

The Making of Heritage Places through the Narration of Ethnic Identity at the Melaka World Heritage Site

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the making of heritage places through the narration of ethnic's identity at Melaka World Heritage site (WHS). Ethnic identity plays a vital role in identifying the community's heritage because people identify themselves to places as it postulates their identity and provoke their sense of belongingness. Due to limited of scientific information in the related field, this study argues the significance in the making of heritage places through the narration based on ethnic's identity at Melaka WHS. This research was conducted using ethnographic methods, which used a snowball sampling technique. It involves an in-depth interview with 19 communities and participant observations. The audio data from interviews were transcribed into text and analysed using thematic analysis. Based on results, it shows community speaks their rights to be represented within the whole aspects of landscape, culture and history, which embodied in Melaka WHS. It is portrayed in the aspects of their historical records, culture, language, identity and place attachment. It also identifies challenges, which hinder the formation of ethnic's identity towards the place making such as generation gap, population density and uncontrolled developments. This study contributes to the importance of identity and placing making in cultural heritage management at World Heritage site.

Keywords: Community engagement; Ethnic identity; Ethnographic study; Heritage management; World heritage sites.



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1. Introduction

Identity plays an important element in shaping the place making because it gives meaning to an otherwise mundane and lifeless place. The social interaction, symbol, affective characterisation and history that are attached to the place, provide a meaningful relationship between an individual and place. This concept also applied to the WHS in Melaka, which placed long connection with the people and the historical records of the community's identities, since colonisation era. Melaka has long contributed to the contested ethnic identities through the process of colonisation, which later on emerged through the process of cultural adaptation, assimilation and hybridization. Within the narration of ethnic identities, ethnic communities develop their sense of belonging and attachment to the place, which will eventually, invokes engagement towards the heritage place.

Past research discussed the important of local community engagement in cultural heritage management in Malaysia, which focus on tourism management (Mohamed and Mustafa, 2005). While others focus on the importance of landscape architectural conservation mainly tangible heritage (Harun, 2011; Lawless, 2015). There are also a few sociological and anthropological studies which were interested in intangible heritage research (Bakar *et al.*, 2014; Bakar *et al.*, 2014a). As far as tourism studies are concerned, the study of cultural heritage management is always seen from a tourism perspective, rather than the study of heritage as an end in itself. Such studies deal with tourist experience and satisfaction in developing heritage landscape (Henderson and Kong, 2001) and economic gain (Rahman *et al.*, 2011) which may lead to uncontrolled tourism development (Azlan and Bagul, 2010) that might endanger the World Heritage inscription poor (The Star, 2013). Although there are some research on the community with tourism, they are motivated by eco-tourism planning (Amir *et al.*, 2016; Ismail, 2008) rather than quality and development of identity and heritage value of community.

Due to the limited focus of earlier research and publications which relate the roles of identity in the making of heritage places, this study tries to fill in the gap by its integration of understanding the social context and values in its analytical discussion of place making in Melaka WHS through community oriented and diversity attentive approach (Adams, 2006). As a result, this research leads the motivation of exploring the identity development and the community's heritage values through the study of meaning production from the community's perspective. This is because, previous studies focused on the development of post WHS such as tourism and conservation studies while it is equally important to highlight the shaping of Melaka WHS through the narration of ethnic identity in Melaka which is portrayed through their history, cultural and social aspects before and during the making of WHS. Hence, this study focuses on Melaka, Malaysia which target four important ethnics at Melaka WHS, namely the Portuguese, Malay, Baba and Nyonya and Chitty. The outcomes of this study contributes to the importance of identity and place making in cultural heritage management at Melaka WHS.

2. Literature Review

Essentially, there are three important phases of Malaysian development during the era of colonialisation in Melaka such as during the Portuguese, Dutch and British era. This epoch have resulted in the emergence of the multi-racial groups in Malaysia. Some of the most distinctive post-colonial communities in Melaka consist of Malay Morten, Chinese and Indian and this signifies the richness of Malaysian cultural identity where it is normal for a person from a Malay community to celebrate Chinese New Year, even though the three ethnic groups have different religious backgrounds, namely Islam (Malay), Buddhism (Chinese) and Hinduism (Indian). This has made Melaka a "...central icon in the construction of a highly contested contemporary Malaysian identity" (Worden, 2001). In addition to the three main ethnic groups residing within the Melaka area, another community that is closely connected to the historical identity of Melaka namely the *peranakan* community. Their richness of heritage elements covers both tangible and intangible aspects ranging from local customs and traditions to architectural structures. From the period before colonialisation right through to the post-colonial era, the *peranakan* community results from mixed marriages between the local residents of Melaka (Malay, Chinese and Indian) and foreign migrants especially during the regime of the Portuguese in Melaka. There are two types of *peranakan* communities in Melaka namely the Baba and Nyonya and the Chitty. Baba and Nyonya communities have a very distinctive traits compared to Chinese community in Malaysia because of their lifestyle and cultural origin, which a mixture of post-colonial lifestyle which is embodied in their language, custom and culture. Meanwhile, the Chitty community is a result of mixed marriages between local women in Melaka (Malay, Chinese and Indian) and foreign Indian immigrants. Although they do not significantly influence the economy, politics and architecture of Melaka as it has been widely discussed in literature as compare to their *peranakan* cousin (Baba Nyonya), the Chitty are still regarded as an important entity in contributing to the development of the nation (Ravichandran, 2009). Therefore, this study will involves four ethnic groups which are the Malays, Baba and Nyonya, Chitty and Portuguese communities to represent a different ethnic groups which experience the different transition period in heritage identities.

Beforehand, it is important to understand the context and definition of heritage. The meaning is both narrowed to indicate what is or maybe inherited to a wider definition pertaining to the idea of ethnicity, nationalism and global identity (Hitchcock and King, 2003). Heritage in everyday use is defined as 'the objects, practices, knowledge, and environments that sustain cultural worlds across generations' Geismar (2015). In simplest term, heritage is 'something you want'. It is also something or anything someone wishes to conserve or to collect and to pass on to future generations (Howard, 2003). Although tracing the earliest usage of heritage concept can be very challenging, but (RUJAN, 2014) traced the concept of heritage back from the Roman empire where fights and defends against territories were prominent. The heritage was seen from the vision of tools and weapon granted and owned which shed an idea of an individual heritage. Although it appears that heritage objects (tangible) seem to rely on the value given by the community in their identity formation and sense of belongingness, it should not be falsely assumed that their role is insignificant compared to the other (intangible) heritage. This has been contested by Waterton (2005) in her studies on the importance of landscape as a vital representation of cultural meaning in relation to identity, belonging and sense of place. Heritage studies play an important part in conforming one's sense of identity within certain communities. They encompass the three stages of yesterday, today and tomorrow, simply because heritage preserves both tangible and intangible aspects. For instance, an architectural landscape of heritage may not persist through time, but the cultural aspect, the memory as well as the identity attached to the place, may remain. (Smith and Waterton, 2009) affirm that heritage is an intangible process because it involves identification, negotiation, rejection and affirmation of social and cultural values. Therefore, it concerns with what is done at and with the heritage site more than the places themselves

Thus in this sense, the "shared" values invoke the feeling of a "togetherness" in developing the "identity formation" of certain groups and communities. Through culture, people and groups define themselves, conform to society and contribute to society. This culture includes many societal aspects such as language, custom, values, norms, mores, rules, tools, technologies, products, organizations and institutions. Within this boundary of culture, the tangible and intangible elements of cultural heritage are inseparable and cannot be defined separately as both are symbiotically related to one another. Hence, in this research context, it is argued that a historic place also exerts people's sense of place and attachment to it. This is possible through identification of its function and attribution of meaning towards the place. These are embedded within people's historical experiences by which they see and remember through the socio-cultural process. This condition will further secure one's cultural norm, identity and willingness to protect the place. When a sense of place triggers one's emotional and behavioral states, one will feel more willing to engage in heritage management. It is important for researchers to identify people's sense of place in relations to the formation of their identities and culture in order to comprehend their engagement towards the place.

3. Methodology/Materials

This study deals with the question of identity and engagement toward the local community at the WHS in Melaka. Hence, ethnographic method is the most appropriate method for this study. Ethnography concerns about the shared patterns of behaviours, language, and actions of intact cultural groups in natural setting over a prolonged period of time which involves observation and interview data collection (Creswell, 2014). The research method that involves a way of interpreting people's mind and behaviour would be the most suitable in this study through an investigation that considers three important aspects: texts, people and objects. Ethnographic studies ensure that researcher becomes immersed in the field of study, enabling to get access into the mind of the participant and investigating through interpretation of daily social interaction within the community.

Nader (2011) suggested that ethnographic study is not a mere description but a theory of description. This is because, historically, ethnographic study has been combined with a wide array of theoretical viewpoints ranging from functionalist, structural functionalist, interpretive, Marxist, evolutionary, symbolic, feminist, or just plain critical. While ethnographic methods are good in making broad generalizations on a social phenomenon, they also help to provide explanations as well as understanding of the results of larger-scale research, for example surveys. What links all these disciplines and theoretical tendencies is the emphasis on interpretation by getting meaning from the perspectives of those being researched (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2010). This is to say, ethnographic methods try to picture the subject of study in a holistic way by emphasizing the individual's experience of everyday life through observation. This may include in-depth interviewing and participant observation of a real life situation happening within a natural setting. In this context, there are certain criteria which need to be explained, covering the setting, participants, events and processes (Creswell, 2009). Ethnographic study not only describes the process through observation but also theorises about it. Therefore, it is argued that ethnographic methods would be the most suitable for this research. Having said that, it is related to the study of specific human culture, through interpretation of social phenomena of the human population, the ability to go beneath the surface by putting oneself in the shoes of others, the ability to think on behalf of others, being an active observer and flexible to cultural adaptation. This ethnographic practice is close to the nature of this research, which seeks to explore the local community's engagement in the Heritage Sites of Melaka.

The unit of analysis in this research involves a case study of the Melaka area and the local communities at the World Heritage City of Melaka. Approximately 19 participants residing at the Melaka WHS were selected ranging from different ethnic background such as Baba and Nyonya community, Malay Morten, Portuguese and Chitty community as tabulated in table one.

Table-1. Number of Participants interviewed

Ethnics	Number of Participants
Malay	5
Baba and Nyonya	5
Chitty	5
Portuguese	4
Total	19

This participant is important as the criteria for selection because they play keys in the formation of Malays identities, which appeal more to the Malaysian visitor rather than the international tourist. Since ethnographic research are more concern on the variance of information given, noting the richness of the information and focus more on the sample adequacy rather than sample size, it is considered as meeting the criteria for reliability and validity. The research involves non-probability sampling methods, involving the process of interviewing the communities. Researcher can locate and later on asked them further information needed to locate other population whom they happen to know. In-depth interviews with the participant were carried out. Data analysis in this study involves descriptive analysis whereby and inductive approach using thematic analysis was used. Hence, in-depth interview and participant observation were used during the interview sessions until themes emerged from the interviews and data are saturated.

4. Results and Findings

4.1. History

Melaka is a melting pot country, which values contrasting ethnic identities. This is portrayed through the historical record on the making of Melaka as WHS that is directly connected to the ethnics' origin and identities. It is illustrated by most of the participants who described the coming of Portuguese to Melaka as a contribution to the cultural adaptation, assimilation and hybridisation. For example, the history of the Baba Nyonya was traced back from the Chinese traders. According to Research Participant (RP)8, their ancestors travelled to Melaka for business purposes. When they wanted to return to China, they had to wait for the wind to change. Since Melaka was famous for its trading port, which invites traders from around the world, the formation of Malaysia as a melting pot country started from it. The Portuguese on the other hand traced back their origin on the coming of the Portuguese to Melaka. The Portuguese brought a big ship that could fit in five to ten thousand people. Those who travelled were all men and the journey took nine months from Goa to Melaka, facing storm and difficulties in the sea. Most probably one thousand men died during the journey there were no turning back as claimed by RP16 from Portuguese community"

Those days, people take the risk. However, the day they go it means I am not coming back. You know. So that means Portuguese came here and they did not go back. They will stay here. Married here, eat here. Everything is here (Research Participant16, interview, April 10, 2015).

Similarly, RP11 who is from Chitty community claimed that his roots came from the traders of India. Most of the traders were men who travelled by ship following the monsoon wind that lead to the intended location. Since the ship relied on the wind's movement, they have to wait longer for the journey to reach the destination. Hence, some of the married man who travelled from India to Melaka, married to local women who may be an Indian, Chinese, Malay, Javanese, and so on. This practice opposed the Hinduism. Hence, the men may need to return home alone, leaving their wives in Melaka with the children. Upon considering the situation, the Chitty men refused to go back

and lived with the families they had in Melaka. As for the young men who had their first marriage with the local Melaka women, they also cannot return to India because of marrying a spouse from different religion and caste. Eventually they settle down in Melaka for good. This situation reflects the cultural changes and adaptation that took place at that time.

Contrary to all of the participants, The Morten village was developed due to the development planned by the authority at the Jawa village. Some parts of the land were taken and this situation forced the community to move out. The Jawa village located very close to the Morten village. RP2's grandfather known as Osman identified the Morten village. As money needed to develop the place, Osman borrowed it from the Commissioner of Land Revenue Collector whose name was Frederick Joseph Morten. Later, the villagers built their first home, which is now called as '*ibu house*', which is built with an open floor with one room only. The village was named after the Commissioner of Land Revenue Collector, Morten village. The '*ibu house*' signify the early coming of the Morten villagers and until today, the *ibu house* is preserved.

... the house need to be built by their pocket money. Hence, for what I know, the house at that time like my old house, we called it "Rumah Ibu". The only house available was Rumah "ibu" where they used round woods; the floor was made from palm trees. The floor looked like aboriginal houses. There was also wall which was made from barks... (RP4, Interview, August 31, 2014).

4.2. Culture

From there, the process of adaptation and assimilation started as they came, married and settled in Melaka. The men fell in love with the Javanese women, married and make a family in Melaka. Most Melaka people married to Portuguese and the mixture of Portuguese cultures had been assimilated together with the Indian and Chinese. On the other hand, RP17 rather explained a short brief on the coming of Portuguese to Melaka. He claimed that the Portuguese came to Melaka on 1511, bringing all the men. Some who stay in Melaka married to local women, that includes, local Indian, Malay and Chinese. Hence, the mixture was because Malaysia was colonised by the Dutch and British as well as the Japan right after. Therefore, according to him, the Portuguese community in Melaka has a different skin colour, some are fair and some are tan and darker skin tone. The mixture of the culture, tradition and lifestyle has changed on how the Portuguese people live their life.

RP16 also added, he traced back the Portuguese descendent and realised the population were scattered everywhere such as in Sri Lanka, Anggora and Timor Leste because of Portuguese's expedition. However, it is important to note that they share the same root. For example, the Portuguese cultural dance. Although the dance was almost the same thing, but it was known by different names in Melaka such as Brayo, Jingly Nona and so on. According to him, Jingly Nona has its roots from Sri Lanka and has become the Melaka culture. According to him, the song and dance however has a strong resemblance to other ethnics too such as the Baba and Nyonya and the Chitty. So does the traditional wearing, which is kebaya. Kebaya was also known in Portugal as "cabaia". However, in Malaysia, kebaya is regarded as traditional clothes for the Malay, Baba Nyonya and the Chitty. Overall, the coming of Portuguese has left a mark in Melaka. It has become a representation of the culture and identity for people of Melaka.

4.3. Language

Not only does the colonialisation reflect the cultural adaptation, but also languages. Due to the mixing of different ethnics, new languages and words were formed. This is happened to almost all of the participants in this study. For example, RP6 who is from Baba and Nyonya communities also claimed that when it comes to mixed marriage, it is the groom who has to decide to follow which lifestyle, either Chinese or Baba Nyonya lifestyle. In her situation, her mother followed her father's cultural lifestyle. Meanwhile, RP8 who is from Baba and Nyonya communities also claimed that his descendent was from Betawi, Indonesia. Hence, the mixed marriage gave birth to the first offspring of the so-called Baba and Nyonya. RP8 cannot speak Chinese language because its either his father or mother could not speak Malay language or Chinese language. Hence, they constructed their own words and language and descended to their offspring. During that time, the Malays are allowed to get married to non-Muslim without the need for the non-Muslim's spouse to change faith. It can be seen, although Baba and Nonya community mostly did neither speak Chinese language, nor Malay language. It is because they develop their own language by which it has a strong resemblance to the Malay language. They did not know how to speak Chinese language and only able to speak Baba Nyonya language and English language. It is clear that language is an important element people identify with the place and their group affiliation. As for Baba and Nyonya, their ancestors have been living in Melaka for too long and through times they developed their language alongside with the Malay language, thus forming words understood among their groups. "They married with the mixed Malay... Not all. So they stay here for so long, and the Chinese remember the Malay language" (Portuguese participants). Contrary to the rest of the ethnic within study, (i.e., Baba and Chitty), the Portuguese community know how to speak Portuguese however; do not know how to write as claimed by RP18:

...err do not know how to write. Any interviewers asked me about the Portuguese language; I prefer them to write it in the Malay language. They just listen to what I say and they write in their language. So the writing is quite similar to Malay like "window", we say "Janela" but the Malay says "jendela". So many words if I am not mistaken it was 400 words similar (RP18, interview, April 8, 2015).

Interestingly, some of the Malay words were adapted from Portuguese language as can be seen from table two as explained by one of the Portuguese participants, "Fork and spoon... fork we call *suley*... it has a little bit of slang, this table we call "*mezeer*", "*kadheer*" we call "*chair*" and "*sapatu*"(shoe) we call "*sepatu*".. They have lots of words,

like.. 400 approximately” (RP18, Interview, April 8, 2015). Close to RP18, RP16 claimed there were nearly 455 words of Portuguese were used in Malay language which signify that the coming of the Portuguese forming parts of the Malays identity, such as:

Table-2. Portuguese words which were adapted into Malay words

Malay	Portuguese	English
Sekolah	Skola	School
Mentega	Mantega	Butter
Keju	Keju	Cheese
Meja	Mazel	Table
Sepatu	Sapatu	Shoe

4.4. Identities

As much as the Baba Nyonya community conveniently speaking in Malay, they also feel comfortable living with the Malays. It was due to the facts that they live within the Malay community for centuries, befriend and mixed with the Malay community since they were small. It makes them feel closer to the Malays. In addition, they also adapted and assimilated the Malay culture and lifestyle rather than Chinese culture, except for religious aspect. This situation marks the highly integrated identity among the Malays, Baba Nyonya and Chinese people. According to Iefa who is from Baba and Nyonya community who converted to Muslim, due to this, she hardly ever identifies the cultural differences living as a Muslim Baba Nyonya.

On another note, psychological aspect also plays parts where Baba and Nyonya community have to deal with their identity formation. For example, RP7 confessed that he is in minority groups and has a feeling that everybody is looking down on his community. Chinese people look down on him because he is a hybrid community who does not know how to speak Chinese language but able to speak Malay instead. However, according to him, being able to speak Malay also is not an advantage for him to be accepted within the Malays because the Malay classifies him as Chinese people; an immigrant.

...but to be honest with you. We are the minority. Everybody look down on us. The China man looks down on us because hybrid Chinese... Maybe now we can pick up the language. However, most of the time we speak Malay language. Ha. Of course, the Malay looks down on us because they classify us Chinese. Immigrant. Although we know Malay poetry, we speak Malay language and then we wear "kebaya". Eat with our hands, but people do not care about us (RP7, interview, March 20, 2015).

RP7 stressed out that he is proud to be Baba. What make him less proud were the Chinese and Malay, who humiliated him for being a hybrid ethnic. Michael's situation indicates that living and carrying unique identities in Melaka is such a privilege for some people but not the other. This situation also happened to RP9. She used to be ridiculed by some kids during her younger age due to not being able to speak and write the Chinese language although her facial appearances resemble Chinese more than the Malay. However, after growing up, she learnt that she was a product of mixed marriage during colonisation period, which makes her happy and proud.

She grew up as a Muslim with a Malay lifestyle, befriends with the Malay, speaks Malay language and does not know Chinese language. It is only during school time she was teased for being a "confused" Chinese.

However, there are also some people who manage to handle the situation and fit her place comfortably within the majority people as experienced by RP6. She believed that it is all about how people bring themselves and how true friends will accept her as she is. She also has many Chinese friends who translated the conversation because she only understands simple languages.

Not really good. I can speak a little, but not fluent. If it is too deep, then I cannot understand. Alternatively, if they speak too fast, then I cannot. So you know you will always be labelled as the "banana": It means you are a Chinese you cannot speak Chinese. They will say it in the Chinese language as "San chao ren". I pronounced also is entirely out of tune. It is like when you peel the banana the other part inside you sees white. So they said you are Chinese but you speak English (RP6, interview, April 15, 2015).

The same case happened to the Chitty people. For example, RP12 admitted that he did not speak the Tamil language as other typical Hindus do. He was not allowed by his parent to go to Tamil school to avoid being bullied due to not knowing Tamil language although his physical features has a strong resemblance to the Indian people. It is also important to note, during that time, parents did not stress the importance of education, hence leaving the children to choose their path.

...That is why we did not want to speak Tamil. Previously we have Tamil school but our parents would not allow us because we did not know how to speak Tamil and they also have complots against us. When we did not know how to speak Tamil, they laugh at us. That is a shame. So we told our parents we do not want to go to that school because we do not know what will they say in front of us or behind our back using the Tamil language (RP12, interview, March 22, 2015).

Among the reason the Chitty community could not speak Tamil language according to RP11 was due to his great grandfather who was busy working to support families and return home once a week. As a result, children could not learn proper Tamil language and they ended up learning their mother's language and lifestyles. Meanwhile, RP14 claimed that being born as a Chitty Melaka, during her younger age, she did not feel belonged to the place she was living. This is due to her inability to speak Tamil language like other Indian friends. Despite of her physical appearance that resembles an Indian, she speaks Malay language at home with a little difference than the actual

Malay language. Whenever she went to school, she did not feel fit in the place and did not belong to it. She had Indian name but did not know how to speak Tamil and due to that, most of the Indian friends isolated her.

Yeah because that is the recent encounter actually. Back then when I was younger. I feel like I do not belong anywhere. Because regarding language, at home, we speak Malay. Moreover, the Malay is a bit different. So when I go to school. I am a bit err because I am a girl also. I do not feel like belong there. Probably Indians you know. I do not speak err Tamil. However, I have an Indian name. So they sort of isolate me (RP14, interview, April 16, 2015) .

Contrary to the Chitty, Portuguese communities are more confident and feel strongly belonged and attached to their place. This is because; the coming of Portuguese to Melaka influenced the formation of their identity. RP16 confessed that he is more Malaysian and Portuguese of those days. It was because, during the process of adaptation and assimilation, he regards that the coming of Portuguese to Melaka has much affected his feeling and rootedness towards his home country. It is because he had lived in Melaka for a very long period and the culture was already in his blood. Having said that, his identity was a mixture of Portuguese and Malay, it does not make him more Portuguese than Malaysian because he lived for so long in Malaysia and had already absorbed the lifestyle. "Now we know about the mixture of the culture and people so we are more Malaysian than Portuguese. Why? Tourism. Because we have lived here for a very long time, the culture of what is here is in our blood." (RP16, interview, April 10, 2015)

It is interesting to note that RP16 who is from Portuguese community has a feeling of protecting his origin by supporting the idea of colonialisation. Contrary to the concept and feeling of being colonized, He feels different. He claimed Melaka people were not colonized. It was because, when Portuguese came to Goa, Indian people were asked to change their name to Portuguese name and to live in a Portuguese culture rather than Indian lifestyle, by which according to him, is colonialisation. However, Melaka people were not forced to change their name to Portuguese name and Melakan were married to Portuguese on their will. They choose to be with the Portuguese voluntarily, in which it does not constitute a colonialisation.

4.5. Place Attachment

Almost all of the participants are well versed with the history, map and structure of the village from the past as well as the present. At times, they also can differentiate the changes that took place in the past concerning building, landscape, road and culture. RP4 for example, mentioned about the village and its route to the center of WHS from the village. She just has to walk through the edge of the river stream until the end of the river mouth where there are ship replica and city centre. If people were to hop on the boat, people could see the painting on the street building at the edge of the Melaka river until the end of the river mouth. From there, people can see the famous A Famosa remaining. Whereas, from the famous fort, people can walk through the St. Paul Hill. She had made her way there as she claimed:

If we were to walk from my house, just walk through the river edge, following the river stream, it will only take us half an hour to reach the end, where we can see the ship, and you can see everything. Have you been there? If we were to hop on the boats, we would see paintings on the buildings, but if we were to walk on the street we would see A Famosa, walk to the hill, the St Paul Hill and St John Hill... (RP4, interview, March 17, 2015).

Not only that, Mrs Hasmah signifies the river to picture the location of the historical places. Meanwhile, Mak Bi added a vivid explanation of the changes of Melaka River; "The house originally sat closely to the river edge by which it was so close to the river banks" (RP3, interview, March 18, 2015).

In addition, RP1 can still clearly picture the people of the early Morten village people before he moved to the village. The people who lived in the village was previously tough and rough. That was in the 1960s where most people were afraid to pass by the village area just because they are afraid of the men of the Morten village. His grandfather told him there was few gang established in the village. It functions to protect the village and to scare the outsiders to come to the village. As the time changed, people can easily enter the house especially when Melaka government granted the village as being cultural heritage village where people can come and experience the living heritage. Most of the villagers here worked as labour, and there were some of them who work at the port, paddling boat.

As the Malay community did not strongly attached to their first birth of origin during the colonisation period, the Baba and Nyonya is on the opposite. It is because, the birth of the Baba and Nyonya community started from the coming of traders to Melaka for business activities, settled and married local women and gave birth to hybrid children called as Baba and Nyonya. Compared to the Morten Malay community who resides in the specific area, Baba Nyonya community did not have a specific location. The famous place associated with them is the Rambai Hill. Although the Jonker Walk seems to be famous for the Baba Nyonya community, according to RP9, currently there were only small amounts of Baba and Nyonya community living in the area today. It is because although the streets look like a place for Baba and Nyonya community, it was filled with heritage hotels designed with Baba and Nyonya elements. It was told by her mother that since she was young, Limbungan was the place where Baba and Nyonya community reside. Although living at the Melaka World Heritage City, she did not have the chance to walk and wander around. It is because she lived with her aunt, who was busy working as a teacher. Her life was about school and home. Until now, she mentioned there were few times she wanders around Bandar Hilir, visiting the heritage sites. She only managed to go to the Jonker Walk area at night. In fact, she could hardly identify a place based on its name although she knew the place if she saw one. Hence, the researcher showed her photo of the surrounding place and she can easily identify few places, such as Kampung Morten by which, she had already visited once. She associated the place as having a river cruise service. She also can easily identify the new and old building from which was newly build before and after colonisation period and manage to tell few stories associated with the

place. Despite the fact that she claimed not knowing the place, on the other hand, she is quite familiar with the area shown in the photo. The same happened to RP8, who is a Melakan local born. He used to live in the WHS, located at Jonker Street, house number 81, which was owned by his mother. Whereas, No 14 is his grandmother's property. He could even trace back his descendant from its origin. Some of his relatives went to China to trace the origin as he claimed: "I live here at this place. I also grew up here at this place" (RP8, Chinese Peranakan Association).

Similarly, RP13 supported the idea that the Chitty village is not a heritage village although situated next to the WHS. The government only inscribed it as the cultural village. She seems to value the UNESCO acknowledgement as its inscription entails security and promises. It was proven when there was a rumour about the road reserve, which will be opened within the village, and most of the community did not agree. Hence, during the protest, they used UNESCO's name to protest the progression.

...my brother's house is just in front whom I think has the bigger plan as what people say, it was a road reserve. So when UNESCO came here, the community used the word UNESCO to stop. To protest the road reserve. Bare in mind the road reserve is still progressing...(RP13, interview, April 11, 2015).

Meanwhile, Portuguese community has a specific location by which they can be associated with. It was named as the Portuguese settlement. It is located next to the beach and people can easily identify the place by the front entrance, marked as "Perkampungan Portugis" (Portuguese village). Although the Fort was destroyed during the change of administration from different geo political force, it remain an element of history by which people come from different places to see the destroyed fort. He agreed, people went to see the landscape view of the fort not because of its physical entity, but because of the symbol attached to the physical and landscape of A Famosa. In fact, the only remained was the gateway to the A Famosa fort. There were approximately four gateways to the fort. However, William Farquhar, who happened to be the Governor for Penang, destroyed all the three forts. This was because the business in Penang was not good. Not only that, RP16 acknowledged the existence of the beautiful landscape of the A Famosa Fort that sits in front of the Dataran Pahlawan. It was because the Fort signifies the early coming of the Portuguese people and the identity of the Portuguese people. Not only that but the fort also signify the benefits Melaka has for tourism industry nowadays.

The fort is important because it gives a mark to the Portuguese in Melaka and what Portuguese has given to the Melaka... erm benefited to the Melaka because of the fort. The people and the Fort have contributed to the Melaka government but also to the Malaysia government (RP16, interview, April 10, 2015).

Since the Chinese traders were mostly are rich people, some of the places in Melaka are associated with the area where rich people live. Michael confessed that only rich people could afford to live here, at Tun Tan Cheng Lock Road. He was proudly confessed that his ancestor's life story was written in the book of which he holds. There are few roads and streets which were named after his ancestor namely the Tun Tan Chen Lock Street and the Heren street as well as the path by which the Chinese Peranakan Association is located. He was proud to be associated with the ancestors who were rich

4.6. Challenges

Despite of all the contested identities and place significant provided by Melaka WHS, it also poses challenges to the formation of ethnic identities toward Melaka WHS. It is portrayed in few elements such as population density, generation gap and uncontrolled development, which caused problems to the communities. With regard to population density, an example is taken from the Morten Malay village. The total population in the village recently is not more than 800 people, which does not imply the whole individuals who settled down in the village because there are some of them who work. Some move out with their families. Hence, the current population living in the village is between 500-600 people. Averagely, one house can fit in six people. However, most of younger population moved outside Kg Morten and left the older population at home. It was estimated 2000 villagers live in Morten village although, in polls, the amounts estimated were 900 people. It was because the highest amount a house accommodates 15 people, which comprised of children, and grandparents. The younger generation outnumbered, the older generation living in the current house. Women and younger people outnumbered the rest because the third generation can only survive until the age of 60. Most women manage to survive until they are 70 to 80s.

Total residents here were mostly from older age to younger age. The third generation was less in number, and our younger generation is increasing. Women and younger generation occupy this place because the third generation like me can last at the age of 60, there were not much less of an older generation above than that. Maybe around 20 percents. Women from the age of 70 above also not much left, maybe around ten percents (RP5, interview, March 18, 2015).

It is important to note that most of the younger community went outside Melaka for career advancement to improve living standards. Note only that, most of the villagers moved out of the village because there were limited place and space within the settlement. The place could no longer afford the space for the growing family members within the communities. Hence, whoever is married and started to build their families, need to move out of the village as commented by one of the Portuguese community:

I am the only one... my family is the only one. Most of them are already moved out because we have a very limited space in the Chitty village. So you know... In the family... When the children get married... So they have to shift out because of the limited space... Maybe their house got about three rooms. How many family they can accommodate right. So they got to move out (RP18, Interview, April 4, 2015).

RP18 asserts that although everyone can live in the settlement, it can only fit 118 houses. Unfortunately, when the house grows bigger, there will be no space left. New flats were opened outside the settlement to cater the growing family members. Meanwhile, As for RP4 who is from Malay community, she lives alone with her husband

because her children are away due to job demand and pursuing education. The oldest has married and he often returns to her mother in law's house.

Another concern for Morten villagers who live next to the Melaka River is the village was prone to flood. The result was it affected the house and all the furniture inside the house.

...So, there are few villages located next to the river. Flooding always happened. The same things happened. The foods can reach until here (living room), you can see the peeled wall and properties in my house. It ruins all my properties.. (RP4, interview, March 17, 2015).

However, RP3 seems to celebrate development as some developments have improved the infrastructure of the village such as the wall has been elevated so there will be no longer flooding in the village. Not only that, the river also is being expanded. There was enough space for the villagers to walk at the river edge where previously people lift their skirt to walk in the water of muds. However there were certain values remains such as:

..but, when there is development, they made the banks higher, broadened up the river, so we got the chance to go and play on the bench outside. Development is good here as compared to the old age; people have to lift their skirt to walk in the mud, and the river was too deep. Now it is getting better. However, people keep the pace similar to the old age, they worked together and united like the old age, when one have events, we visit them and help... (RP3, interview, March 18, 2015).

5. Conclusion

Overall, the data that was accumulated was based on researchers prior knowledge and experience about the place. The data analysis pictures participants' insights towards their place. It is important to know the participants' sense of prior knowledge about the place as it invokes actors feeling towards their identity, belonging and sense of place. Demographics background of the four communities within study picture few patterns and elements of Melaka as melting pots of cultures. Although there are variations of cultural tradition practiced, but they are areas of the shared values and cultures. The community speaks their rights to be represented within the whole aspects of landscape, culture and their history, which embodied in Melaka WHS. What more, Melaka reaps its economic activities through tourism that lie within the communities within the study. They scream for identification, acknowledgement as well as the representation as the whole nation of Melaka as part of other majority ethnics.

Hence, few critical elements have been identified within the communities' demographic background. For example, almost all of the communities within study live in assigned places that have always being associated with their identities. For example, Jonker Street and Heeren Street is a representation of Baba and Nyonya identities as most of the older generations live in the settlements, the young adult was settling outside due to job demand. Hence, it is safe to say the older generation populated the settlements. Majority of the younger participants confirmed that they do not have good knowledge about the history of the village or on their origin. Their lack of knowledge, however, seems not to restrain them from engaging in the heritage management. It is because, although not knowing the history of the place, they know that the trace of their origin was in their bloodline. Some of them were taught by their parents about their cultural heritage (such as RP18's family) while some manage to find on their own (such as RP14, RP6 and RP9). Moreover, in their younger age, the communities seem to experience identity formation where they began to search for their sense of self. Hence, this person took a particular period and phase to acknowledge the uniqueness of their identity that it is more prevalent in their young adulthood.

Furthermore, the ethnics seem to live in the shadows of each other. It is prevalent among all the four groups of Baba and Nyonya, Chitty, Malays and Portuguese. It indicates they influenced each other and formed their cultural orientation. For example, the Baba Nyonya, Chitty, Malays and Portuguese wear the Kebaya. Not only that, they also influence each other in forming the identity of Melaka as the WHS with regards to the physical landscape. For example, the A Famosa Fort and the Heren Street that signifies the coming of Portuguese and Baba Nyonya community that makes the Melaka as the WHS. Conclusively, they influence each other regarding landscape, language, and sociocultural aspect. Although coming from a different ethnic background, all of the ethnics identify their identity as being closer to being Malaysian. For example, the Chitty and the Baba Nyonya can only speak the Malay language that makes them more Malaysian Chitty and Malaysian Baba Nyonya instead of Indian Chitty or Chinese Baba Nyonya. Hence, it is observed that the community needs to live at the WHS to ensure a secure identity and place making. However, few problems were highlighted which affected their identity formation such as generation gap, population density and uncontrolled developments.

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