

THE GREEN CULTURE OF ISLAM

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ISLAMIC VIEWPOINTS ON SUSTAINABILITY OF GREENSPACE

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ABSTRACT

Nature is a substantial entity that interacts and impacts human life. This study defines nature as the non-built areas consisting of greenspace and vegetation. This chapter reviews the Islamic views on man's relationship with nature. It focuses on significances of nature and the Islamic concepts underpinning man's behavioural-based ethical conducts towards nature. The understanding of the concepts can act as guidelines to manage, administer and sustain greenspace and vegetation particularly in urban settings. Reviews on Islamic environmental ethics and studies on benefits of greenspace were content analyzed. This exploration is significant in light of the current challenges in managing the crucial natural resources particularly in urban areas. Islamic views are relevant nowadays in which the concepts are parallel with the needs to understand and aware that man's actions towards the environment and impacts to them, e.g. urban environmental crisis are due to their own failure as trustees. In short, humans' actions are the index either they are successful or fail to manage nature. In addition, the realization on the good care of nature will benefit man, e.g. for the promotion of health of urban populations.

Keywords: nature, Islamic concepts, greenspace, attitude, relationship

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores Islamic views on man's relationship with nature. It focuses on the significance of nature to man in general, and discusses concepts on behavioural-based conducts towards nature and how this can be translated into the context of urban settings. In relation to this, the understanding on the importance of nature and the Islamic concepts of positive ethical conducts can be guidelines to manage, conserve and sustain nature especially in urban environment. The contents of the chapter are based on various literatures on Islamic environmental ethics and current researches on benefits of nature in urban areas. The importance to understand the concepts of behavioural-based conducts in Islam is parallel with the needs of greenspace in urban areas and realization that nature is vital for urban places mainly for the promotion of health of urban-dwelling individuals and for the whole urban populations.

For the purpose of this chapter, nature is defined as the non-built areas consisting of greenspace and vegetation. This includes the spectrum of green habitats consisting of predominantly wilderness areas, semi-natural areas, managed parks, gardens, designed greenspace, scattered vegetated pocket and incidental spaces. In the context of urban settings, a large portion of nature consists of amenity greenspace such as public parks, neighbourhood open spaces and incidental open spaces. The rest of green areas include semi-natural areas such as forest reserves and undeveloped lands. The nature in urban settings provides the most ready access to nature for many urban-dwelling individuals (Maller et al., 2005).