

Readings in Contemporary Construction Technology and Management

Muhammad Abu Eusuf



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THE CONCEPTS OF MAN AND THE ENVIRONMENT IN ISLAM: IMPLICATIONS FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I have identified and briefly examined two Islamic concepts which constitute the nucleus of the conceptual framework for sustainability in Islamic architecture. The two concepts are: 1) man as the vicegerent (*khalifah*) on earth, and 2) natural environment as both a field and means for man's vicegerency mission. Central to the paper are the following themes: 1) the meaning and significance of Islamic architecture; 2) the position and role of man on earth; 3) peaceful and accountable (sustainable) ~~coexistence~~ with the environment; and 4) the implications of the Islamic concepts of man and the environment for sustainability in Islamic architecture. The paper aims to increase awareness, both of the professionals and general public, as to the importance of the theme of sustainability in Islamic architecture by expounding the core of the conceptual basis for the same. The paper presents some general principles and ideas around which a comprehensive theory on sustainability in Islamic architecture, in line with the requirements of the Islamic worldview while fully conforming to the dictates of different circumstances, environments and cultures, can be developed today. The nature of the paper: its content, ~~methodology~~ and conclusions, is a conceptual and philosophical rather than an empirical one. Exploring the mechanisms that translate the issues raised in the paper into tangible reality is beyond the scope of the paper.

Keywords: Islamic Architecture, Sustainability, Islam, Man as the Vicegerent on Earth, Environment