

# **ROLE OF THE STATE AND MARKET IN LOW COST HOUSING PROVISION: THE CASE STUDY OF OPEN REGISTRATION SYSTEM (ORS) FOR LOW COST HOUSE BUYERS IN MALAYSIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The aim of this research is to examine the role of the state and market in low cost housing allocation in Malaysia in the context of a global trend towards neo-liberalism. This research explores the transformation in low cost housing provision in Malaysia particularly in the allocation process. The research is premised on a qualitative research paradigm using case study research design. The low cost housing allocation system in Malaysia under the Open Registration System (ORS) was selected as a case study to determine the role of the state and market in housing allocation. Meanwhile the State of Selangor was selected to study the implementation of ORS at the state level. The research framework was based on the Structure of Housing Provision (SHP) approach in order to determine the changes in housing provision system in Malaysia since the 1950s and to identify the key players involved in the low cost housing production and allocation process. The method of data collection was based on the analysis of documents, qualitative interviews and a group interview.

The key findings include, firstly, the fact that housing provision in Malaysia shows no sign of convergence with the Western neo-liberal model. The state continues to control and regulate the market in low cost housing allocation through ORS. Secondly, although low cost housing production shows trends of commodification since the early 1990s, but the allocation process remains the sole responsibility of the state and is highly decommodified. Thirdly, most low cost house buyers prefer the market to manage the allocation for private low cost housing. Finally, ORS implementation shows the state is dominant in housing provision in Malaysia, which is synonymous with the developmental state approach in the East Asia.

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