

Islam as an urban religion



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Islam is generally described as an urban religion with main characteristics. In his article, Nezar outlines the physical characteristics of a typical Muslim city. He explains that the major characteristic of a typical Muslim city is the inward orientation in which there is a mosque and bazaar market at the center. It also has a circular form of network with narrow and irregular streets which leads to the outskirts of citadel as well as residential areas. According to Nezar there are features that are stereotypic of Islamic cities. These include a Central mosque, Baths and neighborhood, and market and bazzare in part clean and near to religious worships. In this article, William Marcia describes that a typical Islamic cities must have a nearby market with a series of public baths. This article explains that the concept of a typical Muslim city can only be understood in the context of earlier scholars who draws from the medieval times. The scholars amalgamated the modern methodological approaches with the historical events to come with a stereotype of Muslim city.

Anthony D. King brings into light the relationship between the ancient colonial cities and the contemporary cities.

These articles begin by asking question regarding the origin of the contemporary cities and the influence of the historical and colonial periods in shaping the current cities. They conclude that the current status many cities in the contemporary world draw a lot from pre-historic times. King asserts the colonial urbanization and cities formed the foundation for the development of the current cities.

In *Cities and Caliphs: on the Genesis of Arab Muslim Urbanism*, it is evident that Muslim towns are characterized by segregation within the lines of tribes, ethnicity and occupation. However, in *Global Cities: Post-Imperialism and the Internationalization of London*, Kings clearly brings out how intercultural mingling has led to growth of modern towns. There was evident transformation in the environment, politically, social, cultural, economically as well as cognitively. The transformation occurred as a result of colonization, modernization, and globalization. The social life of the Muslim society is what shaped the typical Muslim city.

In *Global Cities: Post-Imperialism and the Internationalization of London*, Kings compares world cities and colonial cities. He seeks to explain how the world cities have been shaped by colonial cities. He outlines both cities are products of external factors and not internal factors. This is contrary to the Muslim society whose cities are shaped the social life of Muslim society. In other words, various sectors of the modern cities are internationally oriented and not internally influenced as is the case with the Muslim Cities. The external influence has made the cities to be a par in regard to ideological political and cultural transmission which has led to cultural as well as economic change.

The two articles mirrored both Islamic cities and moderns cities as major transport and communication nodes. However, Muslim cities weere not defined with regard to a particular socio economic body or political system but rather they were defined as societies with segregated powers to the small groups. This kind of system in Muslim urban center gave more powers the subcomponents of the society as well as the overall government. The

leaders of the small groups included religious leaders, urban commoners, military elites, and local merchants and notables. The influence of Muslim society was from within its subcomponents of the society. However, makes it plain from his article that the modern city is externally or internationally influenced.

The form of Muslim city was as result of the influence of their religious and spiritual life. The article reveals that the Muslim cities have been shaped by Muslim laws. The urban building disputes were resolved in their courts. This implies that their religious life is central in all their undertakings. Kings, on the other hand, acknowledges how the modern world has undergone transformation as a result of merging of various ethnic groups, races, and political groups. This explains the reason why all the cities in the Arab and Islamic world were inhabited by Muslims who shared common religious beliefs and therefore Sharia Law would be easily applied in the process of building.

In his article, Nezar outlines that a typical Muslim city is defined using one factors which Islamic law. However, King's article stipulates that the modern city has undergone international influence from various factors ranging from political, economical, cultural as well as social.