



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***REVIVING TRUE ESSENCE OF PLURALISTIC VALUE IN ISLAMIC CITY
PLANNING CONCEPT ACCORDING TO MEDINA CHARTER***

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CITY PLANNING CONCEPT ACCORDING TO MEDINA CHARTER**

By

MYA SU SAN

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science**

November 2017

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DEDICATION

TO MY BELOVED PARENTS & FAMILY



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment
of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**REVIVING TRUE ESSENCE OF PLURALISTIC VALUE IN ISLAMIC CITY
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MYA SU SAN

November 2017

Chearman : Associate Professor LAr Nor Atiah Ismail, PhD
Faculty : Design and Architecture

When the greater part of Quran and Sunnah discuss how we could uplift the value of our being in every dimension, it is clear that Islamic guidance demands for the human excellence. Without a doubt, exemplary Islamic City is the goal we are aiming for. However in current times, very few countries such as that of Canada seems to be able to deal well with the different groups within a Nation where people of different background are favoured equally and even the newest member of the country is being welcomed by the community and given the same chances as the oldest member of the community despite of their background of ethnicity or religion. When communities around the globe have been struggling for cohesion and pluralism, this study attempts to analyse what are the Islamic values and solutions for the problem. However, there is a difference between 'Tradition' and the 'Traditionalism'. If we do not recognize that factor, sometimes we end up failing to capture the real essence of a tradition. While trying to dig up the scripture and history, we need to be careful in not becoming the traditionalists by bringing ourselves back to live in 600 A.D. Therefore, we should propose to put forth a new modern constitution derived from authentic traditional origins that will honour each and every citizen's private lives and under which they can enjoy the freedom to practice their faiths. The Medina Charter was prepared for the Medina City-State founded by Prophet Muhammad in 622 A.D. It was an agreement that was reached without war, fighting, violence, or compulsion; and all of its parties arrived at voluntarily due to their commitment to the shared principles. It is a Just Constitution which affirmed that everyone who was under its authority were cohesive, one, unified society with all of its citizens enjoying equal rights while having the same duties. But, despite its obvious importance, it has not gained much attention to be studied. The Objectives of the study are (i) To investigate the characteristics of Pluralism in Islamic City Planning (ii) To analyse the success of Medina Charter to a Pluralistic Islamic society (iii) To develop a framework on Pluralistic Islamic City. Transformative philosophical worldview will be adopted and a qualitative method will

be implemented in this study with case study on Medina and the content analysis method on Medina Charter. The study will results to a recommendation of the most appropriate planning methods to improve a Pluralistic Islamic City. According to the analysis, any state's pronouncement or policy which negate the pluralistic value is a threat in establishing a well-functioning State. We can contrive the findings into a framework of 5 major factors in shaping the Pluralistic Islamic City namely: Equality; Unity and Support; Fairness and Justice; Rights and Architecture. If these 5 categories were to be planned properly in accordance with the pluralistic values, we shall be able to revive the true essence of Islamic City.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

MENGHIDUPKAN SEMULA INTIPATI NILAI PLURALISTIK DALAM KONSEP PERANCANGAN BANDAR ISLAM BERDASARKAN PIAGAM MADINAH

Oleh

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Sebahagian besar Al-Quran dan Sunnah membincangkan nilai murni dalam setiap dimensi, dimana ia jelas menunjukkan panduan Islam menuntut kecemerlangan manusia. Tanpa ragu-ragu lagi, contoh Bandar Islam adalah matlamat yang ditujui. Bagaimanapun, dalam keadaan sekarang, terlampau sedikit negara, seperti Kanada, dapat berurusan baik dengan kumpulan yang berlainan pendapat tentang kesaksamaan dalam negara di mana mereka dari kumpulan yang berbeza. Bahkan ahli terbaru negara itu dialu-alukan oleh masyarakat dan diberi peluang yang sama seperti ahli yang tua walaupun terdapat perbezaan dari segi latar belakang dalam etnik dan agama. Apabila komuniti di seluruh dunia berjuang demi perpaduan dan pluralisme, kajian ini cuba menganalisa nilai dan penyelesaian Islam untuk masalah ini. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat perbezaan antara "Tradisi" dan "Tradisionalisme". Jika faktor tersebut tidak dikenalpasti, kita mungkin gagal untuk menangkap intipati sebenar tradisi. Sambil kita cuba menggali kitab suci dan sejarah, kita perlu berhati-hati untuk tidak menjadi kuno dengan membawa cara hidup di zaman 600 A.D. Oleh itu, kita harus mewujudkan satu perlembagaan moden baru yang berasal dari asal-usul tradisional sah yang menghormati setiap kehidupan peribadi rakyat, di mana mereka boleh menikmati kebebasan dan mengamalkan agama mereka. Piagam Madinah diadakan untuk Negara Madinah yang diasaskan oleh Nabi Muhammad SAW pada tahun 622 A.D. Ia adalah perjanjian dicapai tanpa perang, pertempuran, keganasan atau paksaan. Ia merupakan persetujuan adil yang menegas setiap orang yang berada di bawah kuasanya adalah bersatu padu, di dalam satu masyarakat yang bekerjasama dengan semua warganegara yang menikmati hak yang sama dan juga memiliki tugas yang sama. Tetapi, walaupun kepentingannya jelas, ia tidak mendapat perhatian untuk dikaji lebih lanjut. Objektif kajian ini adalah (i) Untuk memahami ciri-ciri Pluralisme dalam Perancangan Bandar Islam (ii) Menyiasat kejayaan Piagam Madinah kepada masyarakat Islam Pluralistik dan (iii) Membangunkan rangka kerja di Bandar Islam Pluralistik. Pemikiran falsafah transformatif akan diterima pakai dan kaedah kualitatif dilaksanakan untuk kajian ini

bersama kajian kes mengenai Madinah dan kaedah analisis kandungan Piagam Madinah. Kajian ini akan menghasilkan cadangan kaedah perancangan yang paling sesuai untuk memperbaiki Masyarakat Islam Pluralis yang boleh diterima pakai di Putrajaya atau di bandar Islam yang lain. Menurut analisis, mana-mana pernyataan atau dasar negara yang menafikan nilai pluralistik adalah ancaman dalam menubuhkan Bandar Islam yang berfungsi dengan baik. Penemuan-penemuan ini dapat diteruskan dengan menjadikannya rangka kerja 5 faktor utama dalam membentuk Bandar Islam Pluralistik iaitu: Kesaksamaan; Perpaduan dan Sokongan; Keadilan dan Kebenaran; Hak dan Senibina. Sekiranya 5 kategori ini dirancang dengan betul mengikut nilai-nilai pluralistik, sebuah Bandar Islam sebenar mampu dihidupkan kembali.



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview of the Study

Islam, well described in the Holy Quran, is the most peaceful religion in the world and the solution for all tribulations. However, the current Islamic civilization however do not seem to reflect its descriptions. As a result of violent threats, colossal damages, and conflicts occurring around the Muslim world, more and more misunderstandings and questions with the peaceful nature of Islam itself has been raised. Is it all just misunderstandings? Or what went wrong in understanding the purest and finest teachings that have ever existed? The term Phobia is being described in many medical terminology as an unreasonable and irrational fear of something. It is considered a mental disorder and effects mostly to the individual himself who is suffering. But the case of Islamophobia certainly is different. The outcry reactions of it apply to the broader development of cultural racism and discriminations in the society resulting in trauma and various distresses to many Muslim families across the globe. Islam has been cast as a political problem in many parts of the world and labelled by media as a threat. The socioeconomic difficulties in a society that Muslims face is immense. When terrorism and extremism take place along with the responses towards Islamophobia, the pursuit of peace within the society seems to flies further away. History states otherwise, indeed. Muslims have always been the best neighbours as citizens and the best guardians as rulers. While Secularism and Democracy is the favoured policies of current world, can Islam go along with them in this Islamophobic era? In the process of reviving the true Islamic essence, Pluralism plays a big role. This study discuss about Pluralistic aspect of Islamic Planning and how it can help in reviving the true essence of Islam in community building and town planning.

Why is Islamic City-Planning a good choice as a planning and how could it effect the Pluralistic Society? In contrary to what people assume it to be as a mere planning method which favours Muslims and Islamic rulings over of other groups of people, it is something benefits to the whole society compared to any other contemporary methods. For instance to build an Islamic city, there are many Islamic legal rulings to be considering such as Eco-centrist Rule, Abstaining from overconsumption, Rule for Preservation of an optimized use of Natural Resources, Pluralism and many more. According to (Jamalinezhad, Talakesh, & Soltani, 2012), this is to guarantee and respect the rights of the citizens in society. The Islamic city has always been a sustainable city which is constructed in line with the natural forces making optimized use of wind, water, light, or any other natural resources available. It also considers highly on geographical conditions and climate influence to ease up the lives of its citizens.

After we over-consumed the global resources, contemporary planners are starting to realized and heading back towards minimalistic and sustainable or green cities where we discuss about utilization of renewable energy resources, green architecture, green spaces, green transportation, or building self-sufficient housing and so on. In reality, there already are many valuable guidelines in the Islamic literature addressed about these issues centuries ago. For example, the Prophet said, 'Protect the earth, water, etc. as if they were your mother' which according to (Alavian et al, 2008: 395), always played a big role in planning Islamic Cities. (Karin, 1938:311) claimed that in traditional Islamic cities, 'Muslims share three things: water, range and fire'. Much more of the prophetic accounts and Islamic values suggest a stable development of the society. We just have to revive them according to the requirements of the modern society.

During the RIS convention interview in Kuala Lumpur with one of the most recognizable contemporary Islamic Theologian Dr. Umar Faruq on 'Islamic City', he answered "Shariah (Islamic legal ruling) produced beautiful societies both inwardly and outwardly. Traditional Islamic societies are all beautiful and rich in skill laboring as well" (Abd-Allah, 2017). But unfortunately, modern researchers on Islamic City seems to focus more on outward appearances of the Islamic City rather than the inward true essence of what really made the Islamic Cities successful.

On the other hand, with the vast diversity of religious practices such as Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Confucians, Taoists and many other ethnic beliefs, ASEAN is arguably the most religious diverse organization in the world. Pluralism, religious tolerance and balance among different ethnic groups are cherished and celebrated in the region. Considering Muslims being in the region more than half of population, and this specific Islamic society being ahead of time compared to the rest of the present Muslim civilization; the role of Islam in the area is significant in the current Global Islamic Reform. This study also discusses why Islamic community in ASEAN plays an important role in reviving true Islamic essence especially in the content of Pluralism.

Discord and conflict are not Islamic values according to renowned specialist in all four traditional Sunni schools Shaykh (Bayyah, 2016), even though some people attempt to conceal them with a veneer of religiosity. As for Islamic principles and values, they teach that engendering trust and love are the foundation of cultivating a society. Since 1400 years ago in early days of Islam, a Just Constitution was developed which later known as 'Constitution of Media' or simply 'The Medina Charter'. This is a document from Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) (governing the relations) in alliance with the Believers, Jews and the Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib. The Charter of Medina includes the most central values and is, in fact, an illustration of them. A major conference was held in Marrakesh, in the Kingdom of Morocco early this year of 2016. (Bayyah, 2016) along with a great number of Muftis, and Religious Scholars from different schools of thought, Ministers, and Academics from many backgrounds of more than 100 countries where Islam is predominant participated in this conference. They called upon the other scholars of the world to initiate more on the Pluralistic

aspect of the Just Islamic Cities. A qualitative method will be implemented in this study with content analysis method. The study will results to a recommendation of the most appropriate planning methods to improve Pluralist Islamic Societies.

1.2 Research Issues and Problem

Lack of study on the Medina Charter as a more applicable Islamic City Planning Method

According to (Pew Research Center, 2011), there were around 49 Muslim-majority countries in the world. Of 1.5 billion adherents currently, 62% of the world's Muslims are living in South and Southeast Asia. It would be very wrong if we were to assume that the future of Islam only lies in Middle-East. The stories of Islamic Nations from South Asia, South-East Asia; and Africa would add a lot more chapters in the journey of Islam. With the immense development within latest decades, countries like Turkey, Malaysia or Indonesia will be the leading countries setting modern Islamic ideals soon enough because of their dedication to Pluralism while respecting the traditional values of Islam. If Quran truly offers the timeless guidance and Sunnah (the way of Prophet Muhammad) is the truthful way, the research on how to improve the planning methods according to Islamic Principles would be of immense help to Malaysia. Without a doubt Islamic City is the goal we are aiming. But how are we going to deal with Pluralism in our planning as an exemplary Islamic Nation? Tourism slogan of Malaysia states "Malaysia, Truly Asia". It is the country which cherish diversity and many different groups live along peacefully. Looking back at Malacca, the first glorious capital had Chinese, Indian, Malay, Portuguese, Dutch, English and many more groups live alongside with mosques, churches and temples next to each other comfortably. The capital that the Malaysians are still very proud of and conserving its identity. And yet gradually, it is losing its essence from the accomplishments once had. Putrajaya, the new administrative capital built with the middle-eastern language, can be a witness to the statement. Why is a tropical country with rich cultural backgrounds trying to force itself into a land in 1001 Arabian Nights story tales, (Rasdi, 2012) asked? If Islamic Identity is what we are seeking, the value-centred approach is what a nation require not the replacement of middle-eastern architecture to the traditional one.

Lack of focus on Pluralism in Islamic City Planning

There is an urgent need to enhance the Islamic Planning Principles to improve the functions of an Islamic Pluralist Society.

Pluralism is not a newly invented notion and modern theory but rather a revival of which Islam has already cherished and recognized. The Constitution known as Medina Charter was developed in Islam by Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) since 1400 years ago. This document stated the unity of the society in terms of freedom of religion and religious Pluralism. Regardless of its obvious importance, it has not received much attention to be studied. There is an urgent need to study details of this Charter where

multi-religious society lived under Islamic rule peacefully.

1.3 Research Questions

This research concentrates on reviving the true Islamic planning principles taught by Prophet Muhammad and develop contemporary Islamic cities into a better quality cities without harming the peaceful equilibrium of a pluralistic society. Subsequently, this research is going to answer the following questions:

- What are the characteristics of Pluralism in Islamic City planning?
- How can a Pluralistic Islamic society be a successful and peaceful society?
- How to develop better and more appropriate planning framework for the Pluralistic Societies while reviving the true essence of Pluralism?

1.4 Research Objectives

Being one of the major branches of global Islamic civilization, the identity of Malay-Islamic values plays a significant role in 21st century. With ASEAN arguably the most religious diverse organization in the world, and with Malaysia representing the three most diverse racial and religious societies; pluralism, religious tolerance and balance among different ethnic groups are cherished and celebrated in the region. Today, many parts of the Muslim world are in chaos and conflicts. Malaysia is one of the few peaceful and successful predominantly Muslim state in the world; and it holds a great future in reviving the true essence of genuine Islamic Principles.

This study will results to a recommendation of the most appropriate planning methods to improve a modern pluralist society. Extended results are anticipated to ease the tensions between the diverse groups and races dwelling in the country; to set a better standard in building the nation's new cities such as iconic administrative capital Putrajaya, and to improve the peaceful equilibrium of the community as well as the current Islamic Civilization. Objectives to address the research questions have been sorted through following sections:

1. To investigate the characteristics of Pluralism in Islamic City Planning
2. To analyse the success of Medina Charter to a Pluralistic Islamic society
3. To develop a framework on Pluralistic Islamic City

1.5 Significance of the Study

The purpose of this research is to develop the better and more appropriate planning framework for a more successful Islamic Pluralistic Society. This study will also help in reviving the true essence of value-centred Islamic City Planning to the modern

Islamic society which will also results in having better relationships among different groups within the society and create the peaceful equilibrium. Since it focus on reviving one of the most important documents of Islamic history, the Medina Charter, it will immensely help on our modern day Islamic approaches towards town planning and constitution.

1.6 Research Scope

The research process begins with establishing the background of the research through identification of issues and formulation of the objectives of the research based on the literature review, case study on Medina Charter and content analysis data for the issues relevant to the research study. The scope and limitation of the research will remain the analysis on Prophet Muhammad's concepts in dealing with pluralistic society of Medina, The Medina Charter. The areas to be analysed include the first Hijrah city Medina (formerly known as Yathrib), its multi-religious and multi-ethnic society where they lived peacefully under the leadership of Prophet and the Muslims. This study also aim to be able to refer on for the future town planning principles of Malaysia. Malaysia being one of the rising Muslim predominant country, Islamic principles are applied in many sectors of the Nation building. The Pluralistic aspects of the Islamic City Planning will be useful to Malaysia profoundly.

1.7 Thesis Structure

This thesis contains five chapters. Chapter one gives a brief background of the study along with its problem statement as well as objectives. Chapter two presents an overview of the documented literature and related knowledge. The following chapter describes the research method and sampling strategies including data collection and analysis plan. Chapter four shows the analysis output and the obtained data explanations which will state 'why revival of Medina Charter' is important in Islamic City Planning. The final chapter will discuss the Framework developed from the study, conclusion, recommendations and directions for the future studies.

Note: Several chapters in this thesis discussed the social problems of Muslim communities from Islamophobia to Extremism and Terrorism. Not to conclude this as being distracted from the main subject itself, but rather those factors influence a great deal on how and why we should favour Pluralism in contemporary Islamic city planning.

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