

Contemporary Research in Urban Planning



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CHAPTER 5

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA

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The Concept of Region

There are different attributes when it comes to the definition of region. In the first emergence of region, Glasson (1978) identifies two ways of identifying the concept of regions in relation to the subjective and objective views. The subjective view presented regions as a concept derive from particular purpose while objective view identified regions according to geographical and physical features. A study in 1970s showed that region is related to the integration of different hierarchy of development into single authority body (Smith, 1976). However, a survey conducted by Hall (1988) in the early 1980s suggested that there are various definition of region based on development approaches (Glasson & Marshall, 2007; Dawkins, 2003). The concept of region is also divided into functional (Glasson, 1978; Edwards, 2007) in relation to operational concern, formal as due to homogeneity of the area (Glasson, 1978) and administrative that is more concern on the political aspect of development (Edwards, 2007).

The concept of region is somehow flexible in a way that the planning of regional is similar to other types of planning. However, planning of the region itself is distinct from each other (Glasson, 1978). Previous research by Thorns (2004) justifies that the concept of region changed from time to time based on objectives and the needs for development (Polat et al. 2009). Region can also be defined as an area within a country (Friedman and Weaver, 1979; Dawkins, 2003) or as an area with the need for establishment of administration body to address the issues beyond the limited government jurisdiction (So et al., 1986; Davis, 2004; Draft Law Regional Planning, 2008). This idea was then further explored and suggested that region can be a cooperation of one or more authority bodies at different governmental levels (McDonald et al. 2003).

Nevertheless, A study by Ijaz and Ihsan (2005) show that region also emerges upon the needs of local economics and national development needs or emerges as 'regional policies' or 'local program'. Studies done pictured the planning and categories of region were based on political and purpose of establishment. Although understanding the concept of region is relatively might regard insufficient to create a big impact on the practice of regional planning, the availability of information should able to guide the professional and practitioner to implement better development and planning of region.

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