

# The Built Environment Selected Writings

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INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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## CHAPTER 3

### THE CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF NEIGHBOURING LANDS/OWNERS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Azila Ahmad Sarkawi<sup>1</sup>

#### INTRODUCTION

At the outset, the term neighbour, neighbouring, neighbourhood, neighbourliness and neighbourly are connote different theoretical understandings. Nevertheless, they are conceptually interrelated. This is because they are bound together with the essence of proximity and closeness. Majority of the researchers, namely Caplow and Forman (1950), Man (1954), Goss (1961), Keller (1968), Fischer et al. (1977) and Bulmer (1986) are of the opinion that proximity is an essential and key attribute of 'neighbour'. Indeed, the root word for 'neighbour' is the Old English word 'nigh-dweller' or 'near dweller' (Bulmer, 1986:18). Accordingly, researchers have drawn the conclusion that:

- Neighbours are simply people who live near one another;
- Neighbourhood is an effectively defined terrain or locality inhabited by neighbours;
- Neighbouring is the actual pattern of interaction observed within any given neighbourhood whether objectively or subjectively defined;
- Neighbourliness, by contrast, is a positive and committed relationship constructed between neighbours, a form of friendship.
- Neighbourly is a characteristic of a good neighbour (Bulmer, 1986:19).

These various terms, although they share a common feature of proximity and closeness, are not used interchangeably due to their own specific connotations. Moreover, they have been viewed in different ways by different disciplines of study be it sociology, planning or law in order to meet their specific objectives of study. However, in most cases, the first three terms constitute the core subjects, for example, in development planning contexts, neighbour, neighbouring and neighbourhood are thoroughly discussed to suit the allocation of physical planning and to assess the impact of development on the community and environment.

As far as the author is aware, there is no explicit study discussing the theoretical understanding of 'neighbour' combining the sociological, planning and legal points of view, whilst it is a crucial point in urban issues as Keating and Krumholz (1999:1) say; "urban issues is a multifaceted area of inquiry that combines a number of disciplines, perspectives and time periods, as well as numerous actors [...] to arrive at a holistic view of urban issues". However, in Malaysia, Khairiah (2000: 3) says; "planners have left out sociology as a sector [...] sociological perceptions of the people [...] have been neglected [...] the community's needs are assumed by planners and decision makers [...] strategies and policies are then

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