

## INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES FACED IN DESIGNING CULTURAL LANDSCAPE AT PANTAI LIDO URBAN WATERFRONT, JOHOR BAHRU, MALAYSIA

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**Abstract:** Pantai Lido of Johor Bahru has a diversity of cultures, beautiful landscapes, and unique nature along its waterfront. This diversity at one time, made Pantai Lido a tourist's option for domestic as well as international visits. After more than fifty decades of being a landscape of magnificent landmark for Johor Bahru, Pantai Lido is now experienced alteration which has resulted in the de-territorialisation of its cultural landscape. This inevitably eroded the identity and symbolism of the place. Thus, the objective of this paper is to explore and investigated the challenges that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, to preserve Pantai Lido from the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape. To achieve the objectives of the paper, a qualitative research method using a case study approach has been conducted in order to investigated the challenges in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, and Pantai Lido was the context for data collection. A total of 12 informants were involved in this study comprising of the local authorities. The data were primarily gathered through focus group discussions (in-depth, semi-structured interviews) participant observations and supported by relevant information from document analysis, and audio-visual materials. It is hoped that the findings of this study can assist the state government and the related parties in developing cultural landscape design strategies framework for the urban waterfront at Pantai Lido, and thus mitigate the de-territorialisation of the cultural landscape areas at the said location. The implications of this study are not only beneficial to assist in the planning of the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, but can also be applied to other similar regions throughout Malaysia. The objective of this paper is to explore and investigated the challenges that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, to preserve Pantai Lido from the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape. Qualitative Research Method using a case study approach, and to increase understanding of the findings, the primary data has been gathered from Focus Group Discussion (In-depth, semi structured interview), participant observations and supported by relevant information from document analysis, and audio-visual materials. The findings thus presented, this section closes with a list of challenged that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai lido- that is based on all of the theme, for the sustenance of symbolism within a cultural landscape at Pantai Lido urban waterfront; these also work as a potential cultural landscape design strategy to mitigate the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape areas at the said location. The data information faced in designing the cultural landscape for the urban waterfront: could assist local authorities and related parties to take necessary actions to solve the challenges in designing the cultural landscape for the urban waterfront at Pantai Lido.

**Key words:** Cultural landscape; the symbolism of place; urban waterfront; Pantai Lido; Malaysia

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### INTRODUCTION

One of the most remarkable characters of an old town centres is the riverfront or waterfront. The importance of the river or water edge is that it determines the allocation of old town places in Malaysia (Shamsuddin, 2011). Accordingly, Yassin, et al. (2009) have explained that the waterfront is the most important and valuable natural resource for living creatures to ensure a sustainable development of human civilisation, with great potential for a country's environmental

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balance and advancement. For this reason, Shams et al. (2013) have denoted that the urban waterfront may become a promising place in terms of economic, cultural, social, and of nature. It may as well be a symbolism and the identity of the place for a town facing the river or sea (Gonawan, 2012; Isa et al., 2018). Over the years, with rapid development and globalisation, the urban waterfront areas in Malaysia have experienced developmental effects that lead to place attachments crisis (Abu et al., 2016; Ahmad et al., 2018). This situation has resulted in the overlapping urban identity crisis, where cities, places, customs, and behavioural patterns resemble one another (Sepe, 2013).

At the same time, this aspect is often overlooked and consequently has deteriorated the symbolism values of the place in the developments, which is related to the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape areas at the urban waterfront (Mohamed and Salim, 2018). Poli (2020), and Mohamed and Salim (2018), have explained that the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape areas is a situation when such a place is adulterated by uncontrolled urbanisation, globalisation and rapid development, which slowly but surely deteriorate the symbolism and place identity. This de-territorialisation of the cultural landscape area at the urban waterfront landscape will lead to monotonous content, alienated design, and the lack of cultural characteristics in its roles to enliven the historical and human spirit on the basis of functions due to the designers' insensitivity toward the locals' need (Boulhila et al., 2022; Huang, 2008; Xu and Ma, 2017).

The de-territorialisation of cultural landscape area can be seen in the rapid development of the urban waterfront that is located in Johor Bahru under the five flagships of Iskandar Malaysia development, chasing its vision to become an international and sustainable metropolitan region in 2025 in Johor Bahru (Gonawan, 2012; Salisu, 2015; Sultan et al., 2016). The Iskandar Malaysia flagships plan is a regional development corridor that is located in the southernmost part of Peninsula Malaysia that has resulted in massive land use development, particularly in Johor Bahru (Sultan et al., 2016). The whole landscape of Johor Bahru which geographically includes Pantai Lido (Lido Boulevard) is now transformed dramatically, thus worrying the locals, the environmentalists, and surprisingly including the Singaporeans as well (Othman, 2014; Sultan et al., 2016; Rizzo and Khan, 2013). According to the written report by Malaysiakini Online (2019), the Sultan of Johor (the King of Johor), Sultan Ibrahim Ismail had once expressed his disagreement at the aggressive development that was made to Pantai Lido. In the same report, Sultan Ibrahim Ismail has also mentioned to have addressed the utter needlessness of the Pantai Lido's change, considering that such unpleasant changes have also been made to the Danga Bay.

This situation has witnessed the widespread of new urban and suburban projects which resulted in distinct differences in physical, socio-cultural, daily activities and socio-economic changes to that of the symbolism that has been attached to the prior cultural waterfront (Raman et al., 2019; Shepard, 2018). As has been reported by the local reputable newspaper the News Straits Times (2010), after the phase one development is completed Lido Boulevard is believed to be able to accommodate high-end condominiums, hotels, office suites, shopping malls, an indoor snow park, and an esplanade centre on the 50 hectares site along the Tebrau Straits. However, in the current situation the entire beach has been reclaimed for a multi-billion-dollar worth of developments, and Pantai Lido has lost its old charm (Azzaro, 2020; Mohamad, 2010; Sultan et al., 2016). In 1997, the socio-cultural activities settings, natural landscape, and coastal ecosystems, have been demolished to make way for the expansion of Iskandar Malaysia where this development geographically and indefinitely has included Pantai Lido (Sultan et al., 2016). The result of the development and modernisation at the said location have disrupted the cultural landscape areas, leaving it with eroded cultural values by the ill-conceived projects, insensitivity towards the locale antiquities, and the demolition or dislocation of the traditional physical settings. These settings unfortunately have been moved to new locations jeopardising the locals' significance (Aimran, 2013; Ahmad, 2019; Hussain et al., 2021; Rostam et al., 2011; Sultan et al., 2016). Gonawan (2012) revealed that the Pantai Lido waterfront has become dull, failed to function as a socio-cultural place and has lost its image as a cultural waterfront and its vitality due to rapid development, urbanisation and environmental degradation.

In addition, the design guidelines that are issued by the relevant parties' regard to coastal or waterfront development in Malaysia still lack focus on the importance of the cultural landscape characteristic. Yassin et al. (2018), have stated that most of the waterfront guidelines in Malaysia are more focused on the punishment for misconducts on river or water pollution, and that the guidelines that are introduced are very general, they also less specifically monitor the importance of the waterfront area for the public, nature, culture and heritage. This statement is also supported by The et al. (2020) and Musa et al. (2018), as most of the guidelines that are issued by the relevant parties also insufficient provide the detail on aspects of the cultural and landscape characteristics, but are more on the administration, management, development, and protection of land, physical type, and biological life. The same authors have stated that the landscape characteristics are a source of national pride that is so precious, and that it includes a unique and great natural and cultural heritage. At the same time, an appropriate design strategy and guideline is believed to be able to preserve the urban waterfront from facing de-territorialisation (Hussain et al., 2020). However, the lack of design strategies in implementing this cultural landscape, have resulted in the lack of implementation of the antiquities of the past environment on the new urban waterfront. Nevertheless, Pantai Lido consists of various unique cultural landscape characteristics which could be developed as the symbolism of cultural landscape in urban waterfront design, and to strengthen the tourism destination. Hence, a good solution to keep the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido in order for it to thrive is that the strategies and design guideline that are related to urban waterfront development need to be improved, by emphasising the importance of the cultural landscape at the said location. This strategies and design guideline will conserve the cultural heritage that demonstrates the heritage to the next generations. At the same time, it will strengthen the symbolism of the cultural landscape in urban waterfront design to preserve it from de-territorialisation.

This justifies the importance of this study in developing the cultural landscape strategies and design guideline for the urban waterfront. Understanding the importance of the cultural landscape must be rooted from its holistic perspective,

systematically. In doing so, the cultural landscape resources that form the symbolism of the local landscapes can be conserved, preserved, and protected accordingly. In short, this study explores and investigated the challenges that faced in designing cultural landscape in urban waterfront design at Pantai Lido. Notably, the regeneration in the urban waterfront areas in Malaysia lacks the focus on the importance of cultural landscape as part of its development and design guideline. Nonetheless, the linkage between the cultural landscape and urban waterfront design strategy might potentially be implemented in the urban waterfront design development in Malaysia so as to exude the symbolism of place as well as to mitigate the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape areas at the urban waterfront. Thus, this study aimed to look into the challenges faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido urban waterfront, Johor Bahru, Malaysia. This study is much needed to guide future development within the urban waterfront centre to achieve the goals of conserving the characteristics of the culture and heritage materials whilst allowing for more sustainable development to take place.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This section discusses the study collection methods that are used by the authors in order to achieve the set study aim with its corresponding study objectives and questions; this consists of explanations of the research design in response to the research question. The study was conducted using a qualitative method and had adopted the case study approach to explore and investigated the challenged that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. As has been suggested by Yin (2014), the case study approach allows the researcher to obtain a clear understanding by analysing the past and current situation in which this study has chosen the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido as referred to *Figure 1*. This initiative has taken into accounts the contemporary phenomenon with regards to the tremendous change of the past and present, which have resulted in the development of a design strategies to augment the symbolism of cultural landscape in the urban waterfront design of Pantai Lido. The primary data for this study have been gathered from in-depth, semi-structured interviews though out focus group discussion with the local authorities to gather information about their knowledge, perceptions, views, and experiences that are related to Pantai Lido's history, in the effort of developing the competitive advantage of the cultural landscape characteristics for an urban waterfront design. The case study approach has been adopted in order to explore the challenges that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. To triangulate the findings and enhance this study's topic of interest, participant observations have also been conducted. In addition, data have also been collected and are supplemented with secondary data through document analysis, and audio-visual materials.

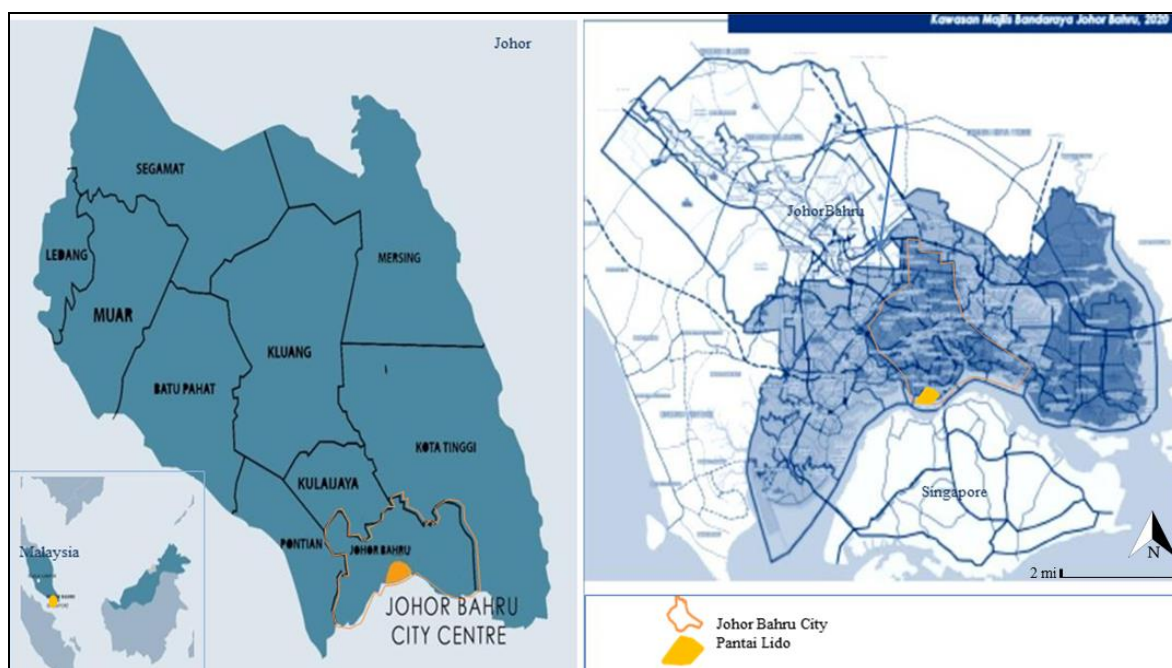


Figure 1. Left: The of state of Johor in Peninsular Malaysia. Right: The location of Pantai Lido map at Johor Bahru (Sources of image: Gonawan, 2012)

Pantai Lido is located in the southern part of Johor Bahru (JB) of Peninsula Malaysia. It is located approximately 350km away from Kuala Lumpur City Centre. Referring to other known city, Singapore City Centre is located at the south of Johor and it is located about 40km from JB. Pantai Lido at JB can be reached by various types of transportations such as airways, waterways, railways and land roads. JB is known as the southern gateway to Malaysia and acts as the international gateway linking Singapore to Malaysia. From the historical perspective, JB was once known as Iskandar Puteri with Tanjung Puteri as the centre of governance, which started in the beginning of 1855. This was an event that had happened after the officiated agreement of understanding between Sultan Ali and Temenggung Daeng Ibrahim (Husain, 1995; Thukiman, 2011). In addition, according to Thukiman (2011), JB is a southern gateway for the development of civilisation, culture, and intellectuals. The same author has also pointed out that this phenomenon has created a complex, unique and diverse society culture that is known as *Bangsa Johor*. With the differing ethnicities living harmoniously, there used to be a famous gathering and tourism area. It was synonymous with the local community as well as with foreign tourists- this was

Pantai Lido. Its beautiful position stretches along the banks of the Tebrau Strait covering various interesting socio and cultural landscape characteristic locations from Danga Bay towards the JB city centre. Pantai Lido used to be an ideal place for the locals to relax, take a bath, take a walk, enjoy the beautiful scenery, and also a great place for fishing. According to the local folklore, the name of Pantai Lido is believed to have originated from the incident of a British who resides in the area, a British Officer is also known as a British Resident during the British protectorate in 1885 in Johor Bahru.

The British Resident had repeatedly uttered the word 'lido' as he headed to the beach for a picnic when riding in a *lanca* (referred to as a human-pulled traditional rickshaw) (Thukiman, 2011). Eventually, the word 'lido' became synonymous with that particular beach, thus, Pantai Lido has been given that name ever since. It is called Pantai Lido, for according to the Cambridge Dictionary 'lido' relates to a public outdoor swimming pool or part of a beach where people can swim, lay in the sun, or do water sports. According to Thukiman (2011), from a historical point of view, in the old days, the royal family of Johor used to picnic at Pantai Lido on the weekends and thus, had stayed at their holiday palace that was known as *Istana Hinggap* which was facing the Tebrau Strait. Previous researchers have also stated that in every festive seasons, Pantai Lido will be so lively along its length, with various local food stalls serving delicious local cuisine while the youngsters are running around happily playing on the beach, catching a native molluscs, i.e., the *kupang* (mussels), *lokan* (Mangrove clams), *kijeng* (glaucomyas), and *kepah* (clams), together with other crustaceans such as *belangkas* (horseshoe crabs), and *ketam ragi* (common moon crabs) (Thukiman, 2011; Sultan et al., 2016). Pantai Lido is facing up to the Tebrau Strait, under the district of Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru (MBJB) which covers almost 800 hectares and consists of 3.5km length of waterfront, where more than 75% of the area is covered by the water (Tebrau Strait). The site is surrounded by some remarkable cultural landscape characteristics (physical, socio-cultural and human activities) within the Pantai Lido boundary such as Pantai Lido waterfront, Dataran Bandaraya Johor Bahru, Laman Tun Sri Lanang, Jalan Dhoby, and Medan Tepian Tebrau. Due to the development and construction of the coastal highways to widen the existing roads, the cultural landscape characteristics at Pantai Lido has been ignored and reclaimed (Gonawan, 2012; Mohamad, 2010). As a result, where once it has the most nostalgic and remarkable cultural landscape, Pantai Lido has now lost its old charm and has surrendered to development. Gonawan (2012), Mohamad (2010), Salisu (2015), and Woo et al. (2017) has also added, that the changes by the development have blocked the open view towards Tebrau Strait, gentrification of ecological resources, and have eroded the local's socio-cultural activities such as harvesting native molluscs and other crustaceans, street hawkers; the changes have also put a limitation between the interaction and intimacy of the people with nature. Figure 2 illustrates the changes that have happened at Pantai Lido from the 1990s to the year 2018. The same figure also shows the transition of socio activities and land uses up to the time when the beach has been closed for the land reclamation.

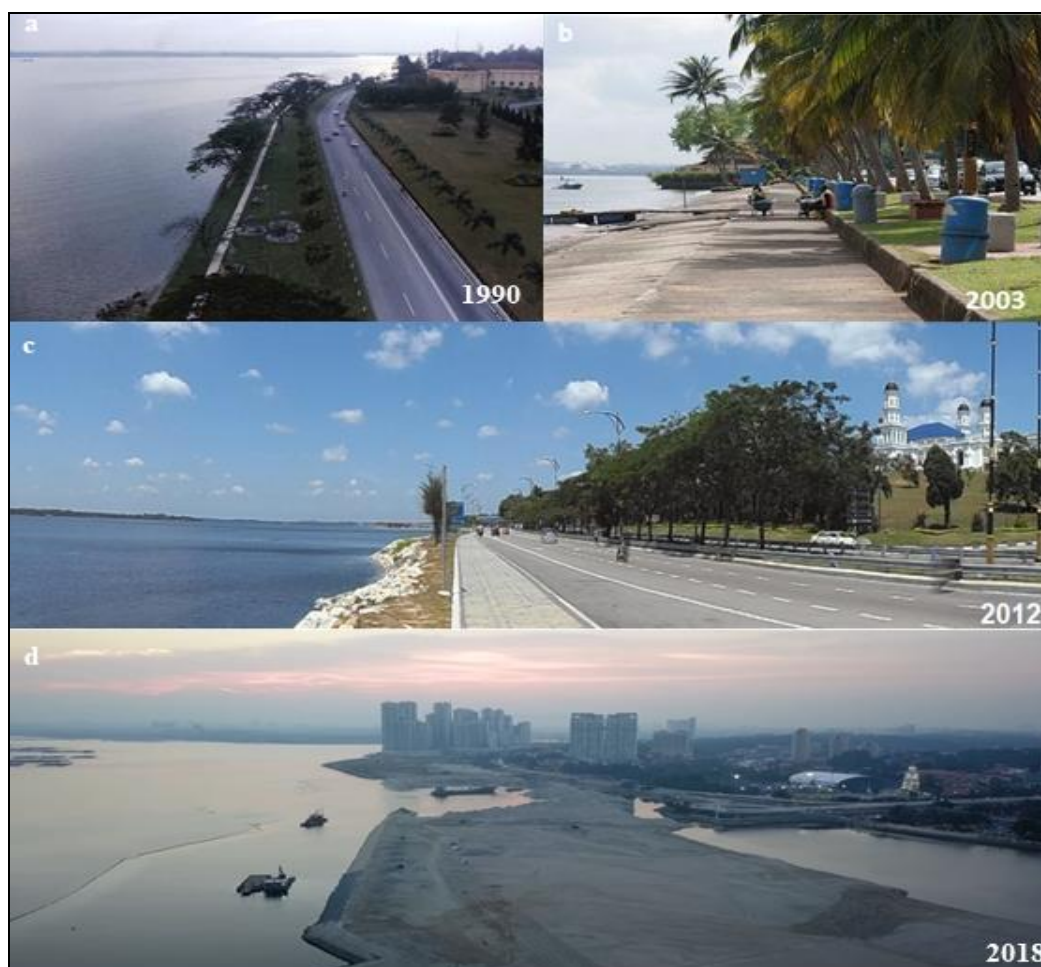


Figure 2. The process of urbanisation that took place at Pantai Lido (Source of image: Johor Bahru City Council, 2019)



### Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

In this study, the authors had conducted FGD to explore the challenges that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido through the eyes of a local authorities that is representative from two differences government body known as Yayasan Warisan Johor (YWJ) and Majlis Bandaraya Johor Bahru (MBJB), they have been selected based on their experience in handling the Pantai Lido development plan for Pantai Lido. This measure aligns with the scope of this study, which requires a deeper understanding of the local authorities' perspective about their experience in handling the Pantai Lido development plan and executions. Besides that, the conjoining interviews from informants of multiple backgrounds have allowed the researcher to obtain richer perspectives. Thus, the authors conducted FGD with the local authorities to explore the knowledge and experience in facing challenges in designing a cultural landscape symbolism within the urban waterfront of Pantai Lido. In addition, the intent of the FGD was also to find out more about the opinions and views of essential considerations that were needed to properly design an emblematic cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. Their opinions and views are very important for this study in improving the existing list in the waterfront guideline. Besides, the FGD is also important to gather deeper information about the existing situation at Pantai Lido, the perspectives on the changes, and the overall views on the current urban waterfront design guideline that is endorsed by The Department of Town and Country Planning (JPBD). This is consistent with Stewart et al. (2007) who have stated that FGD is useful for an exploratory study, especially when little is known about the study phenomenon.

The FGD session for this study was performed with two moderators. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explained the relevance of having two responsible personnel within a FGD so that one can focus on facilitating the group while the other takes detailed notes and arranges technical requirements such as recorders, cameras, and caters to the different individual needs. In this study, two sessions of FGD were conducted by the researcher because the purpose was only to triangulate and support the data from in-depth interviews from the local community. Correspondingly, Stewart et al. (2007) have stated that one or two sessions of FGD can be sufficient to produce satisfactory data in line with the purpose of the study. This study conducted FGD with a total of 12 experts, who were representing two local authorities in the related fields such as landscape architects, town planners, and cultural and heritage officials. The 12 informants were divided into two sessions of FGD respective to their representative body. Their diverse knowledge and experience in the culture and tradition studies, cultural landscape design, and urban waterfront planning were deemed to be insightful for the rigour of this study. Other than that, FGD participation with the minimal number of informants is due to the suitability of the study, to avoid conflicts of interest during the session and instead facilitating the aimed saturation point as is set by the researcher. Tobi (2016) and Merriam and Tisdell (2016) have noted that a FGD usually consist of six to twelve participants, which is an optimum size, while Stewart et al. (2007) believe that fewer participants per group (less than six) limits the discussion, and too many (more than twelve) restricts the time that is available for the participants to contribute. The saturation point for this study was reached at informant number 12 based on the fact that no more new discovery or information has emerged thereafter.

The first FGD session has been held in the MBJB office at Hutan Bandar on 5th. January 2019. In this session, the informants are representatives of the MBJB who hold positions of senior officers. The second FGD session has been held at the Yayasan Warisan Johor Complex, in Johor Bahru on 12th. January 2021. The six informants who were also gathered for the session hold the position of senior staff at the Department of Yayasan Warisan Johor. Both authorities are related and aware of the matters involving the development and design planning at Pantai Lido. They also have broad experiences and knowledge of the highs and lows of Pantai Lido over the years, until this day. In this study, the name and identity of the informant are not disclosed. To ensure that their name is not mentioned, a pseudonym is given to each informant when explaining the theme that has emerged from the findings i.e., LA1 for local authority 1. Apart from using FGD as the main technique for data collection, this study has also employed participant observations in a few Pantai Lido's local events, namely, the *Liga Gamentra* Festival, *Pasar Karat* (Rust Market), *Pasar Pagi* (Morning Market), *Pasar Malam* (Night Market), and the *Jualan Boot Kereta* (Car Boot Sale), all of which have occurred in the setting of the study.

Furthermore, to enhance the understanding of the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, document analysis was employed on the Pantai Lido's cultural landscape with reference to related books entitled; *Sejarah Johor Dalam Pelbagai Perspektif*, *Pesta Pembangunan Negeri Johor*, *Siri Mengenal Johor*, *Asal Usul Nama Tempat dan Jalan Serta Bangunan di Johor Bahru*, *Johor Bahru: Kebanggaan Jauhar Selatan* (The Southern Jewel Pride), *Johor: Local History, Local Landscape, and Urban Character of Johor Bahru*. Also, reports from the newspapers, articles, and journals that were related to Pantai Lido were reviewed. Besides that, to cross-check the finding's, complementing data was also retrieved from audio-visual materials including pictures (Facebook, Blogs) and videos (YouTube) of the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. Combining all of the methods within this study, the researcher had aided with multiple-angle views of the case in the Pantai Lido's urban waterfront cultural landscape. From the basics of knowing the meaning, how it is translated into symbolism, identifying obstacles and then the considerations to prosper, the researcher has been rained with rich data explaining the case study deeply and holistically. The selection of methods was therefore appropriate to provide thorough inputs in explore and investigated the challenged that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings of the paper through data that have been collected and analysed by the authors in order to investigate challenges that faces in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. With all of the findings thus presented, this section closes with a list of challenged that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai lido- that is based on all of the theme, for the sustenance of symbolism within a cultural landscape at Pantai Lido urban waterfront; these also work as a potential cultural landscape design strategy to mitigate the de-territorialisation of cultural landscape

areas at the said location. The authors chose to explore and investigated the challenges that faced in designing cultural landscape at Pantai Lido from eyes of local authorities at Pantai Lido, as a way to gain a better perspective of the study. The most informants have experienced more than 20 years and possess deep knowledge about the transition of sociological and cultural landscape at Pantai Lido have been the primary subjects for this study. Some of the informants were involved in policy development, strategic planning, guideline, and the waterfront design for Pantai Lido.

### Investigate the Challenges that Faced in Designing Cultural Landscape at Pantai Lido

This study objective addresses the challenges that are faced by the local authorities in regards to the designing of cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. Findings for this research objective were gathered through Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with local authorities, and supported from participant observation, audio-visual material and document analysis. The data collected were transcribed and analysed by coding, classifying, and then organising into themes. Three themes have been formed based on the findings regarding the challenges that are faced in designing the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, they are as follows:

1. Authorities' revocation due to inconsistent policy
2. Appreciation indigence
3. Insufficiency in planning guidance

#### 1. Authorities' revocation due to inconsistent policy

##### a) Social and Cultural events are no longer being organised

From the finding, it has been found that a significant number of cultural events have seen their end or are decreasing practices. *Karnival Bot Berhias* (Decorated Boat Carnival) and *Pesta CitraRasa* (Locals Food Festival) for example, are no longer organised at Pantai Lido. According to the LA 2, the changed of the new political party during the 14th Malaysian general election was one of the reasons why these festivals have not been continued. He stated that previously, these events were organised once biannually or within three years at Pantai Lido. The last time it was held was in 2015 for *Karnival Bot Berhias*, and 2016 for *Pesta CitraRasa*. However, up to date, the local authorities did not receive any information on when and how this event should be organised again, particularly under the new political party. He said:

"...previously the festivals were held every two or three years, but they have stopped due to the change of the new political party after the election, so we have no idea what is their next project... since all the local council member are revoked".

These findings were consistent with that of LA 1 who remarked on the newly appointed political party, which also mark the discontinuance of the previous political party's effort in promoting hereditary festivals. No more events incorporating traditional games and local foods which initially are thought to promote the diversity of cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. Needless to say, that she utters her disappointment on the discontinuation of these local events by the new political party. According to her, this is the best strategy to promote local sociological and culture elements at Pantai Lido. LA 1 stated:

"...the best thing that has been made, and I think it should be continued, it is the socio-cultural festival, it's not just a festival...but it also promotes the local socio-cultural and local character...I am not sure since it is not fixed, it is seasonal, previously it was...the change in the new political party probably causing it slower..."

Another informant has further stressed these findings and stated that the *Karnival Bot Berhias* and *Pesta CitraRasa* has not been continued by the new political party is believed due to the announcement of limited budget from federal and the problem of discord between politicians. In addition, LA 6 has stated, when politicians are inexperienced in local cultural affairs, it will be erratic with inconsistent proposals or planning aside from elucidating 1,001 excuses not to pursue such events if it does not benefit to their political party. From there, he has said, that the Sultan of Johor was once furious and said that politicians should not interfere in the affairs of the state government to promote the development territory of Iskandar Malaysia and attract investors and visitors to come to the area. LA 6 said:

"The Sultan of Johor once said ... this is a warning to all politicians and among them, do not politicised the Johor administration with their political agenda ... they need to prioritise the interests of the state over self -interest or politics, for the well -being of the people and the economic prosperity of Johor".

These findings are supported by the document analysis regarding the Sultan of Johor issuance of a warning to all politicians to not to intervene in the Johor administration with their political agenda. From that, the LA 4 had a similar view with the above findings and emphasised, when such events are no longer held as a result of political unrest. Many visitors who came here asked us about these festivals, when it will be held and including the other question been asked about the festival. She stated:

"...lately there is a sign of declination of social-cultural festival event, the *Karnival Bot Berhias* and *Pesta CitraRasa* that has become an attraction are no longer being held... when there are no such festival happening, the regular visitors who came before asked about it... it means that the visitors can see various kinds of local social-cultural attraction through such festival... however no initiative taken by the current political party, or any other related government agencies..."

Table 1. Informant Profiles (Source: Result of the study)

Informants	Ages	Gender	Years experiences living at Pantai Lido (year)	Notes
LA 1	48	Female	26	Government officer
LA 2	52	Female	28	Government officer
LA 3	34	Female	34	Government officer
LA 4	44	Female	44	Government officer
LA 5	39	Female	39	Government officer
LA 6	52	Female	52	Government officer
LA 7	44	Male	30	Government officer
LA 8	47	Male	47	Government officer
LA 9	39	Male	39	Government officer
LA 10	52	Male	52	Government officer
LA 11	57	Male	57	Government officer
LA 12	46	Male	46	Government officer

Despite the many initiatives that have been employed by the local authorities, there were several issues relating to the lack of development and design guideline about the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. One of the issues is the discontinuation of the social and cultural elements festival that has the significant character to Pantai Lido. The change in the appointed leader from the 2018 general election may be a reason for the discontinuation of such events apart from the issues on high-cost. The majority of the local authorities have mentioned that the reason why these social-cultural events have to be discontinued was due to the change of new political party. Jalis (2016) has described that every leader in the political party has a different strategy and interest to promote the local, social culture, and character.

### b) Undecided planning of Pantai Lido significance

Another important finding is about the changes of ideas regarding Pantai Lido's development planning from the new political party. LA 4 raised the concern about this constraint and highlighted the problem she encountered with the new political party. She said that most of the planning with the previous political party that expand the cultural landscape for tourism had to be stopped and needed to be changed. She also said that the Yayasan Warisan Johor representative told her the same thing about this issue. She stated:

"...another issue is politic when the government changed, there is a bit of change, that is the current problem, we had to pass over to another party, we have not received any feedback from them on the program we have planned ... as long as we do not get the green light, we have to postpone it first, as well as release the existing program until informed, even Yayasan Warisan Johor said so, the current problem is the changes in government, all arrangements have been stopped, we are unable to do anything..."

Another informant had a similar view on the above findings and emphasised on the lack of information and idea from the new appointed councillors regarding the cultural landscape promotion strategy. The same informant also stated that, she did not know who the new appointed representative head was or how to communicate with him regarding the events promotion planning. This was different from the previous councillors who had always updated the information regarding local social and cultural promotion planning with the Yayasan Warisan Johor. Then the LA 6 said:

"...yes, usually to arrange such program must go through the appointed councils, they will make an announcement, but we have no idea how the newly appointed councils work..."

These findings were consistent with that of LA 5 regarding the unclear idea of the event planning by the new political party. She also stated that the former chief of parliament had worked with the mass media through a television and local broadcast program to promote any event held at Pantai Lido. However, for the newly appointed chief parliament, she was still unsure about the promotion plan, specifically on social-cultural and tradition. Her stated:

"...yes, there was media involvement and there were a lot, as far as I remember in the past, I had joined a program organised by the member of parliament, this program was shown on television, radio, and newspaper, the show explained the whole arrangements made by the member of parliament and what is special in the member's area for examples local food, local people, traditional dance and art performance, traditional game, and more... we are not sure about the newly appointed member of parliament especially what is his arrangement with regards to local social cultural promotion..."

These findings are in line with the audio-visual material and document analysis regarding the involvement of the former chief of parliament in promoting cultural and heritage activities that have been held at Pantai Lido at one time as referred in Figure 3. Unclear ideas from the newly appointed political party state's leader is one of the main challenges that is faced by local authorities relating to the designing and promoting of local cultural landscape as part of the attractions. International Tourism Highlights (UNWTO) reported that in promoting local culture and tradition at a destination, the political situation must be correctly assessed (Amir et al., 2020). The support from the local and state government's leaders is important in developing and designing the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. As Jalis (2016) and Steinmetz (2010) asserts that communication gaps between the planners and local authorities are one of the barriers in promoting local, which resulted in a misunderstanding between the two parties.



Figure 3. Traditional Malay games tarik upih that happening at Dataran Bandaraya Johor Bahru (Source of image: Fadzli, 2015)

## 2. Appreciation indigence

### a) Not enough efforts and support

Another challenge to designing the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido was the insufficient efforts and support of the local tourism organisation, local government bodies, and other stakeholders. According to the LA 2, the underlying problem was about the minimal supports that has been given to the local authorities such as Yayasan Warisan Johor, and local activists such as *Persatuan Bangsa Johor* and *Pasal Johor* to further promote the uniqueness of Pantai Lido through the social media. He also added that the promotion of the local's uniqueness as an attraction was mainly through individual effort and was not much supported from the responsible bodies. He said:

“...as what I have mentioned, this promotion effort cannot be done individually, we need help from others who can facilitate us in developing cultural landscape design strategy and promotion at Pantai Lido, if we want to promote there must be someone who can bring it for promotion, for example, the Department of Tourism, National Landscape Department, and National Department for Culture and Arts should give their concern...”

These findings are consistent with that of LA 5 who commented that the individual effort was never enough to promote the whole of local cultural landscape here. She also said that this effort must be supported by other large organisations such as the Tourism State Department and Development Planning Department. The authorities need to play their roles in creating a cultural landscape design guideline, particularly in help to enhancing the existing physical landscape and social-cultural activities at Pantai Lido keep-alive. The LA 5 said:

“...there is someone who has taken the initiatives, but it is ineffective, and if we want to ask for help it should be from the related departments, which is the department from tourism, heritage, and authorities they should play their roles to highlight the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, that is what I think...”

Another informant had a similar view about the above findings and remarked that the local social and cultural promotion was not captured sufficiently and required more efforts in order to make it more attractive and marketable for both local and international tourists. LA 8 stated, the responsible authorities need to revamp the existing guideline and incorporate the importance of the cultural landscape design in it so that the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido can continue to be maintained through set guidelines. The same informant has also added that, the current guideline about the cultural landscape is still debatable, while another obstacle that is faced in designing the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido is the lack of cooperation from responsible department and the support from the authorities. LA 8 said:

“We have tried to take this matter to the forefront ... to review back the existing guidelines for improvement...but it still hasn't got any feedback from them... it seems like only our department is serious, but the party in power doesn't seem to care about our proposal and idea”.

As the same informant has stated, to bring the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido to another level, there will be requirements for more efforts from all parties working together to raise the local culture and tradition at Pantai Lido to the international level. According to LA 4 this is like a suggestion from the Sultan of Johor who wants the development carried out to have the characters and culture of Johor. She said,

“...the Sultan once expressed every development in Johor must emphasise the local culture... so that this culture continues to remain intact”. This is so that it can be used as a backbone to the identity of the *Bangsa Johor* in promoting matters that are related to local culture, traditions, customs and heritage to the outside community. Yassin et al., (2011) and Ismail (2021) have argued that developing a specific cultural landscape at the waterfront or townscape indeed requires collaboration from the stakeholders and the local authorities. It is not enough to provide cultural experiences from singular effort alone, especially for a culturally sensitive destination like Pantai Lido. Thus, the cultural landscape promotion cannot rely on just one party in the effort towards awareness about the embedded social and cultural elements. Support from government bodies and related organisations in coordinating the promotion strategy and waterfront development guidelines are deemed important to maximise the potential of cultural landscape tourism.

#### **b) Lack of awareness among the community**

The lack of awareness among the community has been another finding regarding the challenges of designing the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. According to LA 3, the lack of knowledge and concept regarding the cultural landscape and the role that it plays in tourism, as well as the little awareness among the community have been the obstacles in developing Pantai Lido as a cultural landscape tourism destination. He said:

“...there are efforts from NGO and authorities in promoting cultural landscape at Pantai Lido, however, they are also waiting for the community whom maybe might not understand, maybe the community cannot see what to do for the development of Pantai Lido in term of promoting local culture and tradition...”

These findings are consistent with that of LA 6 who has further emphasised the lack of awareness among the younger generation in appreciating and promoting cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. According to LA 6, it was hard to get young people to volunteer in traditional dance and art performances, and promoting heritage food at carnivals or events compared to the older generation. She has felt that the younger generation is still lacking in terms of knowledge, interest, and the awareness to promote the uniqueness of the local culture. She said:

“I don't really understand the needs of the younger generation now ... we have classes and training to learn local cultural arts, but those who come are not the youths ... are they not interested in learning our heritage art...we have tried to bring the younger generation to participate in this program...but they are less interested”.

LA 6 further elaborated that on this finding, apart from the lack of interest of the younger generation to learn and continue this legacy, the lack of encouragement by parents to their children to learn local cultural arts is among other factors that hinder the success. In addition, there are limited new ideas in attracting the attention of the younger generation to enrich this knowledge and culture. As LA 5 said:

“We need to sit at the same table and discuss with all parties such as; parents, schools, the local community, and the authorities too... in encouraging the younger generation to love and deepen this local culture and heritage ... so that it does not become extinct... besides increasing the number of cultural spaces at Pantai Lido for the convenience of the local community to carry out cultural activities freely”.



The same informant stated that, the number of social-cultural space at Pantai Lido were insufficient and cannot solely rely on what they have now to promote Pantai Lido as a cultural landscape tourism destination. She also added, even though the cultural landscape is not the main motivation for a tourist to visit a destination, nevertheless it potentially creates tourist satisfaction for the overall experience. However, for some reason, the cultural landscape is viewed as not being interesting enough and something a visitor or tourist would not want if it does not show something unique about the local community, their culture, their traditions and their heritage (Luekveerawattana, 2012; Kebete, 2021). The same author has highlighted that the lack of knowledge regarding the local cultural landscape among the people as one of the challenges for the locals to promote their cultural landscape as the main attraction. This can lead the cultural landscape to at least receive attention as a potential marketing tool because many local people are losing their sense of appreciation of the cultural landscape due to ignorance in doubting the place potential to be a travel motivation to visit the destination. They do not feel proud of their cultural heritage and tradition, especially among the younger generation. There are many opportunities to utilise cultural landscape as a tourist attraction, but certain people do not know how to utilise the local resource to relate it with tourism development.

### 3. Insufficiency in planning guidance

#### a) The current guideline is still inadequate and needs to be improved

The lack of focus on the importance of the cultural landscape as part of the development and design guideline in the urban waterfront such as Pantai Lido has been another important finding concerning the challenges that are faced in designing the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. These findings have been highlighted by LA 10 who has commented on that the current guideline regarding the “Waterfront Development Planning Guidelines in Malaysia”. Apparently, it still lacks emphasis on the importance of cultural landscape in the coastal areas. She has also explained that in the existing guidelines, the authorities have only outlined the importance of conserving historical or archaeology sites if those are available in the development areas, but did not mention important detail about the cultural landscape. LA 10 said:

“If we refer to the guidelines issued by authorities, we find that there are fewer specific conditions or guidelines on cultural and landscape control in coastal areas... moreover, Pantai Lido is not under any sensitive area development nor heritage site...it is quite difficult for us to control the development here, as it is not the same as the historic area of the UNESCO site”.

LA 7 had the same view with the above findings and commented about the development that was carried out at Pantai Lido which had followed the appropriate guidelines as issued by the authorities. However, she had also added that the existing guidelines that were issued by the authorities consist of some shortcomings regarding the strengthening of the importance of cultural landscape in coastal areas. Hence, the guideline seems to be a bit outdated, is biased and not in line with the current situation which probably is due to the fact that it has not been updated and that it is time for the responsible department and authorities to discuss this issue and bring it to parliament. LA 7 said:

“The existing guidelines for development and control in coastal areas are as outdated ... the rules and proposals listed are not very favourable to us (landscape architects) ... so reforms need to be carried out, old guidelines need to be drafted and improved”.

The other informant has supported the findings by commenting on the constraints of the existing guideline that do not emphasise the importance of the cultural landscape. LA 2 said:

“The federal, stakeholders and local authorities need to sit at the same table, and discuss the role of the cultural landscape in its contribution to local heritage, economy, knowledge and tourism .... it is time for the existing guidelines to be reshuffled”.

The same informant has said that landscapes often change according to specific needs, whether they are to be developed, preserved or conserved. The landscape changes are particularly evident and significant in small and rapidly developing countries, with a high diversity of natural and cultural landscapes. But if we have specific guidelines to preserve the cultural landscape, it will be easier for designers or the related agencies to use it so that the development can be carried out and does not deviate from the aim. LA 4 has the same view with the above findings and have commented that if they have a specific guideline, it will be easy to control any changes or development at those specific sites. The existing guideline is to control the change of cultural landscape accordingly so that no major change is being put upon the place that deviates from the essence of the place. This is because development, preservation, and conservation can either be controlled or not. Thus, through a legal guideline in this cultural landscape application, the control over each landscape change can be monitored. If there is a violation of the applicable laws and regulations, action may be enforced accordingly.

According to him, such matters are also supported by the Sultan of Johor who wanted changes on the development in Johor Bahru by creating Johor Bahru as a city of character, as mirrored to its nickname of *Jauhar Selatan* (The Southern Jewel). These findings were consistent with document analysis regarding the constitutional amendments and guidelines which says that, the Sultan of Johor has also given his support that any outdated amendments are to be revisited and enacted in order to be in line with the current situation. As been reported in local prestigious newspaper the *Berita Harian Online* (2018), The Sultan of Johor recommends any constitutional amendments and guidelines made in the past and has a negative impact on the present, to be corrected in order to ensure the nobility and well-being in the future.

Moreover, in the FGD sessions, most of the informants have thought that the new guidelines for the waterfront development in Malaysia should emphasise on the importance of the cultural landscape and to continuously rehabilitate the waterfront. The informants have also thought that the guidelines for the waterfront development should include provision to promote local characters, sensitivity to the development control, contextual consideration and the strengthening of the social cultural elements. LA 3 said: “I am sure if responsible department and authorities care about our views, maybe the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido will enhance accordingly ... become the focus of cultural landscape tourism ... not the same as other urban waterfront that are monotonous and boring”.

These findings are consistent with the other informants, who further emphasised that the current trend of insensitive and bad planning must be stopped and be replaced by more effective approach in order to allow the regeneration of their heritage and cultural environment that will not destroy the sense of place. According to Yassin et al. (2018) the cultural landscape at any townscape must be appreciated as a living part of the city where a community is needed to ensure its continuous vitality. Thus, the stakeholders and authorities must recognise the need for a complete system of design and guidelines to ensure the sustainability of the community in this most treasured part of the townscape.

## CONCLUSION

As with any efforts, obstacles are there to hinder the process. Exploring the challenges from the past and current that made Pantai Lido today, is the next research objective in this paper. The findings of the challenges have been treated as the shortcomings in developing the symbolism of cultural landscape in the urban waterfront design at Pantai Lido. The result for this research objective has disclosed the list of challenges that are faced by the local authorities in the designing and project implementations of the cultural landscape at Pantai Lido. The changing of political autocracy, lack of appreciations, the planning guidelines voids for urban waterfront have been among the challenges that are highlighted by the informants. Identifying and classifying gaps as well as challenges in designing a cultural landscape at Pantai Lido is supporting the elements, by addressing issues that are related to the study. Improvements to the existing gaps can ensure the continuity of the place thus enhancing its competitiveness and controlled development.

Furthermore, the authorities must frame and be led by the same goals in formulating actions that are related to the importance of the cultural landscape of the country. This action is important in making the cultural landscape be elevated as an important factor in the design of an area, in particular as well as to help in sustaining the balance of future developments of the modern landscape incorporation in the cultural landscape- as a means to mitigate de-territorialisation of cultural landscape at the urban area. It should start with the understanding of the importance of cultural landscape- holistically and systematically, so that cultural landscape resources that formed the character of the local landscapes can be conserved, preserved and protected.

Therefore, policies, acts and guidelines that emphasise strictly on the cultural landscape character should be formulated and made available. This is to be applied in tandem with the existing planning guideline in order for it to be a better strategy for an elevated distinctiveness and significance of the cultural landscape.

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