

## Social Mobility among the Malaysian Land Development Settlers

### *Mobiliti Sosial di Kalangan Peneroka Pembangunan Tanah di Malaysia*

NOR AZLILI HASSAN\*, UMMI MUNIRAH SYUHADA MOHAMAD ZAN, AZLINA ABDULLAH,  
HAIROL ANUAR MAK DIN & MARZUDI MD YUNUS

#### ABSTRACT

*Social mobility is a process of change or movement of a person or a group, from one position to another, in society either within the generation itself (intrageneration) or between generations (intergeneration) towards a better position than before or vice versa. This article attempts to evaluate the social mobility that occurs among the first and second generations of land development settlers. The study involves two states namely Pahang and Johor with a total of 742 respondents consisting of the settlers. The sample was selected based on the group and the purposive sampling method. The findings of the study show that there is a process of social mobility that occurs in terms of the level of education, employment, and income among the first and second generations settlers. The education level of the intergenerational group was found to be vertical social mobility. These changes have also resulted in better second-generation jobs and monthly income. This study contributes to the corpus of sociology on social mobility in society. The success of intragenerational vertical social mobility shows that the development programs implemented by the government change the socio-economic status and increase the income of the settlers which further increases the level of development of the Malaysian economy.*

*Keywords: Social mobility; settlers; generation; socio-economy; land development*

#### ABSTRAK

*Mobiliti sosial merupakan suatu proses perubahan atau pergerakan seseorang atau kelompok kumpulan, dari suatu kedudukan ke kedudukan yang lain, dalam sebuah masyarakat sama ada dalam generasi itu sendiri (intragenerasi) atau antara generasi (intergenerasi) ke arah suatu kedudukan yang lebih baik daripada sebelumnya ataupun sebaliknya. Artikel ini akan menilai mobiliti sosial yang berlaku dalam kalangan generasi pertama dan kedua peneroka pembangunan tanah. Kajian ini melibatkan dua buah negeri iaitu Pahang dan Johor dengan jumlah responden seramai 742 orang yang terdiri daripada peneroka. Sampel kajian dipilih berdasarkan kumpulan dan kaedah persampelan bertujuan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan adanya proses mobiliti sosial yang berlaku dari segi tahap pendidikan, pekerjaan dan pendapatan dalam kalangan peneroka generasi pertama dan kedua. Tahap pendidikan kumpulan antara generasi adalah berbentuk mobiliti sosial menegak. Perubahan ini juga telah menghasilkan pekerjaan dan pendapatan bulanan generasi kedua menjadi bertambah baik. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada korpus sosiologi mengenai mobiliti sosial dalam masyarakat. Kejayaan mobiliti sosial intragenerasi secara menegak menunjukkan bahawa program pembangunan yang dilaksanakan oleh kerajaan telah mengubah status sosioekonomi dan menambahkan jumlah pendapatan peneroka yang seterusnya telah meningkatkan tahap pembangunan ekonomi Malaysia.*

*Kata kunci: Mobiliti sosial; peneroka; generasi; sosioekonomi; pembangunan tanah*

## INTRODUCTION

One of the important questions in developing countries is how the societies attain their socioeconomic position, which is, who gets ahead, and what determines individual success in a developing country. This is also the issue of social mobility. All individuals should have the opportunity to achieve their potential. A society characterized by equality of opportunity will reward people according to their abilities, talents, and efforts rather than based on their social background. It might also be expected to exhibit high levels of mobility between social groups. Every society will experience social mobility, especially from the economic aspect (Weber 2021). The economy and society are the yardsticks for assessing whether a society is progressive or backward. The paradigm of human development seeks to establish a relationship between income development and value development which consists not only of economic aspects but also the aspects of education, health, a clean environment, and political freedom. This approach does not rule out the importance of economic growth as this aspect is importantly emphasized in the context of poverty eradication. Thus, economic growth is considered a sub-set of the human development paradigm (Nor Aini 2004). Investment in health, education, and skills can encourage community members to participate in the process of economic growth. What is more important is that economic growth can be distributed to the members of society through public policy. Land clearing plans are among the programs implemented by the government to help the poor.

Malaysia has a land development plan which is implemented by the Federal Land Development Authority or FELDA since 1956 and it is a strategy formulated towards eradicating poverty among the farmers. The small and uneconomical land size is said to be one of the factors contributing to poverty in rural areas (Asan Ali et al. 2018). This agency was established to develop land to be a productive agricultural area and maximize the quality yields as well as develop settlements equipped with other basic and social facilities. The role of this agency is to encourage and assist in investigating, planning, and implementing land and settlement development projects in the country. Today, this agency is not only an agent of land development and resettlement of the poor groups but also responsible for producing productive members of society as well as looking after the welfare of settlers. It has channeled its

profits to the settlers through *Koperasi Permodalan FELDA Bhd* as its business networking. Its focus is on commercial or export-oriented crops, namely rubber, and oil palm as well as other crops including sugarcane, cocoa, and coffee.

The program brought many benefits to the farmers when more than 100,000 families had been successfully settled on 509 land plots by the year 1999. Each settler is given 4.1 hectares or 10 acres of land planted with commodity crops, while a quarter of an acre is provided for residential sites. The income of the settlers depends on their ability to produce productively and so far, there is 67.3 percent of the settlers in peninsular Malaysia are farming the rubber estates. The program can also directly solve three land problems, namely land availability, small land size, and land subdivision. The immediate effect is that the participants have the opportunity to improve the socio-economic status of their families through crop activities even though sometimes their income is affected due to falling market prices. The most important is that their children have the opportunity to receive a better education and social mobility as a result of such education (Faizah Mohd Fakhruddin 2019). The success of the settlers' children in achieving a high level of education and entering the field of employment that generates a lucrative income has been much informed.

Since its inception in July 1956, there was an estimated more than 700,000 of the second generation of land development settlers have been born. The majority of them have completed their studies at higher learning institutions and are successful in their respective fields. There are more than 6000 of the third and fourth generation are currently studying at local and overseas higher institutions. This proves the effectiveness of the program introduced by the government 45 years ago in overcoming the problem of rural poverty (Felda 2018).

The first generation is already experiencing horizontal social mobility. Their migration to the land development plan area provided an opportunity for the settlers to change their family poverty status. In contrast to the second generation, their social mobility occurs vertically and horizontally. For those with higher education, their chances of getting a good job are brighter when they migrate out of their land areas. However, there is also the second generation who only experienced horizontal mobility when they look for work around the nearby area of their settlements. This phenomenon

is common among those with secondary education only. However, under certain circumstances, a more lucrative income can also be enjoyed by the second generation despite their low level of education. For instance when they work as construction workers in Singapore. This situation can be considered a form of vertical social mobility because of their changes in attitude towards better conditions. They are willing to try to find a better income opportunity even if they have to work in other countries.

Studies that look at the issues and importance of social mobility among land development settlers in Malaysia are still lacking. So, the question is on the level of social mobility among the settlers and the extent of the influence of their level of social mobility in Malaysia. This study attempts to evaluate to which extent of social mobility exists among the first generation (parents) and the second generation (settlers' children) after the first generation has managed to get rid of poverty. Four factors affect social mobility namely employment, education, marriage, and individual factors (Rohana 1996). This article focuses on the level of education, employment, and income to see social mobility among the first and second generations of land development settlers. The question that needs to be answered is whether there is social mobility by making comparisons between the first and second generations of settlers.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on land development settlers has been done since the 1970s until today. These include a study by MacAndrews (1979), a book on FELDA land schemes, a work by Amriah (1977) study on the innovation perception of FELDA settlers in Sendayan Negeri Sembilan, and the study by Abdul Hamid et al. (1987) on socio-cultural development and change in rural Malaysia. Socio-cultural changes in the FELDA community occur due to land development in terms of income, living conditions, and attitudes.

Many studies have been conducted on the FELDA settlers from social, economic, and political perspectives. In Malaysia, land development settlers are also found to emerge as a new social class in society, which they are known as a group that has different classifications. This group is said to have become modern through the government development program package (Abdul Hamid et al. 1987). After several years of the establishment of

the land development program, some publications write about the achievements of the settlers and the program such as writing by Tunku Shamsul Bahrin and Perera (2001) entitled *FELDA 21 Years at Land Development*, and Lee Boon Thong and Tengku Shamsul Bahrin (2006) entitled *FELDA's Fifty Years: Land Pioneers to Investors*. Besides, there are also studies from local researchers about the settler's community which include economic, political, and social. These include the study of social mobility of the second generation of FELDA (Nor Aini 2004), social and economic FELDA settlers (Bahijah et al. 2009), quality of life of settlers (Izham et al. 2012), social change of the second generation of FELDA (Mahadir, 2014), property issues heritage (land) of FELDA settlers (Zulkifli, 2010), and development of FELDA education and human resource sustainability (Noraziah et al. 2010).

On top of that, research on social mobility has been done either directly or indirectly. Studies on social mobility analyze the changes or movements experienced by an individual from a position held at a certain level to a new position whether a high or low position in the social system (Rohana 1996; Aldridge 2001; Nor Hayati 2011). Changes in demands for achievement or improvement and changes in supplying talents or abilities are two reasons why social mobility exists in every society (Lipset and Bendix 1964). Social mobility is divided into two levels, namely inter-generational and intra-generational. Intergenerational mobility is a change in social status that occurs between one generation and another. While intragenerational mobility is a change in social position that occurs in the life of an individual.

Mohammed Abdul Khalid (2018) investigates the existence of intergenerational mobility in Malaysia in terms of educational attainment, occupational skills level, and income level. He compares the status of working adults born between the years 1945 and 1960 and their adult children born between 1975 and 1985, using non-linear transition matrix techniques. He found that the majority of adult children have a better level of educational attainment and occupational skills compared with their parents. Income mobility is the highest among children born to parents with the lowest income. The results show that education, asset ownership, gender, and location matter for upward mobility. Moving forward, there will be difficulties for children from poor families to move up the socioeconomic ladder because of changes in policies. Therefore, the intergenerational

is relevant because it reflects human capital and the improvements in mobility have a positive return on investment (Juan et al. 2019).

There are several factors related to individual characteristics that influence households to engage in a local organization such as age, gender, household wealth, education, social status, and access to ease of communication and socialization (Katungi, Machethe & Smale 2007). The situation of households with a higher consumer-to-employee ratio is said to be exposed to the risk of death and poverty. This condition will cause a high dependence on others. There are also women in some rural areas of Africa who are found to face high time constraints compared to men due to circumstances that force them to do household chores. Negative norms are also felt by women where there are constraints in the social interaction of women in rural Africa. Female households were found not to participate in organizations that charge membership fees due to financial constraints (Maluccio, Haddad & May 2003). While more affluent households are found to be more involved in social organizations aimed at gaining social influence compared to the poor or less affluent (Glaeser, Laibson & Sacerdote 2002).

Ee Bee's (2002) study attempts to see the relationship between education and social mobility among Chinese members in Kampung Air Kuning Selatan, Negeri Sembilan. He found that the majority of the children of the respondents did not have a high level of education up to the college or university level. However, the income received is quite lucrative as there are half of their children work abroad such as in Singapore, Britain, and the United States. So, even though they are blue-collar workers, high exchange rates directly increase their income. Also, Alex Nuun et al. (2007) listed several factors that cause social mobility, namely social capital, cultural capital, early years influence, education, labor market experience, health, and well-being as well as area-based influence. Structural factors, human capital, and social capital are the contributing indicators to the achievement of social mobility (Nor Hayati Sa'at 2011).

Thus, social mobility can be measured based on various dimensions. However, for this paper, the dimensions of education, employment, and income are three measures of social mobility between the first and second generation of land development settlers. Based on the previous studies, in the context of the development of rural communities, including the settlers, there is a need to increase social mobility

to ensure the improvement of the quality of human life. Settlers and rural communities may have natural resources such as land but they usually lack expertise (human capital) and organizations (social capital) to help them increase the economic value of their physical assets. Therefore, social mobility can be seen to play an important role in organizing the population for development purposes. Social mobility can help these groups of settlers work together and unite for common interests with the government or other parties.

### SOCIAL MOBILITY CONCEPT

Social mobility is a change in the position of socioeconomic status that occurs among members of society as a result of the process of economic development (Vegard Iversen et al. 2021). The concept of social mobility also refers to the process by which individual changes or moves from one position to another in a society, where the position is generally agreed upon and can provide specific hierarchical values. When studying social mobility, it analyzes the changes or movements experienced by an individual from a position held at a certain level to a new position whether a high or low position in the social system. More specifically, social mobility involves a change of position in a layered system or a process of individual movement from one stratum to another stratum. Such changes can be either up or down, which is an increase or decrease in wealth, power, and prestige.

Horizontal social mobility is the movement of an individual in the same status. While vertical social mobility involves movement in different statuses. Vertical mobility can be seen or studied through intergenerational mobility and mobility within the generation itself or intragenerational. Intergenerational mobility is a change in social status that occurs between one generation and another. In intergenerational mobility, it is also seen that the extent to which such opportunities are opened to children is determined by social class or parental income rate. While intragenerational mobility (or mobility in one generation) is a change in social position that occurs in the life of an individual. In intragenerational mobility is seen as the social position of an individual or the change in the rate of income in life throughout their own life (Rohana, 1996). Sociologists generally focus on intergenerational mobility and economists are concerned with intragenerational mobility. Mobility



can also be defined through aspects of employment, geographic area, or culture (Aldridge 2001).

According to Lipset and Bendix (1964) and Gregory (2014), there are two reasons why social mobility exists in every society. First, changes in claims for achievement or improvement. Society is complex and changing, and social change, whether slow or fast, will bring about change in demands where different positions will be given to those who can obtain it. Second, changes in the supply of talents or abilities. Just as there is a change in demand for various types of talents and abilities, there will always be and there will be a continuous change in supply. No party, including the government, can control the distribution of talents, intellectuals, or other abilities, although the elite can monopolize educational and training opportunities. This is because many of those with high capacity are among those who are in the lower strata. Although the opportunity given to them is small to develop their potential such as being a leader, sooner or later they will succeed in penetrating it.

The social mobility experienced by an individual can have both positive and negative effects depending on the form of mobility that occurs. Vertical upward mobility will have a positive effect if the individual can adapt to the position, environment, values, and customs. While vertical downward mobility will have a negative impact if the individual experiencing it has feelings of inferiority, frustration and may even plunge them towards negative social symptoms. In this article, the contributing factors to social mobility are examined based on education, employment, and income which are the three measures of social mobility of the first and second generation of FELDA.

## METHODOLOGY

### STUDY AREA

Land development settlers refer to those who are held accountable by the government in a designated land area as owners who have the right to work. The settlers are including the wives and children if the original settlers have died. This study uses a set of five-level Likert scale questionnaire data collected through fieldwork on a total of 742 first and second-generation FELDA settlers in Malaysia. This study only selected two states, namely Pahang (53%) and Johor (47%) to represent all the land development settlers in Malaysia. Pahang is represented by

Jengka (31.9%) and Kuantan (21.2%) while Johor is represented by Johor Bahru (32.2%) and Segamat (14.5%). The land plans for Pahang state are Bukit Goh (7.2%), Lepar Hilir 2 (9.1%), Panching Timur (9.4%), Jengka 2 (7.5%), Jengka 15 (9.7%), and Jengka 19 (10.3%). Meanwhile, the state of Johor consists of Lok Heng Barat (8.9%), Aping Timur (11.3%), Pasak (6.3%), Ulu Pengeli (5.4%), Bukit Tongkat (5.4%), and Ulu Belitong (9.5%).

### SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The study sample was selected based on a combination of two sampling methods, namely cluster sampling, and purposive sampling method. The cluster sampling technique aims to select the settler's areas in certain states. Two states were selected, namely Pahang and Johor. The preference of this state was chosen because the largest number of land development settlers was from these two states. The purposive sampling method is to be used due to the purpose of this study is to focus on a specific group, namely two generations of settlers.

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The social mobility measurement for this study focused on the level of education, employment, and monthly income. The level of education is the main factor that can be seen to prove the occurrence of social mobility. The level of education between generations in this study was measured based on five levels, namely no education, primary school level education, high school level education, certificate/diploma/bachelor's degree education and master's/Ph.D. level education. The employment measurement is based on the employment status between the two generations to reflect the economic position and whether there is a change or not. The long-term picture can also be seen through the measurement of this employment status because it has a relationship with other social and economic variables (Hauser et al. 2000; Hauser, 2010). Employment status in this study is divided into three categories, namely low, medium and high. The measurement of monthly income is based on the total monthly income earned between generations. Monthly income can also explain the economic well-being of a family. The focus is more on the family rather than the individual because the family income is a true reflection of the economic position of the parents as the first generation and the economic position of the children as the second generation.

## DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis was conducted using several statistical techniques starting with descriptive analysis and structural equation modeling (SEM) with partial least squares (PLS). Descriptive analysis aims to describe the basic data of the study respondents. These basic data include the items found in the study respondent's profile. The variables of gender, marital status and employment are variables that use nominal scale measurements while the variables of age, level of education and monthly income use ordinal scale measurements. Accordingly, all these variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics based on frequency values or numbers and percentages. The researcher used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 21 to analyze the data in a descriptive analysis. Hair et al. (2014) stated that SEM is a combination of two multivariate techniques namely factor analysis and multiple regression analysis which includes latent variables and observed variables in one analysis. To define the latent construct of social mobility, three measurement items are used in this study, namely

the level of education, employment and monthly income. The evaluation of the structural model in this study includes research on the value of the coefficient of determination (R<sup>2</sup>). The coefficient of determination value (R<sup>2</sup>) is based on Cohen's (1988) guidelines which state 0.02 as small, 0.13 as medium and 0.26 as large.

## RESULTS

## BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

The first generation and the second generation of settlers consisted of 742 people (Table 1). Most of the first-generation respondents were female (55.9%) while the second-generation were male (54.5%). As for the age distribution, it shows that the first generation is in the group of 61-70 years old (44.4%) and the second generation is 31-40 years old (45.4%). Most of the first generation entered the land development area between the years 1977 and 1986 (51.4%). 80.3% of the first generation and 82.8% of the second generation are married.

TABLE 1. Profile of the Respondents

Variables	First Generation n=742	Second Generation n=742
Gender		
Male	44.1	54.5
Female	55.9	45.5
Age		
30 years old and below	1.1	21.7
31-40 years old	1.7	45.4
41-50 years old	5.4	28.3
51-60 years old	36.6	4.5
61-70 years old	44.4	0.1
71 years old and above	10.8	-
	Min=60.8, Standard deviation=8.64	Min=37.1, Standard deviation=8.10
Marriage Status		
Unmarried	0.9	14.5
Married	80.3	82.8
Divorcee	6.1	2.6
Divorced	12.7	-

### LEVEL OF EDUCATION

Data in Table 2 shows that more than 60% of the first generation went to primary schools only. 14.1% received education up to lower secondary school while 9.8% were up to upper secondary school. This data also shows a significant increase in the level of education of the second generation which is 50.4%

get an education in colleges or polytechnics. 25.2% went to upper secondary schools while 14.5% were further up to universities. The second generation who have been educated in college or polytechnic, as well as universities, have at least got a certificate, diploma, or degree. This qualification has enabled the second generation to get more secure jobs and employment.

TABLE 2. Level of Education based on the Two generations

Level of Education	First Generation	Second Generation
Not going to school	8.1	0.7
Primary school	62.4	5.0
Adult classes / <i>Pondok</i>	3.8	-
Lower Secondary School	14.1	4.0
Upper Secondary School	9.8	25.2
College/ Polytechnic	1.6	50.4
University	0.1	14.5
Others	0.1	0.1
Total Percentage	100	100

### EMPLOYMENT

The second generation who have been educated in college, polytechnic, or at university have at least got a certificate or diploma or degree. This qualification has enabled the second generation

to get more secure jobs. The most occupational category for the first generation consists of those who work as farmers, village workers, laborers, or hawkers which is 72.7%, as shown in Table 3. The majority of settlers are involved in this category which is about 735 people.

TABLE 3. Employment Category of First and Second Generation

Employment	First Generation	Second Generation
Farmers / Village Workers / Laborers / Hawkers	72.7	19.9
Technical / Teacher / Clerk / Salesman / Retailer	1.5	48.1
Professional / Executive / Wholesaler / Owner of Industrial Firms	0.1	4.0
Others	2.9	7.5

Most of the second generation work in the second or secondary category as technical workers, teachers, clerks, salesmen, or retailers (48.1%). Those who are involved in the fourth category are the self-employed, housewives, students, or not working. These changes indicate that the settler's children have experienced vertical social mobility in the employment category. The level of education a person possesses will determine the form of vertical mobility they experienced. Those with higher levels of education have more job options compared to those with lower education. In other words, those with higher education are more likely to experience vertical mobility upward.

### MONTHLY INCOME

There is a relationship between employment and monthly income for these two generations, as shown in Table 4. 75% of the first generation and 51% of the second generation earned RM1,500 and below. Although the value of the monthly income of the second generation is still the same level as the first generation, there is an increase in monthly income between RM1,501 to RM3,000 (38.4%).

TABLE 4. Monthly Income of First-Generation and Second Generation

Monthly Income	First Generation	Second Generation
RM 1,500 and below	75.0	51.0
RM 1,501 – RM 3,000	23.5	38.4
RM 3,001 – RM 4,500	1.2	5.3
RM 4,501 – RM 6,000	0.4	4.3
RM 6,001 and above	-	0.9
	Min = RM1619, Standard Deviation = 797	Min = RM2088, Standard Deviation = 2599
Total Percentage	100	100

### EVALUATION OF STRUCTURAL MODEL STUDY

A structural model is a hypothesis model of a study (also known as a conceptual framework of a study) that is formed when all the measurement models of

this study have achieved good validity and reliability. Figure 1 shows the results of bootstrapping analysis to determine the significance of each construct item and the significance of the relationship between all constructs in this structural model at the 0.05 level ( $p < 0.05$ ).

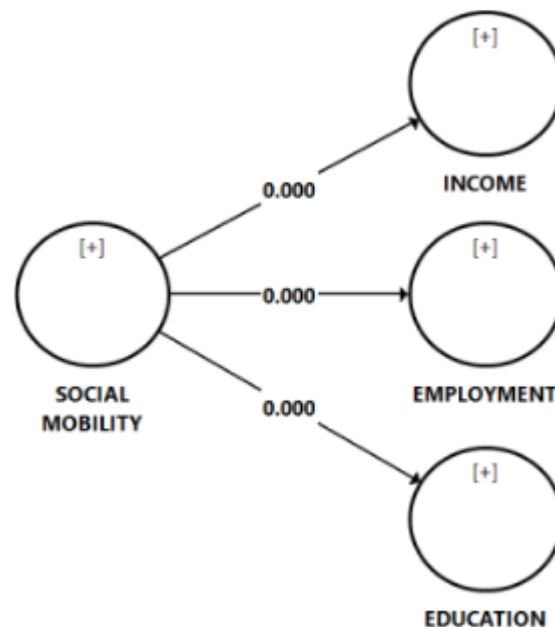


FIGURE 1. Bootstrapping Analysis for Social Mobility Structural Model

Figure 2 shows the results of the PLS algorithm analysis showing the beta value ( $\beta$ ) and the value of the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the income, employment and education construct. The large  $R^2$  values of income and education of 58.3% and 54.3% ( $R^2=0.583$ ,  $R^2=0.543$ ) indicate that the selection of income and education constructs is appropriate

to explain the achievement of social mobility. It also explains the statistical strength based on the relationships in the model and the number of samples to ensure that the value of  $R^2$  for each construct is achieved by at least 25% or  $R^2=0.25$ . All significant predictors also contributed at a good level which is exceeding the value of 0.2 (Hair et al. 2017).





FIGURE 2. PLS Algorithm Analysis for Social Mobility Structural Model

## DISCUSSION

The study revealed that education is one of the important factors in measuring social mobility. Based on the findings, there is vertical mobility upwards from the first generation to the second generation such as the children of the settlers themselves. Education is one of the factors that determine upward vertical mobility among the second generation of settlers (Nor Aini 2004).

The study found that there has been a major change between generations from the levels of education among the members of the settlers' community of the first and second generations. Unlike the generation of their fathers and grandfathers, the dynamics of the social mobility process in terms of higher education achievement is improving among the children of today's settlers' community. Development in Malaysia has transformed the country from an era of agriculture to an industry that requires its people to have high education and skills. The possession of such knowledge and minds enable the people to change their life as well as the transformation in the country that urges them to move towards commercial ethos, markets and the use of the latest technology. The findings of this study are in line with the study of Abdul Rahman (2002) who stated that education is a contributor to the growth and expansion of new categories of employment. Education is thus important to produce human capital and also as a means of social mobility (Nursila Senin & Irene Y. H. Ng 2012). The settler's community has apparently 'shifted direction' from

the settlers solely to the other jobs such as in the field of administration, especially for the second generation onwards. This is made possible by the achievement of education which is an important step towards upward social mobility, and also acts as an important indicator of the occurrence of social mobility for this settler community.

In terms of employment, the finding is in line with the study of Abdul Rahman (2002) and Nor Hayati (2011) stated that education and the expansion of new categories of employment contribute to the growth and expansion of the middle class. The limited and low-income employment opportunities have led the second generation to migrate out of the land settlers, mostly in the public and private sectors (Noraziah Ali et al. 2010). They get better jobs and at the same time earn a high income through education. The study also found that the settler's community with a completely 'settler identity' has increasingly 'disappeared'. The identity of the settlers referred to as the change of employment as a settler for the community has been diversified. Settler's main source of livelihood or employment based on cultivation has been reduced and shifted to a source of income in the technical, administrative, and business fields which shows the increasing interest of the community, especially for the younger generation. The transformation in terms of the settlers' increasing community participation in the non-cultivating employment sectors is due to the expansion of the manufacturing, construction, and services sectors as a result of development progress around community residential areas that have created

more employment opportunities for the workforce. Besides, individuals from unskilled working-class backgrounds have substantially lower labor market chances than individuals from skilled working-class backgrounds or higher social class backgrounds and there was a gap in labor market chances between individuals from unskilled working-class backgrounds (Bastian, 2020). This illustrates that the settler's community is undergoing a dynamic process of transforming their work to work outside the scope of settlers. The progress and development in the environment that encourages the settler community with various opportunities for economic activities have diversified their sources of income. Generally, as a result of the dynamics of this aspect of employment, the common interpretation that puts the "land development community is synonymous with settlers" is no longer in line with reality.

This difference can also be seen through the average value of monthly income where the monthly income for the second generation is found higher than the first generation. More open employment opportunities for the second generation allow them to earn a higher income than their father or mother. Mahadir (2014) stated that there is a process of social change that occurs in terms of economic change, employment, and income status among the second generation of land development settlers.

## CONCLUSION

The land development program has successfully created social mobility in the second generation of settlers. The inter-generation social mobility of the settlers based on educational factors has given birth to the second generation of settlers who are knowledgeable, responsible, and able to compete with other human beings. Every child of the settler can have the opportunity to be a human being who contributes to the concept of great economic power and thus may give a positive impact on social relationships and the well-being of the individuals. The educational opportunities that exist in the country along with the awareness of the settlers allow the second generation to make a wider choice. This is evident when most of them manage to have a job that suits their level of education. The success achieved allows them to help their families in the form of transfer payments. The study also shows that the development in the residential area of the settlers' community has contributed and influenced the improvement of the living standards of this

community. Generally, this shows that the progress and development made by the government can open space and opportunities to help 'launch' the movement or social mobility of this community. Among the forms of contribution are providing more employment opportunities to children, giving opportunities to get side jobs, and also the existence of educational institutions in their area that has given high motivation to children to study.

Thus, the combination of these three social mobility factors, namely education, employment, and income, allows them to have strong assets and savings rates that are also more secure. Based on this finding on the first and second generations of land development settlers, by relating to economic planning and development, the country must consider that it does not escape from meeting the needs of the society, especially the need to increase social mobility. Improving social mobility is becoming more important for the B40 group such as the land development settler community. The role of such a country can be a trigger to the transformation and mobility of the members of the community so that they are empowered and able to 'get out of the circle of poverty'. After all, social mobility is important socially, because social cohesion and inclusion may be more likely to be achieved in a society where people believe they can improve themselves through their abilities, talents, and effort than in a society where opportunities and quality of life depend on social background.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Acknowledgment is given to the research grant, namely Geran Universiti Penyelidikan GUP-2019-057, and "Dana Cabaran Perdana DCP-2017-012/1", The National University of Malaysia (UKM) which contributed to the publication of this article.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul Hamid Abdullah, Rahimah Abdul Aziz & Sulong Mohamad. 1987. Development and socio-cultural changes in rural Malaysia. *Akademika* 30: 29-48.
- Abdul Rahman Embong. 2002. *State-led Modernization and the New Middle Class in Malaysia*. New York: Palgrave.
- Aldridge, S. 2001. *Social Mobility: A Discussion Paper*. London: Performance and Innovation Unit.
- Alex, N., Steve, J., Surya, M. Tim, B. & Sarah, K. 2007. *Factors Influencing Social Mobility*. Leeds: Department for Work and Pensions.

- Amriah Buang. 1977. Persepsi inovasi peneroka-peneroka FELDA: Kes Rancangan Tanah L.B. Johnson dan Sendayan, Negeri Sembilan, Semenanjung Malaysia. *Akademika* 11:31-49.
- Asan Ali Gollam Hassan, Ibrahim Ngah & Shri-Dewi Applanaidu. (2018). Agricultural transformation in Malaysia: The role of smallholders and area development. *World Bank - Agricultural Transformation and Inclusive Growth. The Institute for Agricultural and Food Policy Studies*, UPM. November 14, 2018.
- Bahijah Md Hashim, Adilah Abdul Hamid, Mat Saad Abdullah, Rohana Alias & Sarina Muhamad Noor. 2009. Socio-economic issues among FELDA Settlers in Perlis. *Asian Culture and History* 1(2): 113-117.
- Bastian, A.B. 2020. Left Behind? Over-time change in the social mobility of children from unskilled working-class backgrounds in Germany. *Acta Sociologica* 63(2): 133-155.
- Ee Bee Chuan. 2002. Peranan Pendidikan ke arah mobiliti: Kajian kes di Kampung Air Kuning Selatan, Negeri Sembilan. Final Year Project. Faculty of Economy, UKM.
- Faizah Mohd Fakhruddin & Noor Azlan Mohd Noor. 2019. When fortune smiles on the poor: A story of upward intragenerational social mobility among Malay FELDA settlers. *International Journal of Recent Technology and Engineering (IJRTE)* 8 (3S2): 719-722.
- Felda 2018. *Laporan Tahunan 2018*. Kuala Lumpur: Felda Publication.
- Glaeser, L.E., Laibson, D & Sacerdote, B. 2002. The economic approach to social capital. *The Economic Journal* 112: 437-458.
- Gregory Clark. 2014. *The Son Also Rises: Surnames and the History of Social Mobility*. United Kingdom: Princeton University Press.
- Izham M. Yusoff, Wan Rozali W. Hussin, Fatimah Hassan, Nurwati Badarulzaman, Mohamed Z. Omar & Main Rindam. 2012. Meningkatkan kualiti hidup sosial: Satu kajian kes di kawasan gugusan FELDA Trolak, Perak Darul Ridzuan Malaysia. *Jurnal Perspektif* 4(2): 99-113.
- Juan, P. G., Teresa, S., Stefano, M. B. & Juan, A. R. (2019). Intergenerational of Social Mobility based on the Investments in Human Capital. *Policy Research Working Paper* 9001. World Bank Group.
- Katungi, E., Machethe, C. & Smale, M. 2007. Determinants of social capital formation in rural Uganda: Implications for group-based agricultural extension approaches. *The African Journal of Agricultural and Resource Economics* 1(2): 167 – 190.
- Lee Boon Thong & Tengku Shamsul Bahrin. 2006. *FELDA's Fifty Years: Land Pioneers to Investors*. Kuala Lumpur: Federal Land Development Authority.
- Lipset, S. M. & R. Bendix. 1964. *Social Mobility in Industrial Society*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- MacAndrews, C. 1979. The FELDA Land Schemes in Malaysia. In *Group Farming in Asia: Experience and Potentials*, edited by Wong J. Singapore: NUS Press.
- Mahadir Ahmad. 2014. Perubahan sosial generasi kedua FELDA daripada aspek ekonomi: Satu kajian kes di FELDA Sungai Sibol, Johor. Master Thesis. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
- Maluccio, A. J., Haddad, L. & May, J. 2003. Social capital and gender in South Africa, 1993-1998. In *Household Decisions, Gender and Development: A Synthesis of Recent Research*, edited by Quisumbing, A.R., 145-152. Washington DC: International Food Policy Research Institute.
- Mohammed Abdul Khalid. 2018. Climbing the Ladder: Socioeconomic Mobility in Malaysia. *Asian Economic Papers* 17(3): 1-23.
- Nor Aini Haji Idris. 2004. Mobiliti sosial di kalangan generasi kedua FELDA. *Akademika* 64: 83-95.
- Nor Hayati Sa'at. 2011. Mobiliti sosial dalam kalangan komuniti pesisir pantai: Kajian kes di Kuala Terengganu. *Kajian Malaysia* 29(1): 95-123.
- Noraziah Ali. 2010. Pembangunan pendidikan dan kelestarian sumber manusia di FELDA. *E-Bangi* 5(2): 82-63.
- Nursila Senin & Irene Y.H. Ng. 2012. Educational aspirations of Malay youths from low-income families in Singapore. *Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development* 22(4): 253-265.
- Rohana Yusof. 1996. *Asas Sains Sosial: Dari Perspektif Sosiologi*. Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.
- Tunku Shamsul Bahrin & Parera. 2001. *FELDA 21 Years at Land Development*. Kuala Lumpur.
- Vegard Iversen, Anirudh Krishna & Kunal Sen. 2021. *Social Mobility in Developing Countries: Concepts, Methods and Determinants*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Weber, N. 2021. Experience of social mobility and support for redistribution: Beating the odds or blaming the system? *QPE Working Paper* 1-38.
- Zulkifli Mohamad. 2010. Penyelesaian isu harta pusaka Tanah Rancangan FELDA: Kajian Kes FELDA Lurah Bukit Bentong Pahang Darul Makmur. PhD Thesis. Universiti Malaya.

Nor Azlili Hassan (Corresponding author)  
Faculty of Creative Industries  
Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman  
Malaysia.  
Email: azlili@utar.edu.my

Ummi Munirah Syuhada Mohamad Zan  
Faculty of Management and Muamalah  
Selangor International Islamic College University  
Malaysia.  
Email: ummi@kuis.edu.my

Azlina Abdullah  
Anthropology and Sociology Program  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities  
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia  
Malaysia.  
Email: azlina\_ab@ukm.edu.my

Hairol Anuar Mak Din  
Department of Nationhood and Civilization  
Selangor International Islamic College University  
Malaysia.  
Email: hairolanuar@kuis.edu.my

Marzudi Md Yunus  
Department of Socio-Culture/Malay Art  
Academy of Malay Studies  
Universiti Malaya.  
Email: marzudi@um.edu.my