new situation in Peninsular Malaysia’s cities.

5. The “new Malaysian urban culture”
   - Elite formation
   - The Middle Class
   - Local Level tensions in urban areas as local communities attempt to reconcile national conceptions of development and planning

B. IMPLICATIONS OF NEW UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE URBANIZATION PROCESS IN MALAYSIA TO POLICY.

1. Need to deal with the “ideological perception” of “rural” and “urban” division under new “urban condition”.

2. Need to resolve the dilemma that ongoing developmentalism poses for the creation of livable and adaptable urbanizing spaces.

3. Need to recognize how the physical space of urban areas will have to be reorganized and restructured. e.g., public transport, environmental initiatives, new “Green Economy”, life style changes.

4. New Governance for urban areas. decentralization, participation, collaboration and coalitions.
PART THREE. URBAN SUSTAINABILITY POLICY
“SOFT PLANNING” FOR A PEOPLE-CENTERED POLICY.
The development of a new sustainability policy offers a new opportunity to make it central thrust in the overall goals of the 11\textsuperscript{th} 5 year plan.

By a) Changing the emphasis in sustainability planning from “hard” to “soft planning”. This has the implications for capital investment

b) By recognizing that these changes will involve more “information” that is necessary on the specific conditions of urbanization, ecosystems and policy changes.
DEVELOPING “SYNERGETIC CAPITAL”

7 FORMS OF CAPITAL + ECO CAPITAL

Natural Capital defined as the endowment of non-renewable resources

- “Economic capital” stock of financial resources - investment

- “Cultural Capital” aspects a) historical endowment of regions cultural capital b) the culture of development that exists in a region

- “Symbolic capital” capacity to construct a region and mobilize recognition of region

- “Institutional capital” Institutional fabric of a region, government, law etc.

- “Social Capital” ability to engage in collaboration to achieve results

- “Physical capital” e.g rural and urban infrastructure

- “Human capital” knowledge and skills of individuals in a region “nurturing through education, health etc.

Eco-Capital: The capacity of the society to preserve eco-systems in the face of challenges of development and environmental change.
PRIORITIES FOR “INFORMATION CLUSTERS”

1. Information on new emerging Spatial configurations as urbanization proceeds
2. Information on the functional integration of the particular spatial forms of urbanization/ e.g. EURs, Corridors, Secondary Cities, Core cities
3. Information on processes of change that are occurring in ecosystems as a result of the expansion of urban activities
4. Information on the processes of urbanization and sustainability policy on other parts of Asia e.g. “decentralization”
5. Information on institutional changes (governance etc. as it relates to sustainability needs)
6) Information on policy formation and implementation of “people first” policies in the Malaysian context.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH, TRAINING
THE CHALLENGES OF THE IMPLEMENTING THE NEW URBAN SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

1. Needs changes in the government organization that are designed to bring about greater co-ordination and inter-departmental co-operation.

2. Needs decentralization and reorganization of government administrative departments to cope with the “holistic” approach that an understanding of eco-systems' demands.

3. Needs policies that will “empower” the regional and local levels through budgetary and decision making capacity at urban and local level.

THE DILEMMA

Two visions of the future

- **Developmentalist** - Urban regions as ‘engines of growth’ e.g. In 2000, China’s 4 EMR’s produced 45% of the nations GDP.

- Urbanization is a necessity for economic growth

- **Sustainable, livable and resilient EUR’s** as ‘places for all’.

The challenge: Are these two visions capable of being merged in the 21st century in Malaysia?
CONCLUSION