

**Category** : Social Sciences and Humanities

**1455**

**USE PATTERN ANALYSIS IN GREEN OPEN SPACES OF MALAYSIA#**

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Housing development in Malaysia is bounded to obey several acts and legislation which among them is the Planning Guidelines and Standards set out by the Town and Country Planning Department of Malaysia. This guideline serves as a written statement that contains guides that become reference in advancing any development. It is used by local planning authorities in controlling activities in land development for uniform, comfortable and safe execution. Among the most important guidelines closest to the policy in providing recreational area to a community is the Guideline on Recreation and Open Spaces, under Act A933 (Garispanduan Tanah Lapang dan Rekreasi, Pindaan 1995, Akta (A933), Seksyen 2(f), Bil No. 21/97 and The Town and Country Act, 172 (Akta Perancangan Bandar dan Desa, 1976 (Akta 172.)). The policy also calls for recreational areas to be gazetted and for their development to be monitored, for environmentally sensitive areas to be protected and for green areas to be established as buffer zones to limit urban development. However, the specific guidelines in developing Neighbourhood Parks are hardly stated. Merely an indication of a general and very broad guideline which stipulates a 10% of open spaces and recreation must be provided in any residential development, commercial development as well as in industrial developments. This is what Malaysia is experiencing now. Housing development especially in Malaysia has now grown to a stage where location relative to the nearest park or green area contributes to the most highly regarded property. This research has concluded that in order to explore the current Malaysian policy on green open spaces an analysis of use pattern of the users who uses the green open spaces is needed. This research is important as it helps to verify how green open spaces could complement the existing planning guidelines into developing a more user specific needs in all outdoor recreational venues.

**Keywords** : *Green Open Spaces, Neighbourhood Parks, Use Patterns, Policy.*



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### Malaysian Policy on Green Open Spaces

Housing development in Malaysia is bounded to obey several act and legislation which among them is the Planning Guidelines and Standards which often refers to as the Garis Panduan dan Perancangan, set out by the Town and Country Planning Department of Malaysia.

Among the most important guidelines closest to the policy in providing park area to a community is the Guideline on Recreation and Open Spaces, under Act A933 (Garis Panduan Tanah Lapang dan Rekreasi, Pindaan 1995, Akta (A933), Seksyen 2(f), Bil No. 21/97 and The Town and Country Act, 172 (Akta Perancangan Bandar dan Desa, 1976 (Akta 172) by the Town and Country Planning Department of Malaysia.

This act serves as:

- A guideline towards development and implementation of the recreation and open spaces in Malaysia.
- It stated among others type of recreation available, recreational function, classification of recreational area and its usage, current issues on recreation and open spaces and the implementation procedures.

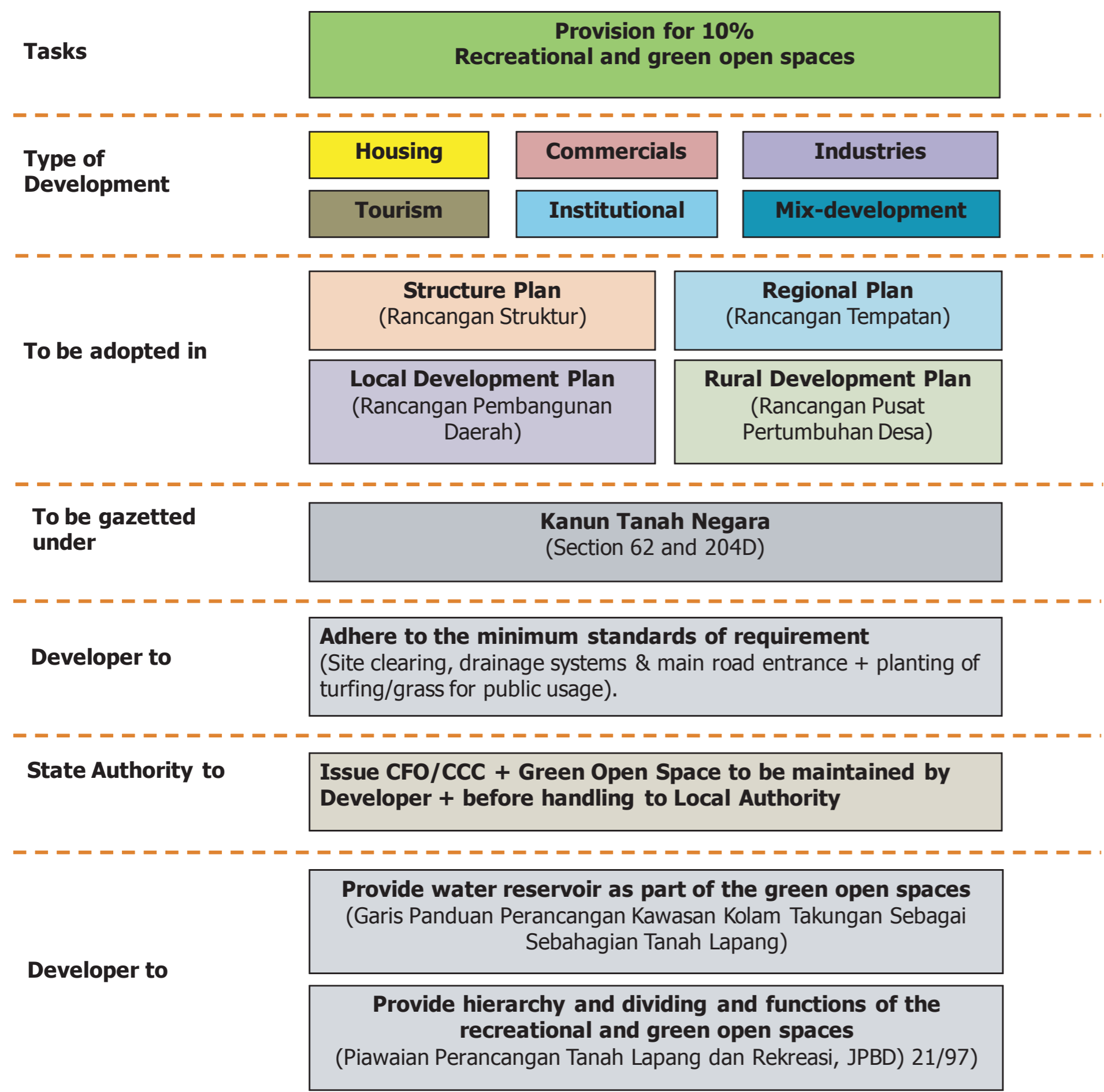


Figure 1: Implementation guideline for the provision of Recreational and Green Open Spaces in Malaysia. Source: (Piawaian Perancangan Tanah Lapang dan Rekreasi, JPBD and Abdul Malek, N., 2009)



Figure 2: Some of the usual views and recreational activities including hardscapes and softscape elements found in a Malaysian neighbourhood parks. Source: Taman Tasik Menjalara & Taman Lembah Kiara, Kuala Lumpur, Author (2009).

### Results: CFA on Use Pattern

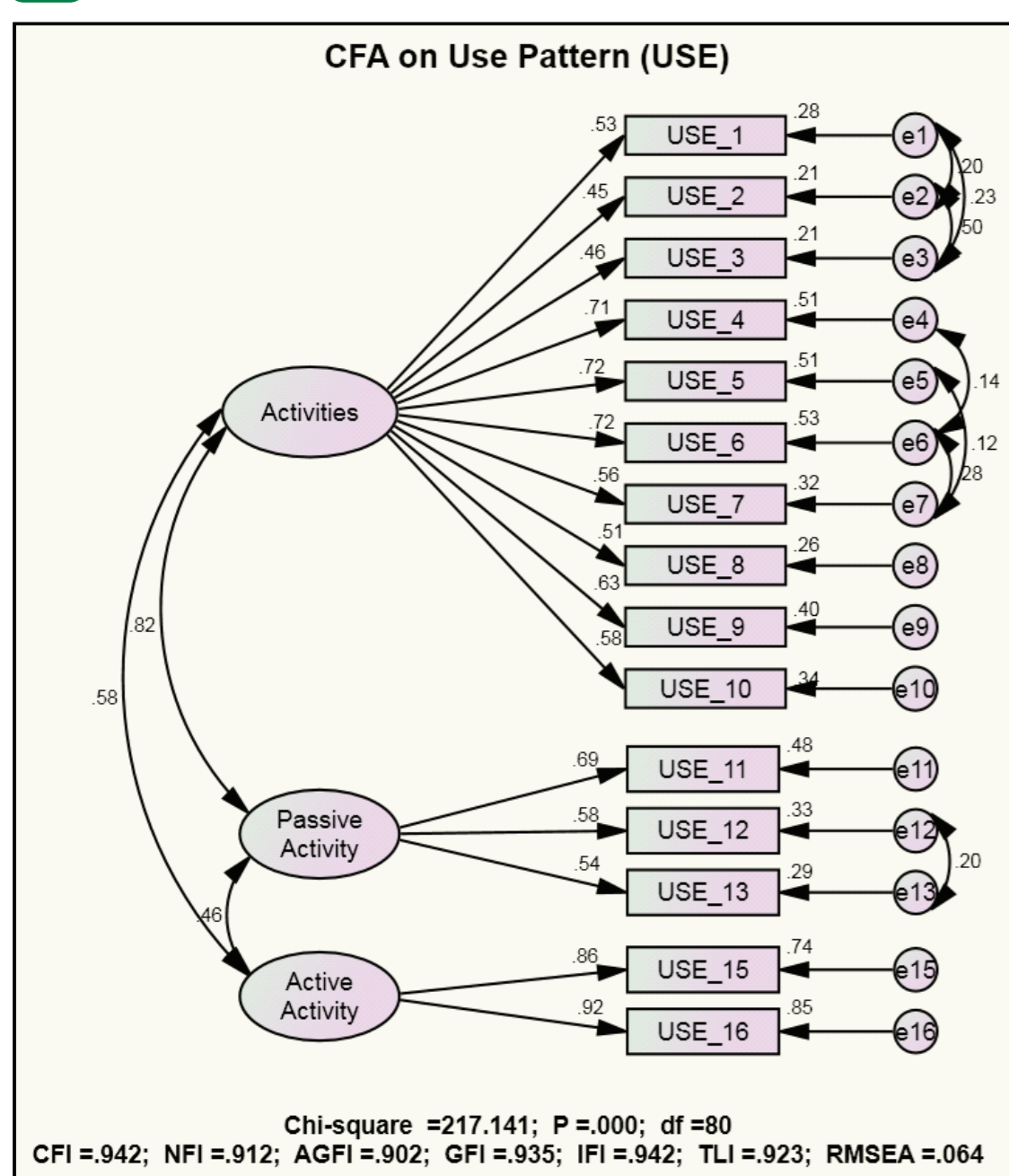


Figure 3: Confirmatory Factor Analysis on Use Pattern Items (Nurhayati Abdul Malek, Manohar Mariapan & Mustafa Kamal Mohd Shariff, 2012)

### Method

- The total participants for the study were 414 daily park users in two local neighbourhood parks in Malaysia.
- Two study areas were used, the first one is Taman Lembah Kiara, in Taman Tun Dr. Ismail, Kuala Lumpur and the second one is Taman Rimba Riang, in Kota Damansara, Petaling Jaya.
- Both parks were located in two different local authority jurisdictions but accessible in so many ways within a short distance of 10km between each other.
- The two sites were selected because the similarity of both community characteristics which are mainly occupied by middle low to upper or high income group, neighbourhood housing areas that were heavily connected to a commercial area.

“Open space for recreational, sports and environmental beautification is based on a standard of 10% of the gross development area of the said housing scheme. The calculation of the 10% of the gross development area would also include a 30% of the reserve to be for infrastructures and utilities. This 10% of open space requirement forms the basis of most of Malaysia’s modern townships today”.

Guidelines for Recreational Open Space Provision, cited in Open Spaces in Urban Malaysia, Federal Department of Town and Country Planning (2005, p.70)

### Evolution of Malaysian Green Open Spaces

According to the Malaysian Federal Department of Town and Country Planning (2005), the development of open spaces in Malaysia has overwhelmingly evolved as a part of the current Malaysian urban fabric. The design of green open spaces in Malaysia has experienced an increased in its activity because of the Government’s decision to develop new parks in order to improve the current health, well-being and the way of life of the Malaysian population (Abu Bakar 2002 in Abdul Malek, 2006).

Subsequently, all green open space developments in Malaysia were geared towards the Garden City Concept in the Garden Nation 2005 ideal. This initiative was motivated by our former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamed. Until today, the conceptualization appeared in all present-day Malaysian green open spaces and neighbourhood gardens developments such as the advancement of new neighbourhood housing concepts as well as all commercial and institutional developments (Abdul Malek, 2006). On that account, a sequence of that evolution will be further explained in Figure 2 below.

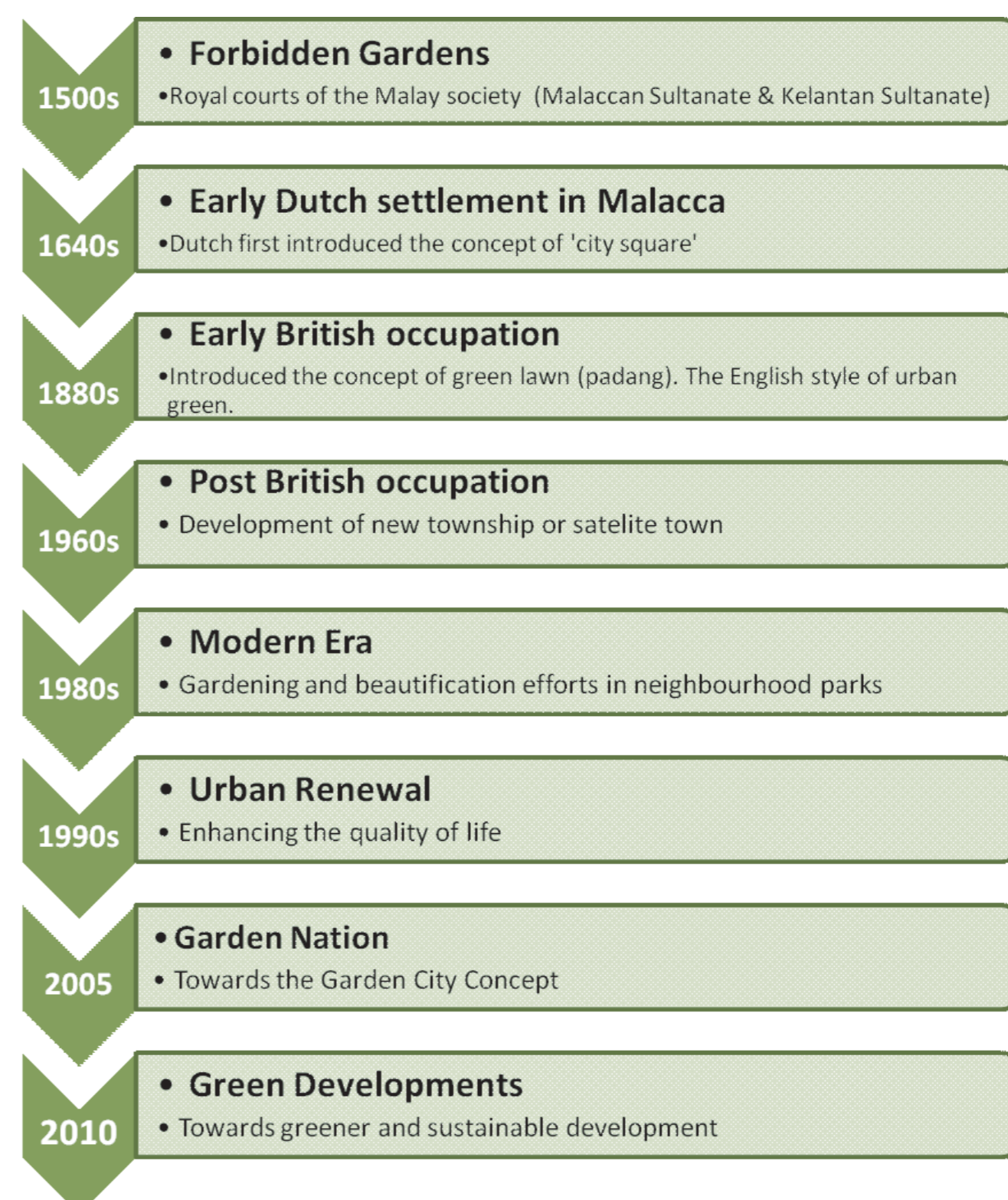


Figure 3: The Malaysian Green Open Spaces evolution. Adopted from: Abdul Malek, N. (2006)

### Results: Distributions of Park Users' Use Pattern in Neighbourhood Parks

Use Pattern Items	Agreement Level <sup>1</sup>		
	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I will only visit the park if there is some special event going on	54.1	25.1	20.8
I do not like the sound of water	72.2	14.5	13.2
I do not like this park as it have too many trees	67.2	19.1	13.7
I walk my pets to this park everyday	71.0	18.4	10.6
I enjoy skating with my friends here	57.7	24.6	17.6
I often celebrate birthday parties or have BBQ with friends and family in the park	57.9	23.7	18.4
I usually relax alone resting by the pond or sit on the grass	38.4	25.8	35.8
I only come here to accompany my children to the playground	43.2	25.1	31.6
I like to fish here	59.4	22.0	18.6
I prefer smaller parks	63.3	21.0	15.7
I only come to this park to meet with my friends	43.3	22.7	34.1
Watching people is the only thing I do here	45.2	23.7	31.2
I often spend time in the wooded/forest area of this park only	35.3	30.9	33.8
I think some kind of F&B kiosk is an absolute requirement for this park	14.8	20.8	64.5
I walk in this park everyday	48.8	30.7	20.5
I jog here everyday	48.1	28.5	23.4

Table 1: Distribution of Park Users Use Pattern in Neighbourhood Park

### Conclusion

- The results from this study supported the hypothesis and therefore indicated that there were significant correlations between quality green open spaces to use and between use patterns to satisfaction aspect.
- This also can be concluded that there is direct relationship between use and quality green open spaces. Hence indicating that park users’ use pattern is obviously an important aspect to consider in relation to assessment and development of quality neighbourhood parks.
- It could be a tool with the best variables tested to be considered for the assessment of a quality neighbourhood park in an urban context.

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