

Evaluation of Activities, Spaces and Architectural Elements in Houses of Worship that encourage Social Inclusivity across faiths for Nation Building in Malaysia: Mosques and Churches in Kuala Lumpur

The main objective of this research is to contribute towards a construct of religious houses of worship as nation building elements in forging social inclusion among different faiths by engaging with religious buildings of different faiths. Race and religious relationship in Malaysia have suffered many setbacks and one of the stumbling blocks has always been a gap in Malaysians looking at the idea of being part of a larger community and nation building family with respect to each other's faiths. Houses of Worship have always been isolated entities and this adds to the problem of race relations and nation building.

In this research, there are three objectives to be investigated in order to contribute to the larger framing of a planning policy on houses of worship as nation building entities apart from just a community centres for each faiths exclusively. The first objective is to evaluate social activities and programmes determined by the committee of houses of worship that would encourage a general participation of users from different faiths. The second objective is to evaluate the planned spaces for inter-communal interaction and social inclusion in the houses of worship. The third objective is an evaluation of architectural elements that would create a friendlier and inclusive image of the religious building that would invite inclusive interactions. The researchers have selected Kuala Lumpur as a city representing the most educated and diverse multi-faith context with 100% sampling of all five mosques and five churches.

This research would help policy makers and designers as well as committee leaders of all religions in Malaysia to relook at the activities and planning of their Houses of Worship to be more in line with inclusive aspects of social interaction, understanding and acceptance between different religious adherents towards a more harmonious form of community and nation building.

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Principal investigator: Professor Dr Mohd Tajuddin Mohd Rasdi

Investigators: Assistant Professor Teoh Chee Keong; Intan Liana binti Samsudin