Contemporary Research in Urban Planning

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IIUM PRESS
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
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## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contents</th>
<th>Page No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>viii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ix</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xii</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 1:** A SURVEY METHODOLOGY ON THE MEASUREMENT OF TRAFFIC NOISE

_Abdul Azeez Kadar Hansa, Masao Miura, Shuhei Inokuma and Yosuke Nishimura_

**CHAPTER 2:** WELFARE STATE REGIMES AND LOW COST HOUSING PROVISION IN MALAYSIA

_Syafiee Shuid_

**CHAPTER 3:** PREFERRED FENCE DESIGN: A CASE STUDY OF SELECTED COMMUNITIES IN THE KLANG VALLEY

_Alias Abdullah, Rosmizawati Mohamed Salleh and Muhammad Faris Abdullah_

**CHAPTER 4:** ASSESSING THE LEVEL OF SERVICE OF POLICE STATIONS IN URBAN AREAS USING CATCHMENT AREA ANALYSIS: A CASE STUDY OF WANGSA MAJU, KUALA LUMPUR

_Samsudin Jasfar and Zul Aiman Md. Salleh_

**CHAPTER 5:** THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA

_Mariama Mohammed Osman, Syahriah Bachok & Noor Suzilawati Rabe_

**CHAPTER 6:** TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC CITIES: LESSONS LEARNT

_Azila Ahmad Sarkawi & Sharifah Fadilawati_

**CHAPTER 7:** THEORY AND RESEARCH IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING: EVOLVING NATURE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

_Mohammad Abdul Mohit_
CHAPTER 8: THE AGREEABLE CALIBRATION OF CELLULAR AUTOMATA MODEL IN URBAN LAND USE SPRAWL SIMULATION: A REVIEW AND ANALYSIS
Norzailawati Mohd Noor and Mazlan Hashim

CHAPTER 9: AN AUTOMATED LAND USE MAPPING USING REMOTELY SENSED DATA FOR TOWN PLANNING PURPOSES: REVIEW OF PROPOSAL
Norzailawati Mohd Noor

CHAPTER 10: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN KUALA LUMPUR
Raja Noriza Raja Ariffin, Rustam Khairi Zakari & Mohd Idham Mohd Yusof
CHAPTER 7
THEORY AND RESEARCH IN URBAN AND REGIONAL PLANNING: EVOLVING NATURE AND FUTURE CHALLENGES
Mohammad Abdul Mohit

INTRODUCTION

Professional streams in the Built Environment discipline are – Urban / Regional Planners (URP); Architects (AR); Landscape Architects (LA); Quantity Surveyors (QS); Building Engineers (BE). Whereas URP deals with the overall spatial layout of human activities, AR focuses on the detail design of individual element of human activity, such as a building. Building Engineering concentrates on the technical, service and engineering aspects of buildings. LA is concerned with the layout design of surrounding environment of building sites, whilst QS deals with the costing and procurement processes and systems of construction.

The main focus of this chapter is to highlight the changing research perspective in urban and regional planning and as such the following objectives have been set which constitute the scope of the study:

a) Investigate into the development of planning theories.
b) Identify the changing perspective of research / research issue.
c) Relate the management of research to the changing perspective of planning.
d) Anticipate future directions in planning research.

NATURE OF PLANNING THEORIES

Built environment theories, particularly pertaining to town and country planning, have two elements – (1) Substantive elements are concerned with the subject matter of planning; and (2) Procedural elements deal with the methodological approaches. In fact, in every planning theory both the elements are present, however, which element is dominant is a controversy, but it may vary from one sub-field to another sub-field. Over the years, the philosophy of planning has undergone several paradigm shifts – from city functional to city beautiful movement, from place prosperity to people’s prosperity followed by environmental and sustainable development concerns. Recently, the philosophy of the Islamic Tawhidic approach has been applied to the formulation of a total planning doctrine (JPBD, 2001; Ismawi Zen, 2002).