

KINEMATIC MEASUREMENT AND PROCESSING STRATEGY FOR
DYNAMIC MONITORING OF ENGINEERING STRUCTURES USING
GLOBAL POSITIONING SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

Demands in engineering structures protection against destructive stimulations have lead to a significant research in this area. In particular, the non-destructive evaluation sensor such as the Global Positioning System (GPS) is valuable to assess the serviceability, safety and integrity of these structures such as tall buildings and bridges. Nevertheless, the attainable accuracy of the GPS measurements is dependent upon the presence of errors or noises in the measurements. These include satellite and receiver clock errors, satellite geometry, satellite orbit, multipath and atmospheric errors. Some of the errors can be eliminated or minimised by applying differencing techniques, but others require particular attention if a high accuracy result is sought. This thesis explores the development of an integrated methodology and systematic processing for kinematic GPS method in continuous structural monitoring applications. The research presented here reinforced the theory of spectral representation of the signal, which was used to recover the signature of the disturbed signature from the priori signature. This method works when there were at least two sets of measurements from the so-called fixed and moving stations. It has been justified in this research that as these stations are closed together, they are strongly correlated with respect to GPS error sources and thus cancel some of the errors. A correlation coefficient between stations of up to 0.831 has been obtained in this study. By deriving their signatures using the Fast Fourier Transform, a method of minimising these spatial correlated errors by signatures differences and displacement detection with the aid of Kalman filter method has been developed. The developed technique is validated through a simulation test and real applications on a tower block and cable-stayed bridge. The test has demonstrated the potential of this technique for the improvement of observed values. Results have shown that an increase of almost 50% to 60% in position estimates was achieved by applying this technique. This can be interpreted by the Root Mean Square Error (RMSE) of simulated displacement in longitudinal direction with respect to true displacement has decreased from ± 0.004 m to ± 0.002 m by processing through the developed technique. Similarly, for vertical direction, the RMSE has decreased from ± 0.009 m to ± 0.006 m. The test conducted on the special designed simulation device shows that the responses with tip displacement of 1cm can be detected by kinematic GPS when compared with the actual displacement. A tower and cable-stayed bridge trials indicate the ability of the developed technique to detect displacement of more than 3 cm. The comparative results in the case of simulation study and real trials on structures proved that the proposed technique can enhance displacement measurement accuracy and capable of assessing the allowable safety tolerance of the engineering structures.

ABSTRAK

Tuntutan dalam penjagaan struktur kejuruteraan akibat daripada perangsangan kemusnahan telah memberi laluan kepada penyelidikan yang signifikan dalam bidang ini. Secara khusus, penderia penilaian tanpa musnah seperti *Global Positioning System* (GPS) berguna untuk menilai kebolekhidmatan, keselamatan dan integriti struktur seperti bangunan tinggi dan jambatan. Walau bagaimanapun, ketepatan yang diperolehi daripada pengukuran GPS bergantung kepada kewujudan selisih atau hingar dalam pengukuran. Ini termasuklah selisih-selisih satelit, jam alat penerima, geometri satelit, berbilang-alur dan atmosfera. Sebahagian daripada selisih tersebut boleh dihapuskan atau dikurangkan dengan melaksanakan teknik pembezaan, tetapi sebahagian yang lain memerlukan perhatian khusus jika keputusan yang berketepatan tinggi diperlukan. Tesis ini mengkaji pembangunan integrasi metodologi dan pemprosesan yang sistematik dengan menggunakan kaedah GPS kinematik dalam aplikasi pemantauan struktur secara berterusan. Kajian yang dibincangkan ini menguatkan teori perwakilan spektrum isyarat yang digunakan untuk memulihkan kembali pengenalan asal isyarat daripada isyarat terganggu. Kaedah ini berfungsi apabila terdapat sekurang-kurangnya dua set cerapan daripada stesen-stesen yang dikenali sebagai stesen tetap dan bergerak. Ianya telah diwajarkan dalam kajian ini, iaitu apabila kedua-dua stesen adalah berdekatan antara satu sama lain, sekaitannya daripada segi sumber selisih GPS adalah tinggi dan oleh itu sebahagian daripada selisih-selisih ini akan terhapus. Pekali sekaitan sehingga 0.831 antara stesen telah diperolehi dalam kajian ini. Dengan menerbitkan pengenalan isyarat menggunakan *Fast Fourier Transform*, kaedah untuk meminimumkan selisih-selisih *spatial* yang sekait melalui pembezaan spektrum dan pengesanan anjakan dengan bantuan penuras *Kalman* telah dibangunkan. Teknik yang dibangunkan ini telah sahkan melalui ujian simulasi dan aplikasi sebenar ke atas blok menara dan jambatan kabel tambat. Ujian telah membuktikan keupayaan teknik ini untuk meningkatkan hasil cerapan. Keputusan menunjukkan peningkatan sehingga 50% hingga 60% dalam anggaran kedudukan dapat dicapai menggunakan teknik ini. Ianya boleh diterjemahkan oleh nilai *Root Mean Square Error* (RMSE) bagi anjakan simulasi dalam arah membujur yang merujuk kepada anjakan sebenar telah menurun daripada ± 0.004 m kepada ± 0.002 m melalui pemprosesan dengan teknik yang dibangunkan. Begitu juga bagi arah tegak, nilai RMSE telah menurun dari ± 0.009 m kepada ± 0.006 m. Ujian yang dijalankan terhadap peranti simulasi menunjukkan tindakbalas dengan anjakan hujung sebanyak 1cm boleh dikesan oleh teknik GPS kinematik apabila dibandingkan dengan anjakan sebenar. Ujian ke atas blok menara dan jambatan kabel tambat pula menunjukkan kemampuan teknik yang dibangunkan untuk mengesan anjakan lebih dari 3 cm. Keputusan perbandingan dalam kes ujian simulasi dan ujian sebenar ke atas struktur membuktikan teknik yang dicadangkan boleh meningkatkan ketepatan pengukuran anjakan dan mampu untuk menilai had terima keselamatan bagi struktur kejuruteraan.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Monitoring the integrity of engineered structures such as bridges and tall buildings is critical to understanding the health of structures and their safety aspects. Such structures have allowance or tolerance for deformation under the action of load. Topic on structural responses due to load is elaborated in great length in Chapter 2. The standard approach to detect the geometrical and physical status of the structures is through deformation monitoring. For this reason, deformation monitoring is one of the tasks of structural engineers to ensure the safety of the structures.

Monitoring of engineered structures using geodetic methods has become a prime concern due to its precision, portability and most importantly non-destructive or non-disturbance nature of the technique. The application of this technique was initiated by Teskey and Porter (1988) using integrated geodetic measurement and finite element model to monitor large concrete structures. From their work, new approach was successfully demonstrated and proved that it is possible to determine the structural deformation behaviour when loading are applied. Furthermore, advancement in geodetic instrumentation such as motorised theodolite makes it possible to evaluate structures such as bridges (Katowski, 1995). Until recently, the Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) technology, specifically the Global Positioning System (GPS) developed by the United States is becoming a leading technology used in structural monitoring (Ogaja, et al., 2007).

The technique used for deformation monitoring should provide quality and reliable results. Moreover, the capability of the technique to produce three-dimensional

data is an added advantage especially for structural monitoring. Compared to other geodetic techniques such as precise levelling, GPS can fulfil these requirements by providing three-dimensional data for used in the interpretation of horizontal and vertical displacements. In relation to Electronic Distance Measurement (EDM), GPS also can yield results in real or near real-time.

As will be discussed in Chapter 2, GPS is satellite-based navigation systems, which permit users to determine their position in three-dimensional space with high precision output. The precision of a few millimetres within a relatively short period of time can be guaranteed to all users through the use of developed techniques in GPS positioning. Relative positioning, either static or kinematic is now well established and is used extensively in deformation monitoring. It has been demonstrated that GPS is feasible alternative to costly conventional geodetic techniques with no significant loss of accuracy when used for deformation monitoring. This has been proven by the abundant reports on the utilisation of GPS as a monitoring tool or sensor in many conferences and in published articles.

GPS has been utilised in the repeated monitoring of crustal and earth deformation for many years but it has only been recently investigated in the context of continuous monitoring for civil engineering structures. Few reasons on why GPS has gain wide acceptance in continuous monitoring are listed as follows:

- the requirement to measure deformation or assessment of magnitude of structural damage where sudden failure may follow;
- the performance improvement and system capabilities of GPS;
- the capabilities of GPS to provide data on demand and detect any short term variation such as measurement due to wind or traffic loadings.

Numerous researches have been made toward the application of GPS in continuous monitoring at global, regional and local scales. At the regional scale, several permanent continuous array systems have been established especially for crustal deformation

applications ((Bock, *et al.*, 1993; Jaldehag, *et al.*, 1996) and (Chen, 1998)). Likewise, at local scale, GPS has been tested as a deformation sensor for civil engineering ((Lovse, *et al.*, 1995); (Leach and Hyzak, 1994); (Guo and Ge, 1997); (Ashkenazi and Roberts, 1997); (Brown, *et al.*, 1999); (M. Celebi, 2000; Mehmet Celebi, *et al.*, 1999), (Ogaja, *et al.*, 2001), (M. Celebi and Sanli, 2002), (Tamura, *et al.*, 2002), (Breuer, *et al.*, 2002), (Roberts, *et al.*, 2004)), (Aziz, *et al.*, 2005), (Hu and Xu, 2009; Seco, *et al.*, 2007) and (Hu, *et al.*, 2009; Seco, *et al.*, 2007; Stiros and Moschas, 2011), to list a few. Further discussion on these applications can be found in Chapter 2.

The high accuracy required for continuous monitoring applications are fully dependent on the GPS errors introduced in measurements as discussed in Section 2.1.3. It is very important to identify features that are clearly not due to displacement and to separate between noise and true movement. Consequently, this is an important issue in continuous monitoring applications. Nevertheless, for most regional scale applications where daily GPS solution were resolved, few errors are not critical since they are averaged out and tend to reduce (e.g. King, *et.al.*, (1995)). But for short or urgent observation monitoring campaigns, such as health assessment of engineering structures, the influence of GPS errors is very significant. To obtain reliable and consistent GPS results, there is a need to reduce these errors either through measurement procedures or data processing or both. As most past investigations on these ad hoc applications have not taken into account or addressed this issue, thus, areas requiring further research include:

- a methodology on the use of GPS in structural monitoring;
- a system for reducing the effect of GPS errors.

Consequently, this study attempts to fill the gap in this important research area. In addition, there is growing interest on the use of GPS for health monitoring of engineered structures, which requires work to be done in this area in order to improve the performance of the technique up to acceptable level.

1.1 Problem Statement

Recently, the GPS has been increasingly used to monitor the static and quasi-static deformations of large structures, such as long suspension bridges and tall buildings. Conventional approaches such as using total station has limitation as it is not able to provide the necessary displacement detection accuracy with sufficient update frequency and precision compare to GPS which provide sampling rates sufficient to track the displacement of dynamically excited objects with an accuracy of the order of millimeters (Casciati and Fuggini, 2008). Similarly with accelerometer instrument which measure acceleration and requires double integration in order to derive displacement.

The kinematic versions of the post-processing kinematic and real time kinematic (RTK) modes of the GPS have been used to monitor dynamic deformations of those engineering structures. As these techniques provide the trajectory of positions, their performance should be assessed. This is one of the issues which are addressed in this study to assess the measurement accuracy of GPS in dynamic status. To be used in structural monitoring, this sensor should be thoroughly validated before its application in full scale. Ultimately, a special device where harmonic movements can be simulated has been devised. These movements were recorded by the rotating GPS antenna and their coordinates were compared with the true value.

As indicated earlier, the research gap in this kinematic monitoring of engineering structures are the methodology on the application of GPS and treatment of GPS errors. The implementation of kinematic GPS techniques in structural monitoring have been reported and published in many publications as discussed in Chapter 2. Most of the tests found in the literature were conducted in controlled and real environments, usually consisting of only two GPS receivers installed at the reference point and structure. Summarizing previous research, the outcome of this study is that by complying with an appropriate procedure for kinematic GPS observation and processing can solved

common GPS errors for short baseline and provide reliable results in structural monitoring.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to investigate the feasibility of kinematic GPS positioning in structural monitoring through systematic processing. In order to meet this aim, the following objectives were established:

1. To investigate the accuracy of kinematic GPS method.
2. To develop an efficient and systematic processing for continuous monitoring applications.
3. To testify and validate the developed kinematic GPS processing technique in structural monitoring.

1.3 Scope of Study

The research is involved with a study and utilisation of kinematic GPS to accomplish structural monitoring application. This research covers the accuracy assessment of the kinematic GPS and identifying on the most ideal observation and processing strategies to determine the structure displacement based on kinematic GPS. Specifically, three objectives of the study have been addressed. In order to facilitate the objectives of the study, the following scopes have been embarked:

- i. Validation on the accuracy of kinematic GPS has been performed through an experiment. The basic idea of an experiment was to determine the trajectory of positions in dynamic mode. This was by forcing receiver to rotate in known horizontal circular orbits and to compare its changing coordinates with the real

ones. For the purpose of this experiment, a special rotating bar device has been devised.

- ii. Determination of spatial correlation between two GPS receivers simultaneously tracking satellites was accomplished through short and long baselines observations. This experiment was vital to identify and develop a methodology for implementing kinematic GPS in structural monitoring. For this purpose, the statistical between these two receivers was deduced.
- iii. Developing a model for observation and processing strategies of kinematic GPS data. The Savitsky-Golay filter which is a low pass filter has been used to remove high frequency noise in measurement and the spectral representation based on the Fast Fourier Transform has been applied to the GPS data. Error removal method has been introduced to eliminate common GPS errors to the measurements, hence structural deformations can be extracted. With the aid of Kalman filter, statistical tests on deformation can be performed. For all processing purposes, the MATLAB routines have been used.
- iv. The feasibility and testing of the proposed methodology was conducted using a special fabricated simulation device which able to move in horizontal and vertical directions.
- v. Full scale monitoring observations have been performed on tower and cable-stayed bridge. At each structure, the study was conducted during the time there was wind and traffic loadings, respectively.

1.4 Research Methodology

In completing this study, a detail and systematic planning is needed to achieve all the stated objectives. This is important so that each step taken will be noteworthy towards the completion of the study. Figure 3.5 and Chapter 4 to 6 can be referred for a detailed and clear explanation of the research methodology.

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, the following methodology is to be applied:

1. Performing kinematic GPS surveys for the following purposes:
 - to analyse the variability of epoch by epoch solution resulting from the measurement;
 - validating the accuracy and position of the kinematic GPS surveys;
 - investigating observation and processing procedures, for example the utilisation of different data collection rates and the use of satellite orbit in data processing;
 - investigating the effect of station separation (between roving receivers):
 - deriving spatial correlation between time series of positions of roving receivers;
2. Data filtering to filter high frequency noises.
3. Developing a systematic processing approach for data analysis based on the spectral representation of the data using the Fast Fourier Transform method.
4. Performing kinematic GPS surveys on a simulated object.
5. Performing kinematic GPS surveys on two engineering structures i.e. tower and cable-stayed bridge.

The overall methodology of this research can be summarized as depicted in Figure 1.1.

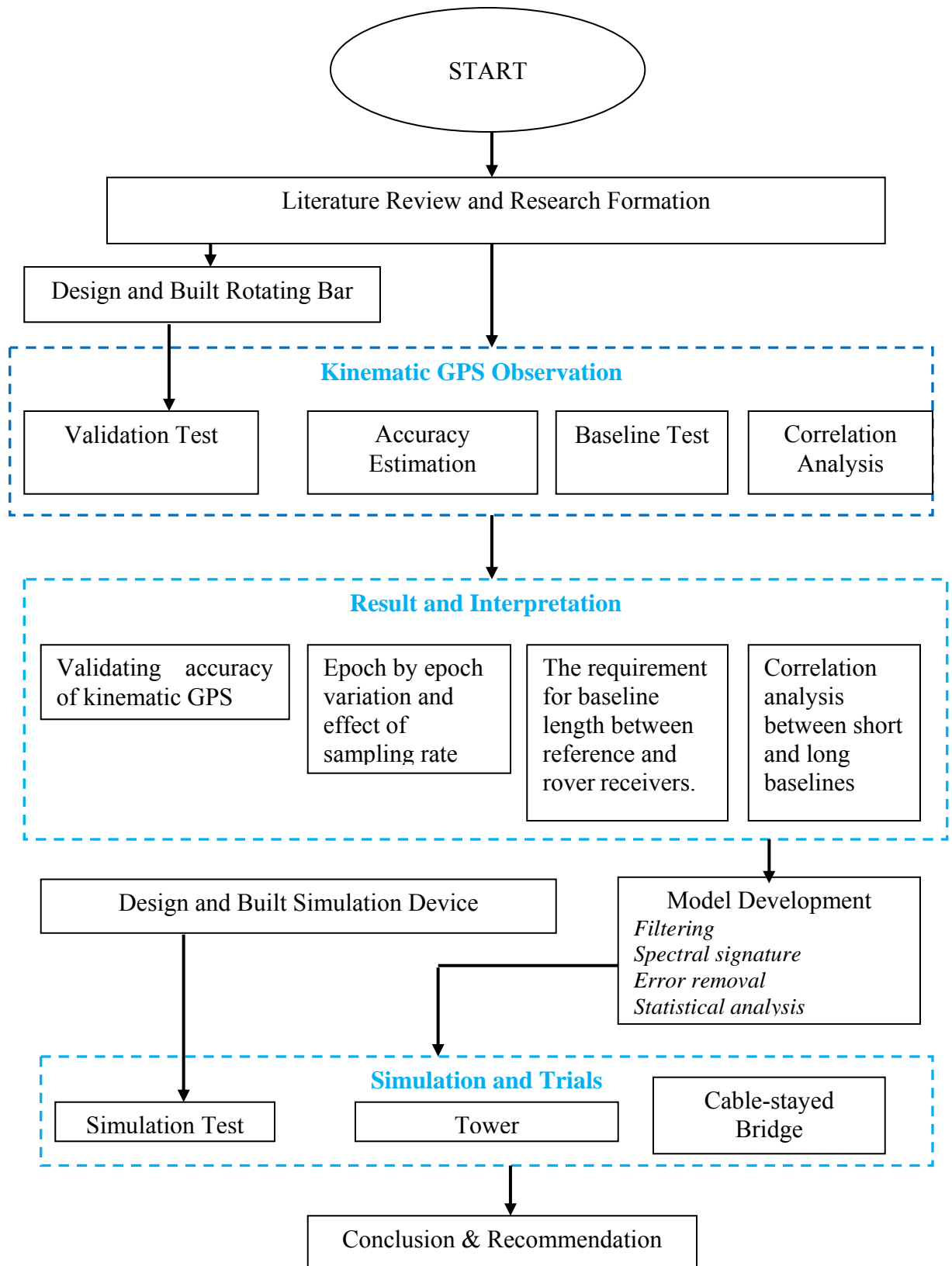


Figure 1.1: Research Methodology

1.5 Contribution of the Study

Dynamic monitoring of structures or structural health monitoring provides critical data for rapid condition assessment and damage detection in structures due to forces such as winds and traffic load and also catastrophic event such as earthquake. Consequently, many structural monitoring studies using geodetic and non-geodetic sensors, for determining and analysing different kinds of engineering structures such as high-rise buildings and bridges are implemented. Currently, GPS is a valuable geodetic sensor to track the changes in the dynamic characteristics of the structure and to detect damage after an extreme event. Research on GPS as a geodetic sensor for the above applications have been mentioned in many published articles such as to tall buildings ((Bashor, *et al.*, 2012; Yi, *et al.*, 2010a, 2010b) and bridges (Erdoğan and Güllal, 2009; Kaloop and Li, 2011). In this study, a few issues related to the use of GPS for structural monitoring have been dealt with and resulted to the contribution of the following:

Assessment on the GPS performance of dynamic mode has been performed in order to validate before its application in full scale. The harmonic movement were simulated by a rotating GPS receiver antenna and the recorded coordinates were compared with the real ones. The results satisfy the precision requirements expected for dynamic monitoring study.

The variations in the position of the receiver (rover) located on the monitored structure during the observation period have been established. These variations are not similar to the ones obtained from the receiver located on the free and clear sky nearby (base). This concludes that during the characterization of the accuracy, that structure distortions and any GPS errors are masked in the results obtained. Because the rover and base GPS receivers were close to each other, signals recorded by each one of them were affected by identical atmospheric effects, and hence the comparison of the recordings of the stable (base) receiver with those of the rover (moving) receiver permits to record the displacement history of the rover receiver. In any case it is proven that by eliminating these errors, the displacements suffered by this structure can be determined.

The spectral information gathered from the time series of the base receiver has been used to estimate the true variation of positions with respect to error free GPS solutions. A Fourier transform is performed on time series in order to obtain spectra. Using these spectra, a signal reconstruction was performed to the rover's time series. The signal reconstruction method used in this study is the inverse Fourier transform. Consequently a method based on a local regularity analysis for detecting and removing artefact signatures in noisy GPS signals being developed.

1.6 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into seven chapters and brief description of each chapter is given as follows.

Chapter 1 introduces the aim of the research by describing an overview of GPS applications in deformation monitoring. The aim and objectives of the research are then described with a particular methodology to fulfil the stated objectives.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature on the use GPS in deformation monitoring. A brief introduction to basic principles of GPS and its error sources is also presented. Two practical aspects of deformation monitoring, i.e. repeated and continuous are examined. Special attention was paid to continuous monitoring or specifically structural monitoring since this approach is of growing interest to date and form the basis of this research. Until recently, the efficiency of GPS to structural monitoring has been established, nevertheless the loading effect to the large engineering structures cannot be neglected and for this reason a special topic on this issue was elaborated in this chapter.

Chapter 3 introduces a theory on random processes. Description on random processes includes (1) types of random processes, (2) statistical properties, and (3) analysis. In addition, data filtering is also summarised. Finally the proposed processing strategy on the use of GPS for structural monitoring was presented. The goal is to

acknowledge their suitability and adaptability for data analysis discussed in subsequent chapters.

Chapter 4 describes various tests using kinematic GPS positioning technique in order to satisfy the aforementioned objectives. The practical and processing procedures are presented in detail. At the end, a new approach for GPS error reduction is proposed based on synthesis of the above tests and information reviewed in the previous chapter.

Chapter 5 presents the application of the methodology described in Chapter 4 to simulation experiment using a constructed device, which allows displacement along horizontal and vertical axes. Considering the spectral nature of data sets, a new data analysis strategy for continuous monitoring is developed, which embodies the findings from Chapter 4. Then the efficiency of the newly developed approach is demonstrated.

Building upon the materials presented in previous chapters, Chapter 6 presents the application of the technique to two examples of engineering structures subjected to wind and traffic loadings. The results confirm the efficiency of the technique for use in structural monitoring.

Finally, Chapter 7 summarises this thesis with conclusions drawn from the results and gives few recommendations for future developments.

Figure 1.2 summarized the organisation of this thesis.

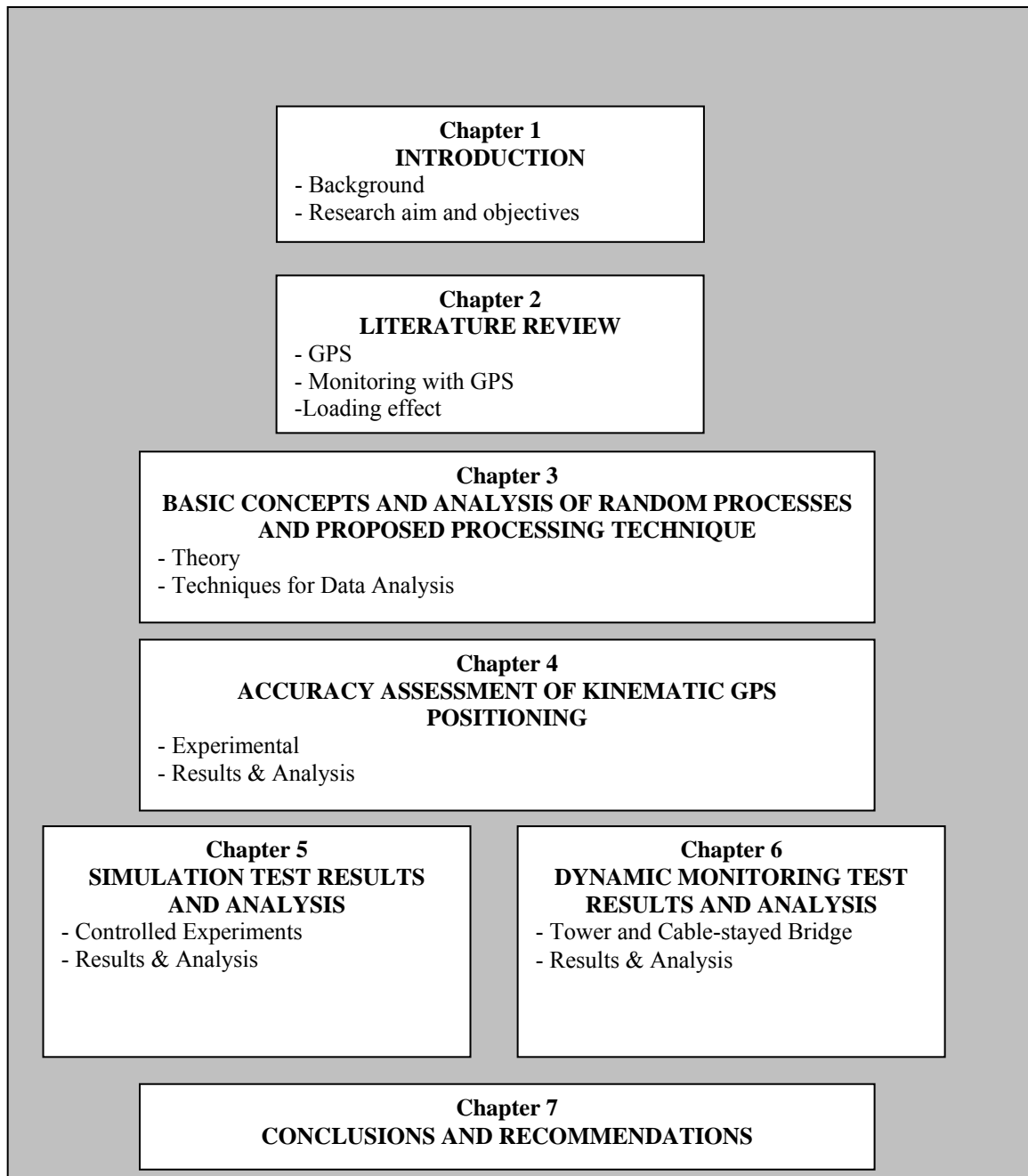


Figure 1.2: Outline of Thesis

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