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Johor

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The SIJORI Series

Johor

Abode of Development?

Edited By

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First published in Singapore in 2020 by
ISEAS Publishing
30 Heng Mui Keng Terrace
Singapore 119614
E-mail: publish@iseas.edu.sg
Website: <http://bookshop.iseas.edu.sg>

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ISEAS Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Names: Hutchinson, Francis E., editor. | Serina Rahman, editor.

Title: Johor : Abode of Development? / editors: Francis E. Hutchinson and Serina Rahman.

Description: Singapore : ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020. | Volume 2 of a trilogy on 'Floating frontiers'. | Includes bibliographical references.

Identifiers: ISBN 9789814881272 (paperback) | ISBN 9789814881289 (pdf)

Subjects: LCSH: Economic development—Malaysia—Johor. | Johor—Malaysia—Politics and government. | Johor—Malaysia—Social conditions.

Classification: LCC HC445.5 Z7J61

Typeset by Superskill Graphics Pte Ltd

Printed in Singapore by Markono Print Media Pte Ltd

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FOREWORD

In 2016, when ISEAS published the book, *The SIJORI Cross-Border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics, and Culture*, co-edited by Francis Hutchinson and Terence Chong, Malaysia was on the cusp of major political change. The ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition secured a parliamentary majority in the 2013 general election, but lost the popular vote. This book, the second in a series of three, began in 2016 and took three years to complete, by which time the Pakatan Harapan (PH) coalition had ousted the incumbent to become the ruling party. Johor, Peninsular Malaysia's southernmost state, also fell to PH, which secured thirty-six out of fifty-six seats in the state parliament.

Johor enjoys a central place in the SIJORI region. Over the last two decades, it has seen significant political and economic developments. Its economic and social interactions with Singapore and proximity to the Riau Islands have contributed to its stellar growth. The state's population grew from 2.7 million in 1990 to 3.7 million in 2017. These factors facilitated Johor's industrialization drive as well as economic diversification, and altered its politics, society and environment. The establishment of Iskandar Malaysia in 2006 further accelerated these developments.

Today, the close economic and people-to-people relations between Johor and Singapore continue to flourish. Both are connected to each other by cross-border networks in sectors such as electrical and electronics, oil and gas, logistics, as well as agriculture. In Iskandar Malaysia, health and education services are new elements of this co-operation. In the near future, the proposed rapid transit system to link Johor and Singapore will further enhance interactions between them. The growing importance of their interactions saw Singapore establishing a consulate in Johor in November 2009.

Francis Hutchinson and Serina Rahman, the co-editors of this book, have assembled a team of twenty collaborators. Their collective work will contribute to a better understanding of the key transformations that have taken place in Johor since its embrace of export-oriented industrialization in 1990, and the different influences to which the state has been exposed as a result of its position within the Malaysian Federation and the SIJORI Cross-Border Region.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this project came from the Deputy Director of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute in 2013, Ooi Kee Beng, who put forward the idea of studying Southeast Asia’s “Floating Frontiers”. Focusing on border regions between Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore, the emphasis was, rather than on land borders, to be on connections between countries across the sea. Seen from a historical perspective, this is consistent with Southeast Asia’s precolonial maritime focus, which was characterized by intense linkages. Consequently, the three sites of this project were: the Singapore and Johor Straits; the Sulawesi Sea; and the Andaman Sea.

This led to the work on the first volume of this trilogy, *the SIJORI Cross-Border Region: Transnational Politics, Economics, and Culture*, which looked at the interaction between Singapore, the Malaysian state of Johor, and the Riau Islands in Indonesia. Following the publication of this volume, the then Director of the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, Mr Tan suggested building on this work with two stand-alone projects on Johor and the Riau Islands.

As with the first volume, we have collaborated with the ETH Zurich to cartographically depict important interactions. In-depth conceptual and empirical discussions with Hans Hortig and Karoline Kostka were extremely fruitful and their work on the collection of maps has provided a valuable complement to much of the conceptual work contained in this volume.

Heartfelt thanks go to Benjamin Hu and Pearlyn Pang for developing the maps used and referred to in the various chapters. Ng Kok Kiong and Rahilah Yusuf of the Publications Unit helped finalize and publish this volume in record time. We are also grateful to the Royal Geographical Society for letting us include Harry Lake’s 1893 map of Johor which was published in the 1894 volume of the *Geographical Journal*.

This project was supported by the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute, under the support of then Director Tan Chin Tiong and now under Mr Choi Shing Kwok. We would like to convey our appreciation to them. We also thank Ooi Kee Beng for developing the Floating Frontiers concept.

We would also like to express our gratitude to the contributors to this volume for their extensive work on their chapters.

PROLOGUE

This book has been three eventful years in the making. As we began to gather the stories, data and information that make up the pages of this publication, Malaysia was still under Barisan Nasional (BN) rule and under the leadership of Najib Razak. As our chapters began to take shape, the 14th General Elections captured everyone's attention, and some research findings were released to the public to share our perspectives. Then, the unthinkable at the time happened—BN was voted out and Pakatan Harapan (PH) took over the reins in Putrajaya, with Mahathir Mohamad once again Prime Minister at the age of ninety-two.

As Malaysia's people and myriad observers ran the gamut of emotions, expectations and critical reflection, we worked to amend our content to meet the changes of the day. Where possible, the writers tweaked content to include the unprecedented changes that were afoot and include projections of where the new regime might take the nation. The book was then sent to publication in 2019.

Just as the manuscript was going through the necessary processes of copyediting, proofreading and typesetting, however, political commotion erupted once again in Malaysia's halls of power. In what still remains a somewhat confusing turn of events, an attempted coup took place, Mahathir Mohamad resigned as Prime Minister, his own party, Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia (PPBM or BERSATU) split into two, and the faction led by Muhyiddin Yassin pulled out of the PH coalition. The country was effectively without a government for eight days as various individuals sought an audience with the King for approval to regain or retain power. On 1 March 2020, Muhyiddin Yassin was sworn in as Malaysia's 8th Prime Minister, leading a loose coalition of previously ousted parties under the banner of Perikatan Nasional.

Following this, the COVID-19 pandemic effectively ground the world to a halt. At the time of writing this prologue, Malaysian borders are closed, barring selected export of goods to Singapore and highly controlled returns of Malaysians working, studying or living overseas. The nation is on its 64th day of various permutations and phases of Movement Control Orders (MCO), and many in Singapore (where this book is being published) are also working from home.

Even as Malaysia's political story continues to unfold and the world comes to grips with a "new norm", the content of this book remains relevant. Nothing that happens in Malaysia today can be properly understood without its context, and this publication seeks to provide that. From an understanding of the evolution of myriad political parties and royal involvement in politics and society, to more functional developments in economy and business, this book continues to provide unique insight into how Johor ticks—and beyond that, how it may then relate to its immediate neighbours.

While the new government seems to be more of BN and a little bit of PH, and there is a possibility of more political turbulence to come at the highest echelons of power, for the most part, the civil service and the nation continue to run, albeit within the constraints of COVID-19 restrictions. Even as there is turmoil (or fanfare) at the surface, long-term structural issues remain. This book becomes all the more relevant now as a comparative tome with which to benchmark and trace developments as they come. It has taken a while to come to fruition, but we hope that its content is worth the wait.

Francis E. Hutchinson and Serina Rahman

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ABBREVIATIONS

AKIM	Angkatan Keadilan Insan Malaysia
ARA	Amsterdam-Rotterdam-Antwerp
BN	Barisan Nasional
BOR	Bed Occupancy Rate
cbm	cubic metre
CBR	Cross-Border Region
CDP	Comprehensive Development Programme
CGPV	Country Garden Pacificview Sdn Bhd
CIQ	Customs, Immigration and Quarantine
CNY	Chinese yuan
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAP	Democratic Action Party
DEIA	Department of Environment Impact Assessment
DHPP	Dewan Himpunan Penyokong PAS
DOE	Department of Environment
E&E	Electrical and Electronics
EDB	Economic Development Bureau
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EISB	EduCity Iskandar Sdn Bhd
EPF	Employees Provident Fund
EPP	Entry Point Project
EPU	Economic Planning Unit
ETP	Economic Transformation Program
FCL	Future Cities Laboratory
FDI	foreign direct investment
FELDA	Federal Land Development Authority
FIREBS	Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services
FPTP	first-past-the-post
FW	foreign workers
GDP	gross domestic product

GE-12	Malaysian 12th General Elections
GE-13	Malaysian 13th General Elections
GE-14	Malaysian 14th General Elections
GLC	government-linked corporations
GNP	gross national product
GRDP	gross regional domestic product
HMI	Health Management International
HSR	High Speed Rail
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IHH	IHH Healthcare Bhd
IIB	Iskandar Investment Bhd
IIBD	Ibrahim International Business District
IJN	Institut Jantung Negara; National Heart Institute
IM	Iskandar Malaysia
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
IRDA	Iskandar Regional Development Authority
ITA	Investment Tax Allowance
IWC	Integrated Wellness Capital
IWCB	Iskandar Waterfront City Berhad
JB	Johor Bahru
JCI	Joint Commission International
JPDC	Johor Petroleum Development Corporation
JPO	Johor Premier Outlet
KIM	Kawan Iskandar Malaysia
KNB	Khazanah Nasional Bhd
KPJ	Kumpulan Perubatan Johor Sdn Bhd
KPRJ	Kumpulan Prasarana Rakyat Johor
LNG	liquid nitrogen gas
LOHAS	Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability
MARA	Majlis Amanah Rakyat
MCA	Malaysian Chinese Association
MDIS	Kolej MDIS Malaysia
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MHLG	Ministry of Housing and Local Government
MHTC	Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
MICE	Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events
MIDA	Malaysian Industrial Development Authority
MIM	Medini Iskandar Malaysia Sdn Bhd
MM2H	Malaysia My Second Home
MMHE	Malaysia Marine and Heavy Engineering
MMU	Multimedia University
MNC	Multinational Corporation
MNE	Multinational Enterprises

MOTAC	Ministry of Tourism and Culture
MP	Member of Parliament
MRT	Mass Rapid Transit
MSQH	Malaysia Society for Quality in Healthcare
NEP	National Ecotourism Plan
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	non-governmental organization
NHP	National Housing Policy
NKEA	National Key Economic Areas
NMIT	Netherlands Maritime Institute of Technology
NPP	National Physical Plan
NSC	Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre
NTU	Nanyang Technological University
NUMed	Newcastle University Medicine
NUS	National University of Singapore
O&G	oil and gas
PAHFSB	Private Aged Healthcare Facilities and Services Bill
PAS	Parti Islam Se-Malaysia
PasMA	Persatuan Ummah Sejahtera Malaysia
PDT	Pengerang Deepwater Terminal
PH	Pakatan Harapan
PHFSA	Private Healthcare Facilities and Services Act
PIC	Productivity and Innovation Credit Scheme
PIDP	Pengerang Integrated Development Programme
PIPC	Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex
PIV	Pulau Indah Ventures
PKR	Parti Keadilan Rakyat
PLKS	Pas Lawatan Kerja Sementara
PMED	Penang Centre of Medical Tourism
PMIP	Pengerang Maritime Industrial Park
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PPBM	Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia
PR	Pakatan Rakyat
PR1MA	Perumahan Rakyat 1 Malaysia Act
PTPTN	National Higher Education Fund Corporation
R&D	Research and Development
RAPID	Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development
REHDA	Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia
RM	Malaysian ringgit
RMMJ	Rumah Mampu Milik Johor
ROI	Return On Investment
RSH	Regency Specialist Hospital
RTS	Rapid Transit System
RUI	Raffles University Iskandar

SEZ	Special Economic Zone
SIJORI	Singapore-Johor-Riau Islands
SKM	Skills Certificate
SLA	State Legislative Assembly
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
TCM	Traditional Chinese Medicine
ULCC	Ultra Large Crude Carriers
UM	University of Malaysia
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
UORM	University of Reading Malaysia
UPEN	Unit Perancang Ekonomi Negeri
US\$	United States dollar
USMC	University of Southampton Malaysia Campus
UTM	Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
VLCC	Very Large Crude Carriers
WWF	World Wildlife Fund for Nature

