



URBAN SUSTAINABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF  
*MAQASID AL-SHARIAH*: A STUDY ON MALAYSIAN  
URBAN INDICATORS NETWORK (MURNInet)

BY

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## ABSTRACT

The idea for sustainability in Malaysia had been incorporated in the nation's development plans since The Third Malaysia Plan (1976-1980) until the latest Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). To monitor the level of sustainability in particular urban area, the Federal Town and Country Planning Department initiated the MURNInet (Malaysian Urban Indicators Network) program in 2002. In 2005 the Guideline and Manual on MURNInet comprising 55 indicators within 11 sectors was launched to guide the 151 Local Authorities under the Ministry of Housing and Local Government to participate in this program. Thus, it is the aim of the research to study the incorporation of the sustainability concepts in the perspective of Islam into the present practices of urban sustainability in Malaysia. In so doing, Malaysian Urban Indicators Network (MURNInet) was studied within the context of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. In this regard, Imam al-Shatibi (d. 1388 CE) in his book; al-Muwafaqat explained *Maqasid al-Shariah* as the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage and wealth under the element of *Daruriyyat* (necessities) followed by *Hajjiyyat* (needs) and *Tahsiniyyat* (luxuries). This research engages mixed-method research methodologies involving content analysis, questionnaire survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Purposive sampling was adopted for this research consisting of Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam, Majlis Perbandaran Bentong and Perbadanan Putrajaya as well as their respective State Town Planning Departments based on their achievement of sustainable cities status in 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively. The research found that there was inappropriate basis/ foundation of the formulation of MURNInet due to lack of understanding on *Maqasid al-Shariah* consequently gave effect to the indicators itself. It is hoped that education and training on *Maqasid al-Shariah*, mutual consultation between Town Planner and Muslim jurists as well as full support and commitment from the relevant authority, the idea of *Maqasid al-Shariah* can be successfully embedded in present sustainability indicators towards achieving Islamic built environment.

## خلاصة البحث

تم إدراج فكرة الاستدامة في ماليزيا في خطط التنمية الدولية منذ خطة ماليزيا الثالث (1976-1980م) حتى آخر خطة ماليزيا العاشر (2011 - 2015م). لمراقبة مستوى الاستدامة في المناطق الحضرية، بدأ القسم الفدرالي لتخطيط المدن والريف برنامج مورني نيت (شبكة المؤشرات الحضرية الماليزية) في عام 2002م. وفي عام 2005م، قد أطلق التوجيه والدليل على مورني نيت يضم فيها 55 مؤشرا ضمن 11 قطاعا لتوجيه 151 سلطة محلية تحت إشراف وزارة الإسكان والحكومة المحلية لمشاركة في هذا البرنامج. وبالتالي، فإن هدف هذا البحث هو دراسة مفهوم الاستدامة من منظور الإسلام وإدماجه في الممارسات الحالية للاستدامة الحضرية في ماليزيا. لذلك درست شبكة المؤشرات الحضرية الماليزية في إطار مقاصد الشريعة. وبهذا الصدد، أوضح الإمام الشاطبي (المتوفى عام 1388م) في كتابه، الموافقات أن مقاصد الشريعة هو الحفاظ على الدين، والنفس، والعقل، والنسب، والمال باعتبارها المصالح من الضروريات، والحاجيات، والتحسينيات. استعمل هذا البحث منهجيات البحث مختلط الطرق التي تنطوي على تحليل المحتوى، والاستبيان، ومناقشات جماعية مركزة (FGD). اعتمد العينة العمدية في هذا البحث الذي تتكون من مجلس بندر رايا شاه عالم، ومجلس فريندرن بنتونج، وبربادان بوتراجايا، وكذلك قسم التخطيط للمدن والريف على تحقيق إنجازها من مكانة المدن المستدامة في عام 2008م، و2009م، و2010م على التوالي. وجد هذا البحث أن هناك أساس أو مبدئ صياغة مورني نيت مناسب بسبب قلة فهم مقاصد الشريعة والتي أثرت على المؤشرات. وتأمل أن التعليم والتدريب مقاصد الشريعة، وتشاور مشترك بين مخطط المدن وفقهاء المسلمين وكذلك الدعم الكامل والالتزام من قبل السلطات المعنية، يمكن فكرة مقاصد الشريعة أن تغرس بنجاح في مؤشرات الاستدامة الحالية نحو تحقيق البيئة العمرانية الإسلامية.

## APPROVAL PAGE

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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Nurul Aida Binti Salim

Signature.....

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A STUDY ON MALAYSIAN URBAN INDICATORS NETWORK (MURNInet)**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

et al.	(et alia) ; and others
FDTCP	The Federal Department of Town and Country Planning
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IIUM	International Islamic University Malaysia
MURNInet	Malaysian Urban Indicators Network
MURNInets	Malaysian Urban Rural National Indicators Network
NPP	National Physical Plan
NPP-2	National Physical Plan 2
NUP	National Urbanisation Policy
JPBD	Jabatan Perancangan Bandar dan Desa (Town and Country Planning Department)
JAKIM	Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia
MBSA	Majlis Bandaraya Shah Alam (Shah Alam City Council)
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him (for Prophet Muhammad)
SPSS	Statistic Package for Social Science



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Many may claim that urban sustainability indicators; Malaysian Urban Indicators Network (MURNInet, 2005) prepared by The Federal Town and Country Planning Department, Peninsular Malaysia have achieved a measure of success in determining the cities' performance and identifying the strength and the weaknesses of a city. However, are these true objectives of having urban sustainability indicators? Are the attainment of physical development and the beautification of the environment the highest goal of MURNInet?

There is in the Islamic civilization, Islam has managed to build the finest cities not only of their physical amenities but also their ability to build an integrated society. During the Umayyah and 'Abbasiyah period (661-1258 C.E) more than 80 new cities were established from Spain and North Africa right across the Arabian territories (Talhah, M., 1995). The purpose of building cities is best summed up in the words of Imam Idris I of Maghrib when he announced his intention of planning the city of Faz. He said,

I want to build a city where Allah is adored, where the Quran is read and where the *Shariah* is adhered to

From the above statement declared in 192H, Imam Idris I has provided planners with a clue as to what planning should be. Arguably, the provision in *al-Quran* and *al-Sunnah* encompasses every aspect of human life including the built environment in which suitable to any times, places and social changes. All of these elements have been mentioned in *al-Quran* and *al-Sunnah*, though in general, they can be used as a basis

for further interpretation in order to come out with man-made legislation which is required further process called *ijtihad*.

Malaysia was developed based on the principles of moderation (Wasatiyyah) (Utusan Online April 4, 2014). In April and July 2014, Malaysian government promotes the implementation of *Indeks Maqasid Syariah* with the aim to measure the commitment of the country in implementing Islamic law based on the five principles of *Maqasid al-Shariah* namely to protect the religion, life, mind, family integrity and property (Imam al-Shatibi, d. 1388 CE; Institut Wasatiyyah Malaysia, 2014; Abdullah Md. Zin, 2014).

With the implementation of *Indeks Maqasid Syariah* while having these two; MURNInet and *Maqasid al-Shariah*, it is timely to carry out the research as there are potential rooms to penetrate for the integration between MURNInet and *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Thus, taking into account the indicators of each sector of MURNInet, the study surveyed the level of understanding among selected local authorities for potential integration using a framework of *Maqasid al-Shariah*. Purposive sampling was adopted for this research by taking cities with sustainable city status which were placed on the first position for the year 2008, 2009 and 2010 namely Shah Alam, Bentong and Putrajaya (Gerbang MURNInets, 2011). In chapter one, basic queries of this research are explained like:

- a. What are the research problems?
- b. The goal and objectives of the research
- c. The scope and limitations of the research
- d. Significance of the research
- e. Key concepts and definitions
- f. The thesis structure

## 1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS

In recent years, sustainability is seen as one of the yardsticks for assessing quality of living in cities around the world (Oduwaye, 2009). Vancouver remains the most liveable city in the world to live (EIU, 2011; Human Development Index, 2011; World Bank, 2011). The selection was based on a combination of indicators related to the environment, health care, culture and infrastructure systems. Therefore, it is progressively required to operate successful tools to monitor sustainability of the towns towards achieving global sustainability targets (Briassoulis, 2001; Davidson, 1996). The Malaysian government from the very beginning had been genuinely concerned about emerging sustainability issues brought about by this urbanization process. That was why in 1998, a set of indicators known as the Malaysian Urban Indicators Network (MURNInet) System was formulated by the Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia to monitor sustainability of its urban centres. Essentially there are 11 sectors and 55 indicators in the MURNInet program. Then, after ten years (November 2012) of its implementation, a review was done and the department produced MURNInets (Malaysian Urban-Rural National Indicators Network on Sustainable Development) manual in April 2013. The earlier MURNInet indicators have now been re-categorized under six dimensions, 21 themes and 36 indicators.

Urban sustainability indicators are crucial for determining the liveability of cities, identifying the strength and the weaknesses of a town and suggesting measures and opportunities for enhancement of sustainability level of each city. Furthermore, the fundamental goal of the National Physical Plan 2 (NPP-2) is enhancing the cities' physical settings as it acts as a basis in building healthier surroundings to live in. This is supported by the ultimate goal of Malaysia, Vision 2020, which affirms the target of Malaysia to attain a developed country status by that time. The nation shall become

fully developed, sophisticated and civilized along with all the dimensions; economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally. For instance, according to *Laporan Bandar Sejahtera Putrajaya 2011*, Putrajaya at the stage of “Sejahtera” with the overall score 91.29% and among the objectives of having urban sustainability indicators are to identify the challenges of development in Putrajaya to meet a prosperous development targets and also, to draw attention of the needs of effort to strengthen capacity building relating to data collection and statistic.

Since April 2009, the old Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications were replaced with Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water. Enhancement of Green-Technology initiative in 10<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (MP) can be seen as a mechanism in expediting Malaysia’s economy and encourage sustainability. Basically, Green Technology focuses on four aspects which are environment, economy, energy and social. In terms of environment, the aim is to safeguard and lessen the environmental impact in the city. Besides that, a Green rating tool was practiced in Malaysia to assess sustainability of the buildings was introduced to the practitioners. It is called the Green Building Index (GBI).

Unfortunately available evidence indicates that technical solutions have not been resulting in satisfactory outcomes in addressing environmental issues (Ramzan, 1996). Thus, answering the question of “how should human behave towards natural environment remained most important” (Sarvestani and Shahvali, 2008). Therefore, it is timely that the challenges of sustainability in relation to the rate of urbanization and development need to be addressed in full swing and the goal towards sustainability should be taken seriously, not only by the governments but by Malaysians as a whole.

In fact, history of civilization since thousands of years ago acknowledged that Islam had already introduced the concept and importance of sustainability. The first

Islamic civilization which is represented by its civilization hub in Madinah had established this fact (Omer, 2009). The Quran and the *Sunnah* of Prophet Muhammad (*pbuh*) had stressed these as “a way of life” for all mankind. Allah had ordered that everyone on earth as Vicegerents (*Khalifah*) and they have the Creator-Human obligations to care for the environment against destructions and to maintain the sustainability of the earth. For the Muslims this becomes their *‘ibadah* (good deeds). The *Quran* and the prophet’s *Sunnah* (*pbuh*) provide clear guidelines and framework for the upkeep of the environment and other natural resources endowed upon them by God. This actually calls for strong spiritual meanings of life to provide for their physical welfares and needs on earth and towards peace in the world hereafter.

Hence, the objective of the Total Planning and Development Doctrine (JPBD, 2001) is indeed an effort towards securing sustainable developments for the population in urban centres as well as the rural areas. The overriding mission is to “Create a balance between physical development and human development and to emphasise all the spiritual and noble universal values for the sustainable progress of the Country”. This is because development does not only mean change (in the sense of economic and technological advancements) and quantitative growth (physical and environmental developments) but also involves the qualitative aspects in terms of the inner self—that is spiritual, moral and ethical of the individuals and the society. Therefore it is again stressed that in the Islamic perspective, the basic principle for developments is primarily based on the spiritual and physical needs of individuals on the environmental resources, they being creations of God (Hassan and Cajee, 2002 cited in Aburounia H., Sexton M., n.d).

Another notion is that the more one is exercised the Islamic beliefs in his every day practices, the better is one’s connection with the environment (Omer, 2004). An

active and sincere promotion of the spiritual harmonization of the individual, to meet its social and biological interests would help to find a balance between needs and wants among Muslim individuals. Indeed, Muslims are religiously bound to prosper the earth by their good deeds. As Islam covers the totality of human life, built environment is no exception. Reconciling Islam and built environment means putting together or translating Islamic principles in the utilization of the environment and its built environment. While the natural environment is confined to flora, fauna and vegetation, soil, air, water, other physical landforms, built environments include physical components or developments like buildings, structures, transportation networks, factories, human settlements, open spaces, infrastructures, social facilities, religious buildings and other institutions.

Meanwhile conventionally, the idea of sustainability had focussed mainly on social, economy and environment aspects as propagated by the Brundtland Report (1987). In fact, its famous definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the needs of the future generations” has become a cliché and well debated upon. Apparently aspects on religious affiliations and practices are somewhat silenced.

Due to the awareness of this incomprehensiveness of the concepts and objectives of sustainability this research had been inspired and triggered to be carried out. Thus, this study attempts to offer a blending and integration between the Islamic and the conventional concepts of sustainability through *Maqasid al-Shariah* by matching the extent the *Maqasid al-Shariah* ideologies *vis-a-vis* the Malaysian Urban Indicators Network (MURNInet) have been incorporated or are still lacking. This is important for the overall quality of human living because a research finding had concluded that the separation between worldly living and religion can be considered as

the main root of environmental crisis (Sarvestani and Shahvali, 2008). Admittedly, religions help to shape our attitude towards nature. The Islamic teaching helps to positively educate the society despite of their traditions or beliefs (Al-Jayyousi, 2001). Airport construction and infrastructure upgrading may produce numerous environmental effects, as a result of airborne particulate produced by aircraft, heavy equipment emissions, and noise pollution (Schiff, 2009). In order for the aviation system to continue spurring economic growth, innovative action and a sustainable approach that addresses mobility and environmental concerns must be achieved (Waitz et al., 2004; Walker and Baker, 2010). The continuing construction of new air transport nurtures serious concerns on the long-term sustainability of the industry; even currently, massive discussions are revealing that air transport is less contaminating than ground vehicles (Popescu et al., 2011).

### **1.3 RESEARCH GOAL**

To study the incorporation of sustainability concepts in Islam into the present practices of urban sustainability in Malaysia, with reference to Malaysian Urban Indicators Network (MURNInet) within a context of *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the study are:

- i. To appraise the present concepts and practices of urban sustainability in Malaysia in particular the MURNInet program.
- ii. To compile the Islamic principles relating sustainability within the context of *Maqasid al-Shariah*

- iii. To analyze the present practice of urban sustainability in particular the MURNInet program within a context of *Maqasid al-Shariah*
- iv. To make recommendations on the framework for the integration of MURNInet and *Maqasid al-Shariah*.

## **1.5 RESEARCH SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

The research started in September 2011. The data collection process had started since March 2012. At that time, the Federal Department of Town and Country Planning Peninsular Malaysia was revising the MURNInet program and the review of MURNInets was in the making and yet to be published and implemented. Therefore, this research had to focus on the year 2005 official document of MURNInet. Subsequently, MURNInets was officially launched by the Minister of Housing and Local Government Malaysia, on the 7<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 during the World Town Planning Day 2012 Celebrations and its Implementation Guideline published in April 2013.

Nonetheless this research can still be considered as a new area and pave a new era in the Malaysian planning practice because it offers a blending between the contemporary framework of sustainability and the Islamic principles. Regretfully though this work could have been more comprehensive and complete should the researcher explore more literature materials on the Islamic philosophies and teachings which are predominantly in Arabic, the researcher is not proficient in this language.

The respondents that were selected were people who are most involved one way or another with the MURNInet program. This is regardless of their religious and educational background. Suffice to say that, this research is using Purposive Sampling