Contemporary Research in Urban Planning



Mariana Mohamed Osman Alias Abdullah Azila Ahmad Sarkawi Rustam Khairi Zahari



IIUM PRESS

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

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Published by: IIUM Press International Islamic University Malaysia

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Contemporary Research in Urban Planning
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ISBN: 978-967-418-036-2

Printed by: IIUM PRINTING SDN.BHD. No. 1, Jalan Industri Batu Caves 1/3 Taman Perindustrian Batu Caves Batu Caves Centre Point 68100 Batu Caves Selangor Darul Ehsan

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CHAPTER 6

TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC CITIES: LESSONS LEARNT

Azila Ahmad Sarkawi¹ & Sharifah Fadilawaty²

INTRODUCTION

Islam is a perfect and comprehensive religion. It is not applied only in laws but it is a way of life (Al-Mulhin, Mohammed Ali, 1993). As a comprehensive religion, Islam is compatible with any time or place. It is known as the urban religion which promotes and contributes significantly to the evolution of human civilization and urbanization (Rabah Soud, 2002; Hisham Mortada, 2004). Urban life of Islam manifested in its law is applicable to resolve society issues. The laws are reflected in the pillars of Islam among them are prayer, fasting, zakat and pilgrimage.

One of the significant manifestations of Islamic civilization and urbanization is the existence of Islamic cities in the 13th and 14th centuries in the era known as the 'Golden Age of Islamic Cities' (Muaza Y. Soud et al.2010). Around the year 288/900, the world witnessed the maturity era of the Islamic civilization development which continues until the following decade. However, it began to collapse in the year 1337/1918 when it was under the Ottoman empire (Besim Selim Hakim, 1986).

Islamic faith was reflected in the city planning where it represents the Muslim lives and religious practices. The urban morphology concerned on the layout, form and function of the city to meet and satisfy the inhabitants' need (Al-Mulhin,, 1993; Muazaz Y.Soud et al, 2010; and Mohamad Mahdi Shabani, 2011).

THE DEFINITION OF ISLAMIC CITIES

Many authors agree that the definition of Islamic city was inspired by the orientalist in the early 1920s, which assumed that Islam was the main factor forming the Muslim way of life, especially from cultural aspects (see Al-Mulhin, 1993; Muaza Y. Soud et al.,2010; and Besim Selim Hakim, 1986). This was reflected through the existence and development of cities, which has a strong local identity where the settlement and building were reflected from specific culture as Islam began to absorb and adapt with regional cultural characteristics.

Akeel Noori (2009) suggests that viewed from a different perspective, the Islamic city can be described as a city of faith that is based on the concept of tauhid (monotheism), rububiyah

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