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Fossil Fuel Subsidies in the Sustainable Urban Transport Agenda: A Maqaṣid al-Shari'ah Approach

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ABSTRACT

Background: Urban transport systems in many Muslim-majority countries face persistent challenges from rapid motorization, underinvestment in public transport, and long-standing fossil fuel subsidies. Although politically popular, these subsidies distort price signals, encourage excessive private vehicle use, and contribute to congestion, air pollution, public health risks, and limited fiscal space for sustainable mobility investments.
Method: This qualitative conceptual study reviewed Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic ethics, fossil fuel subsidy literature, transport externalities, and sustainable urban transport scholarship. It applies the higher objectives of Islamic law (maqasid al-shariah), public interest (maslahah), stewardship (khilafah), and the legal maxim of harm prevention (la darar wa la diror) to evaluate fossil fuel subsidies and sustainable urban transport from an Islamic ethical policy perspective.
Results: Fossil fuel subsidies are found to generate ethical and socio-policy concerns when they encourage excessive private vehicle use, intensify negative transport externalities, and constrain public transport investment. Empirical evidence shows that fuel demand is price-inelastic but income-responsive, indicating that price reform alone is insufficient without complementary public transport investment. From an Islamic ethical perspective, these effects may undermine the protection of life (hifz al-nafs), wealth (hifz al-mal), intellect (hifz al-'aql), posterity (hifz al-nasl), and environmental stewardship (hifz al-din).
Conclusion: Sustainable urban transport reflects harm prevention, public interest, moderation, and responsible stewardship more effectively than continued fossil fuel subsidies. Gradual subsidy reform, internalization of transport externalities, and reinvestment in public transport are ethically justified and practically necessary for sustainable mobility transitions in Muslim-majority urban contexts.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of Maqasid al-Shariah, the higher objective of Islamic law, provides a relevant ethical framework for linking sustainable urban development with public welfare, social justice, environmental responsibility, and stewardship. Tumiran (2024, pp. 109-113) highlights the conceptual overlap between low-carbon city principles and Maqasid al-Shariah, which can be evaluated as an Islamic ethical-policy domain and not merely as a technical infrastructure. In Indonesia and other Muslim-majority countries, it may contribute to fulfilling maqasid al-shariah when it promotes maṣlaḥah (public welfare), equitable access, environmental quality, resource stewardship, and harm prevention (dar' al-mafsadah).

However, sustainable mobility transitions remain difficult when fossil fuel prices are heavily subsidized, as such subsidies reinforce dependence on private motorized transport and constrain fiscal space for public transport investment. ITDP Indonesia (2022, pp. 1-2) recommend reallocating fuel subsidies to existing and expanded public transport systems, while Indonesia's Updated NDC states that fossil fuel subsidy reform can create fiscal space for infrastructure, renewable energy projects, and public transport (Republic of Indonesia, 2021, p. 16). Although politically sensitive because they are perceived as instruments of household relief and economic stability, large-scale consumption subsidies distort price signals, reduce the perceived cost of private motorized travel, encourage the overconsumption of fossil fuels, constrain fiscal space, and delay cleaner mobility transitions. The IMF estimates reported by Black (2023, Annex II, p. 28) show that explicit fossil fuel subsidies in 2022 are particularly high in Saudi Arabia (13.8% of GDP), Iran (10.5%), Indonesia (6.2%), and Türkiye (5.9%). By comparison, explicit subsidies were lower as a share of GDP in selected non-Muslim-majority emerging economies, including Vietnam (1.7%), China (1.5%), and India (1.0%). These figures indicate that fossil fuel underpricing imposes a substantial fiscal burden, especially in several Muslim-majority economies, potentially limiting fiscal space for sustainable urban transport investment.

Despite the broad recognition that sustainable urban transport is essential for reducing congestion, air and noise pollution, public health risks, spatial inequality, limited public space, and road accidents, fossil fuel subsidies continue to reduce the relative costs of private vehicle use. McRae (1994, p. 148) shows that motor gasoline demand in developing Asian countries is generally price inelastic and income responsive. Individual-country estimates report short-run price elasticities ranging from -0.03 to -0.50, including Indonesia (-0.197), Malaysia (-0.125), and Thailand (-0.304). Pooled estimates further indicate that low-income Asian countries are less price responsive than middle-income countries, while income elasticities are generally higher. These findings suggest that fuel price reform alone is unlikely to achieve a substantial modal shift without complementary investments in sustainable transport systems. Within a maqasid al-shariah framework, this evidence raises a critical ethical policy question: whether subsidies that sustain congestion, pollution, road fatalities, and fiscal inefficiency are compatible with maṣlaḥah, ḥifẓ al-nafs, khilafah, israf, and harm prevention, or whether public transport should be normatively prioritized as a more ethically defensible pathway to public welfare.

METHOD

This study adopts a conceptual-normative research design using an Islamic policy analysis. Rather than testing empirical hypotheses or estimating causal relationships, the paper develops an ethical-policy framework to assess fossil fuel subsidies and sustainable urban transport in Muslim-majority urban contexts. The analysis was based on a structured review of secondary sources, including academic literature, Islamic jurisprudential references, and policy reports related to fossil fuel subsidies, transport externalities, sustainable urban transport, and Islamic public welfare.

The analytical framework is built around the five higher objectives of maqaṣid al-shari'ah: protection of religion (ḥifẓ al-din), life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), wealth (ḥifẓ al-mal), and posterity (ḥifẓ al-nasl). Islamic legal ethical principles complement these objectives, including maṣlaḥah, mafsadah, la ḍarar wa lā ḍirar, al-ḍarar yuzal, khilafah, amanah, 'adl, and israf. Data analysis was conducted through qualitative conceptual analysis and normative evaluation, linking transport policy mechanisms with maqaṣid-based ethical criteria. The result is an integrated conceptual framework for assessing the ethical legitimacy of fossil fuel subsidies and a normative case for sustainable urban transport.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Fossil fuel subsidies and transport externalities

Numerous studies have shown that fuel subsidies depress fuel prices, incentivize private vehicle use, and suppress demand for public transport. They contribute to congestion, air pollution, CO_2 emissions, and public health burdens, which disproportionately affect the urban poor. These distortions weaken fiscal capacity and reduce investment in transport infrastructure.

1. Fossil fuel demand and subsidy

Evidence from the ISDB (2018), pp. vii, 7-8) indicates that rapid urbanization, rising income, and expanding vehicle ownership are important drivers of transport demand in many developing and Muslim-majority countries. This pattern is consistent with the findings of McRae (1994, p. 148) that gasoline demand in developing Asian countries is income-responsive and price inelastic. Such inelasticity suggests that fuel is treated as a necessity; therefore, price increases or subsidy reductions alone produce only modest reductions in demand. Consequently, sustainable mobility transitions require not only fuel price reform but also complementary investments in public transport, non-motorized mobility, and demand-management policies.

Country-level evidence from China, Iran, Indonesia, and Turkiye suggests that fuel demand in emerging economies is generally price inelastic but income-responsive. Lin & Zeng (2013, pp. 1-2) report China's gasoline price elasticity at -0.497 to -0.196 and income elasticity at 1.01-1.05 (p. 1). Ghoddusi et al. (2022, pp. 1, 14) find Iran's gasoline price elasticity to be around -0.202 in the short and intermediate run and -0.197 in the long run. Sa'ad (2009, p. 4394) estimates Indonesia's long-run income elasticity at 0.86-0.88, compared with a price responsiveness of only 0.15-0.16–magnitude. Mikayilov et al. (2020, pp. 9-11) similarly estimate Turkiye's long-run gasoline income and price elasticities at 0.25 and -0.27, respectively, while finding no short-run response to income or price changes. Taken together, these elasticity findings suggest that fuel demand in emerging economies is often more strongly associated with income growth, urbanization, and motorization than price changes alone. This does not imply that fuel pricing reform is irrelevant, but that it is unlikely to be sufficient as a standalone instrument. Therefore, the evidence provides an important basis for examining whether fossil fuel subsidies, when they sustain private vehicle dependence and transport externalities, should also be evaluated through an Islamic ethical-policy framework.

Evidence from advanced economies provides useful comparisons. Brons et al. (2008, pp. 13-14, 17-20) find that gasoline demand is generally price-inelastic, with an estimated mean price elasticity of about -0.53, and that studies from the United States, Canada, and Australia show lower price sensitivity, primarily because car ownership is less responsive to fuel price changes. While Brons et al. (2008, pp. 19-20) attribute lower price sensitivity in the United States, Canada, and Australia, mainly to limited car ownership responses and strong automobile dependence, the broader transport literature also links car-dependent fuel demand to spatial dispersion, relatively low fuel costs, and limited availability of competitive public transport alternatives.

Beyond demand-side elasticity, the persistence of fossil fuel subsidies also reflects political-economic considerations. In many developing and Muslim-majority countries, low fuel prices have historically been justified as instruments of household relief, economic stability, and protection against volatile global energy prices. This rationale is particularly salient in countries facing broader energy-access challenges, such as Nigeria, where rising energy demand, inadequate supply, and frequent power-generation failures have constrained economic development, especially in rural and sub-rural areas (Ajayi & Ajanaku, 2009, p. 411). However, empirical evidence indicates that universal fuel subsidies are often poorly targeted and disproportionately benefit higher-income groups. In Indonesia, the top 40% of wealthy households received approximately 70% of the fuel subsidy benefits, while the bottom 40% received only 15% (Widodo, 2012, p. 2). Similarly, cross-country evidence shows that the richest income quintile receives more than six times the subsidy benefits received by the poorest quintile (Coady et al., 2019, p. 12).

From an Islamic ethical-policy perspective, this regressive distribution raises concerns of justice and public welfare. In the transport sector, the problem is compounded because fuel subsidies also lower the relative cost of private motorized mobility. This creates a policy contradiction in many Muslim-majority countries: governments promote public transport while maintaining fossil fuel subsidies that reduce the generalized cost of private-vehicle travel. Based on the IEA Fossil Fuel Subsidies Database (2025), author calculations show that average annual transport oil consumption subsidies during 2010-2023 were highest in Saudi Arabia (US$28.86 billion) and Iran (US$24.55 billion), followed by Indonesia (US$15.35 billion), Egypt (US$8.68 billion), and Malaysia (US$3.34 billion) (IEA, 2025). These subsidies weaken transport price signals, reduce the perceived economic benefits of public transport, and reinforce motorized-vehicle mobility systems.

Evidence of gasoline demand suggests that fuel price reform alone is unlikely to induce a substantial modal shift. McRae (1994, pp. 7-8, 12) shows that motor gasoline demand in developing Asian countries is price-inelastic but income-responsive: short-run price elasticities range from -0.03 to -0.50, while GDP elasticities are generally higher; in the pooled model, long-run price elasticity is only -0.26 compared with GDP elasticity of 0.66. This implies that income growth and motorization may increase fuel demand more strongly than price increases can limit it. From a maqasid-based policy perspective, this weakens the justification for broad, long-term fossil fuel subsidies, particularly when they sustain congestion, pollution, road safety risks, and fiscal inefficiency. In urban commuting contexts, where viable public transport alternatives can be developed, fossil fuel consumption is better classified as hajiyyat or tahsiniyyat rather than daruriyyat. Therefore, redirecting fiscal resources toward sustainable public transport is more consistent with maṣlaḥah, equitable mobility, harm prevention, and environmental stewardship.

Empirical evidence shows that fossil fuel prices exert a limited influence on commuting behavior (McRae, 1994, pp. 7-8, 12), which are more effectively shaped by non-monetary instruments, such as parking restrictions, congestion charging, and other demand-management measures (Graham-Rowe et al., 2011). At the macro-policy level, this creates a fiscal trade-off between maintaining fossil fuel subsidies and investing in public-transport infrastructure and service quality. Drawing on Imam al-Ghazali's hierarchy of needs and supported by elasticity metrics, fossil fuel consumption is characterised by inelastic price elasticity ($|\varepsilon_p| < 1$) yet elastic income elasticity elastic income elasticity ($\varepsilon_\gamma > 1$), indicating that fuel demand responds far more strongly to income growth than to price changes.

Fossil fuel consumption for private motorized mobility does not necessarily qualify as daruriyyat, particularly where viable public transport alternatives can be developed. It is more appropriately situated within ḥajiyyat or taḥsiniyyat, which weakens the justification for the broad and long-term subsidy protection. From a maqasid al-shariah perspective, this classification is important because maqasid al-shariah provides a hierarchy for evaluating public policy. When fossil fuel subsidies encourage excessive private vehicle use, congestion, pollution, fiscal inefficiency, and environmental degradation, they may undermine the protection of life, wealth, intellect, posterity and ecological stewardship.

2. Negative Externalities in Transport Market

Transport represents a classic case of market failure because private mobility decisions generate external costs, such as congestion, pollution, noise, accidents, and parking search costs that are not fully internalized in private travel costs (Santos, 2017, p. 1; Small, 2007, pp. 3-70). As illustrated in Figure 2, excessive private vehicle use pushes actual traffic flow (q^m) beyond the socially optimal level (q^e), because users consider private travel costs while ignoring marginal social costs from congestion, emissions, noise, and accidents. This private-social cost gap leads to inefficient overuse of road space (Litman, 2024, pp ES2-ES7; Small, 2007, pp. 3-65) Thus, the equilibrium at point C reflects allocative inefficiency, in which personal benefits exceed socially optimal limits. Without internalizing these externalities, the market overproduces private travel and underinvestment in public transport systems, thereby sustaining an unsustainable mobility equilibrium.

Beyond efficiency losses, automobile-dependent urban mobility generates wider socio-environmental consequences, including higher gasoline consumption, air pollution, road accidents, congestion-related constraints, and reduced urban livability (P. W. G. Newman & Kenworthy, 1989, pp. 24, 32-35). By contrast, public transport contributes to cleaner air, lower traffic noise, improved public health, and better urban quality of life (UITP, 2023). The overuse of motorized transport can thus be

interpreted as a "tragedy of the commons," whereby individually rational mobility choices impose collectively borne environmental and social costs on shared urban spaces (Hardin, 1968, pp. 1245, 1248). Existing evidence also links high private vehicle dependency with road injuries, pollution exposure, and health risks associated with inactive mobility patterns (ITDP, 2021; Prince et al., 2022). From an Islamic ethical perspective, these harms undermine the objectives of maqāṣid al-sharīʿah, including ḥifẓ al-din through weakened stewardship (amanah), ḥifẓ al-nafs through risks to life and health, ḥifẓ al-ʿaql through stress and degraded urban environments, ḥifẓ al-mal through inefficient use of time and resources, and ḥifẓ al-nasl through intergenerational environmental burdens. Excessive dependence on private motorized mobility therefore constitutes not only transport inefficiency but also moral and social concerns.

From an economic perspective, the persistence of negative transport externalities reflects a failure to internalize external costs, as private motorized users often do not fully bear the social costs of fuel consumption, air pollution, congestion, accidents, and road damage. This underpricing is reinforced by fossil fuel subsidies and unpriced or underpriced road use (Black et al., 2023, pp. 3, 5-8, 11-12; Coady et al., 2019). Such distortions artificially lower the perceived cost of private motorized mobility, encouraging excessive road use and weakening incentives to shift toward public transport and other sustainable modes (Santos, 2017, pp. 120-122, 132-133). Fuel tax reforms represent a classic economic instrument for internalizing road transport externalities, whereas congestion pricing and parking management function as demand-management interventions that more directly target excessive car use by pricing scarce roads and parking spaces (Black et al., 2023, pp. 7-8, 11-12; Graham-Rowe et al., 2011, pp. 401-418; Santos, 2017, pp. 120-122, 132-133). Within the Islamic economic paradigm, such corrective instruments are consistent with the principles of maṣlaḥah (public benefit) and ʿadl (justice), as they require users to bear the social costs they impose on others, thereby discouraging israf (wastefulness) and promoting equitable access to urban mobility.

Restoring the equilibrium at point H (q^e) in Figure 2 requires a combination of fiscal reform, regulatory intervention, and behavioral transformation. Gradual removal of fossil fuel subsidies would move private mobility costs closer to their social costs, thereby reducing the excessive demand for private motorized travel and generating fiscal space that could be redirected toward productive investments, including efficient, affordable, and low-emission public transport (Black et al., 2023, pp. 3-6; IEA, 2025, pp. 28-31). Complementary policies such as fare integration, improved accessibility, first- and last-mile connectivity, and digital platforms can enhance the perceived usefulness, convenience, and attractiveness of Public Transport, thereby strengthen Performance Expectancy and Hedonic Motivation, and encourage voluntary modal shifts. Ultimately, addressing transport externalities is not only an economic requirement for correcting market failure but also a moral imperative within the maqaṣid al-shariʿah framework because it supports the protection of life, wealth, environmental balance, and equitable access to mobility. This argument is consistent with Tumiran (2024, pp. 110-11), who shows that low-carbon city development can be integrated with maqaṣid al-shariʿah through Islamic principles of stewardship, natural-resource conservation, equity, and community welfare, including urban mobility as one element of sustainable urban development.

This economic mechanism is summarized in Figure 1, which illustrates how the divergence between private and social costs in urban transport leads to excessive private motorized travel and creates the need for policy instruments that internalize negative externalities.

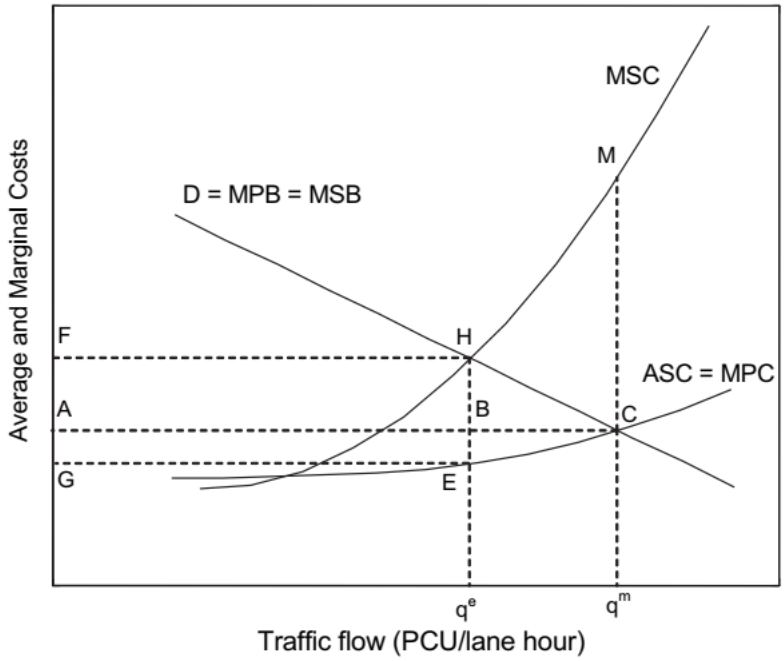

Figure 1. Negative Externalities of Transport Market

Sustainable Urban Transport (SUT) and Behavioural Shift

Sustainable transport can be understood as the evolution of transport systems toward greater efficiency, lower energy use, and improved environmental quality, with public transport (PT) and non-motorized transport (NMT), such as walking and cycling, serving as key components of a less car-dependent urban mobility system (Newman & Kenworthy, 1989, pp. 32-35; Rietveld & Stough, 2005, pp. 1-2). In this sense, PT is not merely a transport mode but also a sustainable urban-development instrument, generating co-benefits for accessibility, affordability, safety, public health, emissions reduction, and socio-economic development (UITP, 2023). In Indonesia and comparable emerging economies, PT is often positioned as a central component of sustainable urban mobility because it can efficiently move large numbers of passengers. In contrast, mature cycling-oriented systems such as the Netherlands and, to some extent, Denmark, demonstrate a more balanced relationship between PT and NMT, where walking and cycling function not only as independent modes but also as access and feeder modes within multimodal transport chains (Rietveld, 2000, pp. 10, 16-17).

Previous transport studies indicate that contemporary urban mobility has tended to follow an unsustainable trajectory, characterized by rising motorized travel demand, fossil-fuel dependence, congestion, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and the need for demand management and integrated transport-land-use policies (Cascetta, 2014, pp. 1-3, 7; Greene & Wegener, 1997, pp. 177-182; Wegener, 2013, pp. 275-276, 278). The cumulative impacts of unsustainable mobility include increasing congestion, deteriorating air and noise quality, rising road injuries, intensified consumption of road space and urban land, and worsening health outcomes (Greene & Wegener, 1997, pp. 177-182; Litman, 2024; Schröder et al., 2023, pp. 1-8). Conversely, evidence from health, environmental, and transport-equity studies shows that sustainable mobility can enhance physical activity (Sallis et al., 2016, pp. 2214-2215), improve air quality, reduce traffic injuries when supported by safe infrastructure and regulation (Pucher & Dijkstra, 2003, pp. 1511-1516), and promote more equitable accessibility by improving people's ability to reach essential destinations and activities (Van Wee, 2022, pp. 1-2).

International examples provide important insights. The Netherlands and Denmark show that sustainable mobility transitions depend on coordinated policy packages: safe infrastructure, car-restrictive measures, public-transport integration, land-use planning, education, enforcement, and parking or taxation policies, while experiences in Japan and China illustrate how shared mobility and bike sharing can strengthen first- and last-mile public transport connectivity and support multimodality (Pucher & Buehler, 2010, pp394, 398-409; Shaheen & Chan, 2016, pp. 573-575, 577-579). These lessons are particularly relevant for Muslim-majority emerging economies, where private motorized mobility is

often shaped by both external conditions such as fuel subsidies, limited public-transport integration, and car-oriented infrastructure, and internal factors, including social norms, habit, perceived convenience, and lifestyle aspirations. Therefore, the interaction between these structural and behavioral dimensions is critical for understanding and promoting shifts toward sustainable mobility.

Shifting commuter behavior away from private motorized vehicles remains difficult in developing countries, because modal choices are shaped by both structural and behavioral constraints. Structurally, underinvestment in NMT infrastructure, such as continuous sidewalks, safe crossings, protected cycling lanes, and integrated walking-cycling networks, reduces the safety, convenience, and perceived feasibility of active travel, despite evidence that active transport infrastructure generates substantial health, congestion-reduction, emissions-reduction, and economic benefits (Bland et al., 2024, pp. 201-202, 204-207). Beyond infrastructure gaps, weak local policy support and fragmented governance further complicate the implementation of integrated transport strategies, particularly for NMT and first-last-mile connectivity. Institutional and regulatory complexity, together with inconsistent implementation, can therefore undermine long-term sustainable mobility programs (Marsden & Reardon, 2017; pp. 238-241; Rietveld & Daniel, 2004, pp. 531-531; Rietveld & Stough, 2005, pp. 1-7). Moreover, shifts toward sustainable transport are conditioned by diverse structural and socioeconomic factors, including land use patterns, urban density, accessibility, transport infrastructure provision, governance capacity, and integrated transportation planning priorities. These factors shape the feasibility and attractiveness of shifting away from private motorized modes toward more sustainable alternatives (Cervero & Murakami, 2010, pp. 400-406; Velasco & Gerike, 2024, pp. 1-6).

Furthermore, in middle-income OIC megacities, the challenge of sustainable mobility is not only financial but also behavioral and institutional. Experiences from Jakarta's BRT system and Kuala Lumpur's urban rail network suggest that infrastructure expansion must be accompanied by service quality, network integration, political commitment, and user acceptability. This is consistent with international evidence that shows that sustainable mobility transitions depend on coordinated policy packages and evidence-informed city planning, including public-transport integration, demand management, destination accessibility, and transport infrastructure investment (Lowe et al., 2022, pp. e882-887; Pucher & Buehler, 2010b, p. 394; Shaheen & Chan, 2016, pp. 573-579). Commuters must, therefore, perceive PT as a credible alternative capable of delivering reliability, convenience, accessibility, and long-term welfare benefits.

Behavioral studies have pointed to three consistent determinants of public acceptance: service quality, affordability, and accessibility. In Greater Jakarta, commuters' multimodal choices are shaped by predictable travel times, comfort inside public transport, affordable tariffs, ease of switching to first-last-mile services, and clear pickup points for ride-hailing. These findings indicate that reliable frequency, integrated fares, digital information, and convenient first-last-mile access are essential for reshaping commuter perceptions and making PT a credible alternative to private vehicles (Sunitiyoso et al., 2022, pp. 1283-1284, 1295; 2025, pp. 1-3, 5-6). Psychological readiness also matters. MaaS acceptance in Jakarta is shaped by users' expectations, pricing, frequency, perceived control, and privacy concerns, while acceptance of road pricing policy increases when policy objectives and revenue allocation are communicated transparently, particularly when revenues are linked to public transport improvement and environmental protection (Sunitiyoso et al., 2020, pp. 123, 128-129; 2025, pp. 1-3).

These findings underscore that sustainable mobility is not solely a technical or financial challenge, but also a fundamentally behavioral transformation. Achieving a modal shift toward public transport (PT) and non-motorized transport (NMT) requires more than just infrastructure upgrades or subsidy reforms; it depends on an integrated alignment of policy design, institutional capacity, social influence, and cultural adaptation. Mobility choices are embedded within broader socio-psychological processes, value commitments, and habitual routines that shape how commuters perceive and evaluate transport alternatives (Gardner et al., 2020, pp.68-76; Steg & Vlek, 2009, pp. 309-313, 315). In Muslim-majority settings, these behavioral mechanisms may also intersect with Islamic ethical motivations, collective norms, and notions of stewardship, moderation, and public welfare, suggesting that effective interventions should resonate not only with utilitarian benefits but also with moral and spiritual incentives that guide communities toward sustainable mobility norms (Tumiran, 2024, pp. 110-111).

Recent behavioral studies reinforce the relevance of UTAUT2 in explaining transportation technology adoption. Evidence from autonomous transport and mobility-as-a-service studies shows that

constructs such as performance expectancy, social influence, habit, hedonic motivation, price value, ease of use, trust/safety, and user experience can shape behavioral intention, although their relative importance varies by context. In Greater Jakarta, commuter mode choice is likewise not determined by travel cost alone, but also by travel time, accessibility, comfort, reliability, technical problems, incidents, and socio-economic conditions (Pradonoputro & Kozo, 2021, pp. 91-95, 99-100). Beyond transport, Islamic-context technology studies indicate that UTAUT2 can be adapted to faith-based behavioral domains, as shown in digital waqf adoption, where performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence significantly shape acceptance (Wadi & Nurzaman, 2020, pp. 1-5). Collectively, these studies affirm UTAUT2's adaptability and support its extension to context-specific variables when explaining diverse mobility behaviors.

Islamic Ethics on Transport Policy

Islamic ethics provides a normative foundation for evaluating transport policies that generate social, environmental, and fiscal consequences. In the context of fossil fuel subsidies and sustainable urban transport, Islamic jurisprudence is relevant because it emphasizes the protection of essential human interests, prevention of harm, avoidance of wastefulness, and fulfilment of stewardship responsibilities. These principles provide a moral benchmark for assessing whether transport policies advance public welfare or reinforce harmful mobility patterns, such as excessive private vehicle use, congestion, pollution, road safety risks, and underinvestment in public transport.

1. Maqaṣid al-Shari'ah as an Ethical-Policy Framework

Maqaṣid al-shari'ah provides a foundational framework for evaluating public policy because it centers on the preservation of essential human interests, realization of public benefit (maṣlaḥah), and prevention of harm (mafsadah). Classical maqaṣid helps identify what must be protected, while contemporary maqaṣid clarify what must be developed and whose rights must be secured. Classical maqaṣid scholarship identifies five essential protection: religion or faith (ḥifẓ al-din), life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql), wealth or property (ḥifẓ al-mal), and posterity or lineage (ḥifẓ al-nasl), which together provide an ethical basis for assessing public welfare (Kamali, 2019, pp. 1-4). However, for contemporary public policy problems, such as fossil fuel subsidies and sustainable urban transport, this classical framework needs to be read through a more systemic lens. Auda's systems approach is particularly relevant because it treats maqaṣid as the philosophy and fundamental methodology of Islamic law, emphasizing wholeness, openness, interrelated hierarchy, multidimensionality, and purposefulness in evaluating legal and policy outcomes (Auda et al., 2008, pp. xxvii–xxviii, 3-8, 45-51). Kasri and Ahmed's maqaṣid-based well-being framework complements Auda's systems approach by showing how maqaṣid can be translated into multidimensional welfare criteria. Applied to urban transport, this implies that fossil fuel subsidies should be assessed not only by their immediate price-relief function but also by their impacts on health, safety, accessibility, fiscal efficiency, environmental quality, and intergenerational welfare (Kasri & Ahmed, 2015, pp. 73-75).

The operational relevance of maqaṣid al-shari'ah becomes clearer when these objectives are linked to the overarching legal maxims of Islamic jurisprudence (al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyyah). Among the most important are the principles that "harm must be eliminated" (al-ḍarar yuzal) and that "preventing harm takes precedence over securing benefit" (dar' al-mafasid muqaddam 'ala jalb al-maṣaliḥ)(Legal Maxims of Islamic Jurisprudence, n.d.). These principles are grounded in Qur'anic injunctions against self-destruction and corruption on Earth, including QS. al-Baqarah 2:195, QS. al-A'raf 7:56 and QS. al-Rum 30:41, as well as the prophetic principle that harm should neither be inflicted nor reciprocated (la ḍarar wa la ḍirar) (Sunan Ibn Majah 2340). Applied to urban transport, this principle provides a normative basis for questioning fossil fuel subsidies when they provide lower prices for private transport mobility while simultaneously intensifying congestion, pollution, road-safety risks, fiscal inefficiency, and underinvestment in sustainable mobility.

2. Protection of the Five Maqasid through Sustainable Transport

Within this ethical framework, sustainable urban transport can be interpreted as an instrument for advancing the five objectives of maqaṣid al-shari'ah. The protection of religion (ḥifẓ al-din) may extend beyond individual worship to the broader moral responsibility of humans as stewards (khulafa') of Earth. Islamic environmental ethics emphasize trusteeship, moderation, harm prevention, and the preservation

of creation (Basri et al., 2024, pp. 86-90; Rice, 1999, pp. 348-349). Sustainable transport contributes to this objective by reducing emissions, improving accessibility, and supporting inclusive mobility networks that enable access to essential social and religious facilities while minimizing ecological harm (Tumiran, 2024, pp. 110-112, 114; UITP, 2023).

Protection of life (ḥifẓ al-nafs) is reflected in the safety and health benefits of sustainable mobility. Public transport, walking, and cycling can reduce private vehicle dependence, reduce exposure to transport-related emissions, reduce road safety risks, and support healthier lifestyles. Clean air, safer streets, and lower accident risks directly serve the preservation of human life and align with the Qur'anic principle of avoiding self-destruction and preventing harm (QS al-Baqarah 2:195; Kamali, 2019, pp. 4-6; Pucher & Dijkstra, 2003, pp. 1509-1516; Sallis et al., 2016, pp. 2214-2215) .

The protection of intellect (ḥifẓ al-ʿaql) can be linked to education, awareness, and informed mobility. Public transport innovations such as digital ticketing, integrated journey planning, real-time information, and data-driven mobility services can improve users' understanding of available transport options and reduce uncertainty, thereby supporting more efficient and sustainable travel choices (Sunitiyoso et al., 2025, pp. 1-3; UITP, 2023). From a maqaṣid perspective, these initiatives support beneficial knowledge and public awareness, thus enabling more responsible mobility decisions.

The protection of wealth (ḥifẓ al-mal) is reflected in the economic efficiency of the collective transport systems. UITP (2023) states that every dollar invested in public transport can generate around five dollars in economic returns, while public transport investment also supports jobs, access to economic opportunities, and productivity gains. This multiplier effect is consistent with the Islamic principle of prudent resource use and the avoidance of israf because public resources are directed toward shared mobility benefits rather than excessive private motorized consumption (Rice, 1999, pp. 348-349; UITP, 2023).

Finally, the protection of posterity (ḥifẓ al-nasl) is related to intergenerational equity in sustainable transport and climate action. Public transport contributes to sustainable development by improving equity, health, environmental quality, and urban accessibility, whereas shifts toward public transport, walking, and cycling can support lower-emission and less car-dependent urban mobility systems (UITP, 2023). This future-oriented ethic corresponds to Islamic stewardship, which rejects the treatment of natural resources as free goods to be exploited by any nation, generation, or individual and instead requires their preservation for collective and intergenerational well-being (Rice, 1999, p. 348).

3. Islamic Legal-Ethical Principles for Transport Policy

The maqaṣid-based assessment of transport policy can be further clarified through four Islamic ethical principles: prohibition of harm and corruption, stewardship and accountability, prohibition of wastefulness, and the removal of harm from public spaces. These principles are not separate from maqaṣid; rather, they operationalize the maqaṣid framework to evaluate whether fossil fuel subsidies and urban transport policies advance maṣlaḥah or generate mafsadah.

First, Islamic scripture prohibits fasad or corruption on earth. The Qur'an commands believers not to cause corruption after the earth has been set in order (QS al-A'raf 7:56), the warning that corruption appears on land and sea because of human actions (QS al-Rum 30:41), and the instruction to seek worldly benefit without spreading corruption (QS al-Qaṣaṣ 28:77). It also criticizes those who claim reform while producing harm (QS al-Baqarah 2:11-12), a theme that is particularly relevant when individually beneficial mobility choices generate collective externalities. In urban transport, fossil fuel subsidies and underpriced road use may encourage excessive private motorized travel, leading to congestion, air pollution, road injuries, CO_2 emissions, and inefficient use of public spaces (Kamali, 2019, pp. 4-6; Rice, 2006, pp. 379-340). These outcomes may be interpreted as ḍarar and policy-induced fasad because they undermine public welfare and disturb the Qur'anic principle of balance (mizan) in creation (QS al-Raḥman 55:7-9).

Second, Islamic ethics frame human beings as stewards (khulafa') entrusted with the earth. QS al-An'am 6:165 affirms that Allah has made human beings successors on earth, implying that human authority must be exercised as a trust (amanah) rather than as unrestricted domination. This stewardship includes responsibility for the consequences of the transportation systems. Policies that degrade environmental quality, endanger life, or generate collective harm contradict the ethical meaning of

khilafah. In transport policy, khilafah requires responsible governance, justice, accountability, avoidance of harm (la ḍarar wa la ḍirar), and equitable mobility for all social groups and generations (Kamali, 2019, pp. 4-6; Rice, 2006, pp. 379-380).

Third, Islam prohibits israf and wastefulness. The Qur'an condemns wastefulness in QS al-Isra' 17:27 and warns against excess QS al-A'raf 7:31. Although these verses directly address consumption practices, Islamic ethics extend the principle of moderation to broader domains of human behavior, including the use of natural resources and public goods. Rice (1999, pp. 350-351) links QS al-A'raf 7:31 to the principle that wealth and consumption are permissible but wasting resources is not. This logic is reinforced by prophetic teaching against extravagance, even in ablution with abundant water (Ibn Majah 425). Therefore, in the context of mobility, reducing unnecessary private vehicle use and excessive fuel consumption can be understood as part of Islamic moderation, resource stewardship, and environmental responsibility.

Fourth, Prophet Muhammad stated that removing harmful things from the road is an act of charity (Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 1009). Although the classical meaning refers to physical obstructions, this teaching can be extended analogically to contemporary mobility harms, including traffic dangers, air pollution, excessive emissions, and congestion. This interpretation is consistent with Islamic environmental ethics, which emphasize stewardship (khilafah), public welfare (maṣlaḥah), harm prevention (dar' al-mafasid), and responsible use of resources (Basri et al., 2024, pp. 86-90; Rice, 1999, pp. 348-349, 2006, pp. 379-380). Table 1 summarizes the core Islamic ethical sources relevant to sustainable urban transport.

Table 1. Core Islamic Ethical Sources for Sustainable Urban Transport

Principle	Selected Islamic sources	Transport-policy relevance
Harm and corruption prevention (*ḍarar* and *fasad*)	QS al-A'raf 7:56; QS al-Rum 30:41; QS al-Baqarah 2:195; *la ḍarar wa la ḍirar*	Provides a normative basis for questioning policies that intensify congestion, pollution, road injuries, emissions, and fiscal inefficiency.
Stewardship and accountability (*khilafah* and *amanah*)	QS al-An'am 6:165; QS al-Baqarah 2:30; QS al-Aḥzab 33:72; Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 1829a	Frames transport governance as a trust requiring accountability, justice, environmental care, and protection of vulnerable groups and future generations.
Moderation and waste prevention (*israf* and *wasatiyya*h)	QS al-Isra' 17:27; QS al-A'raf 7:31; Sunan Ibn Majah 425	Supports the critique of excessive fuel consumption and unnecessary private motorized travel, especially when cleaner and collective alternatives are available.
Removing harm from public space	Ṣaḥiḥ Muslim 1009	Allows an analogical extension from removing physical road obstructions to reducing contemporary road harms such as traffic danger, emissions, air pollution, and congestion.

4. Implication for Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform

Islamic economics recognizes market exchange as legitimate when it is fair and free from exploitation, but it also permits intervention when market outcomes generate harm, injustice, monopoly, hoarding, or wider social costs. Conversely, intervention itself can become ethically problematic when it distorts prices and encourages excessive consumption. In urban transport, broad fossil fuel subsidies may undermine long-term sustainability by lowering the perceived cost of private vehicle use, weakening incentives to shift toward PT/NMT, and diverting fiscal resources from sustainable mobility investment (Abojeib et al., 2018; Kamali, 2019, pp. 4-6).

This argument can be further clarified through al-Ghazali's hierarchy of human needs, which distinguishes ḍaruriyyat, ḥajiyyat, and taḥsiniyyat as levels for evaluating the necessity and ethical priority of public policy (Kasri & Ahmed, 2015, pp. 73-75). Fossil fuel subsidies may be ethically defensible when they protect essential welfare, but they become more difficult to justify when they support excessive or non-essential private motorized travel and generate wider social harm. Figure 2 illustrates how subsidies and underpriced road use contribute to negative transport externalities by pushing private motorized travel beyond the socially optimal level.

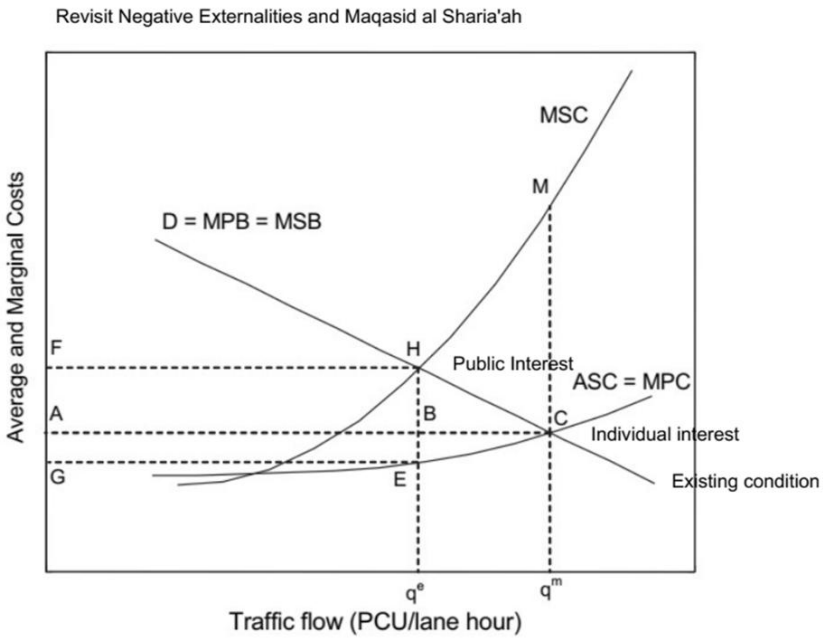

Figure 2. Negative Externalities of Transport Market

Figure 2. illustrates how fossil fuel subsidies and underpriced road use distort the transport market by lowering the private cost of private motorized transport (PMT). As commuters respond to private costs rather than marginal social costs, actual traffic flow increases to q^m, exceeding the socially optimal level q^e. This gap reflects the overuse of road space and the underinternalization of external costs such as congestion, air and noise pollution, road accidents, public health risks, and inefficient use of urban land. In this sense, the market outcome at point C represents individual mobility convenience, whereas the social optimum at point H represents the public interest (maṣlaḥah). From an Islamic ethical perspective, this gap represents not only an economic inefficiency, but also a moral concern because it threatens public interest (maṣlaḥah), the protection of life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), wealth (ḥifẓ al-mal), and posterity (ḥifẓ al-nasl). Therefore, reforming fossil fuel subsidies and reallocating fiscal resources toward public transport and non-motorized transport can be understood not only as an economic correction, but also as a moral policy requirement to prevent harm, promote justice, and advance sustainable public welfare.

Table 2 synthesizes how sustainable urban transport can be interpreted through the five objectives of maqaṣid al-shari'ah. The table shows that public transport and non-motorized mobility are not only technical instruments for reducing congestion and emissions but also ethical-policy mechanisms for protecting religion, life, intellect, wealth, and posterity.

Table 2. Maqasid al-Shariah of Sustainable Transport

No.	*Maqasi al-Shariah*	Islamic Ethical Rationale	Sustainable Transport Relevance	SDGs
1.	Protection of religion (*hifẓ al din*)	The protection of religion may extend beyond individual worship to the moral responsibility of humans as stewards (*khulafa'*) of the earth. Islamic ethics emphasizes trusteeship (*khilafah*), moderation, harm prevention, and preservation of creation.	Sustainable transport supports this objective by reducing ecological harm, improving accessibility, and enabling inclusive mobility to essential social and religious facilities, including mosques, schools, and community spaces. In this sense, mobility becomes part of ethical responsibility when it facilitates religious and social participation without	Supports SDG 11.2 by promoting safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all.

			intensifying pollution, congestion, or resource waste.	
2.	Protection of life (hifz al nafs)	The preservation of life requires reducing preventable harm to human health and safety. Pollution, road accidents, inactive lifestyles, and transport-related health risks can be understood as threats to *ḥifẓ al-nafs*.	Public transport, walking, and cycling contribute to safer and healthier mobility by reducing private vehicle dependence, lowering emissions, improving air quality, reducing accident risks, and supporting active lifestyles. Clean air, safer streets, and lower road casualties directly serve the preservation of human life.	Supports SDG 3.4 on reducing premature mortality from non-communicable diseases, SDG 3.6 on reducing road traffic deaths and injuries, SDG 11.2 on sustainable transport, and SDG 11.7 on safe and inclusive public spaces.
3.	Protection of intellect (hifz al ‘aql)	The protection of intellect is linked to knowledge, awareness, informed decision-making, and the ability of citizens to evaluate choices responsibly. Islam encourages the pursuit of beneficial knowledge and the avoidance of ignorance that leads to harm.	Sustainable transport systems supported by digital ticketing, integrated journey planning, real-time information, and data-driven mobility services can reduce uncertainty and help users make more informed, efficient, and sustainable travel choices. These systems also support environmental literacy and public awareness of sustainable mobility.	Supports SDG 4.7 by encouraging knowledge and skills for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles.
4.	Protection of wealth (hifz al mal)	The protection of wealth requires prudent resource use, avoidance of *israf* or wastefulness, and allocation of public resources toward collective welfare. Policies that encourage excessive private motorized consumption may undermine efficient and equitable use of wealth.	Collective transport systems improve economic efficiency by reducing congestion costs, fuel dependence, road-space waste, and household transport burdens. Investment in public transport can also generate wider economic returns through job creation, improved accessibility to employment, and productivity gains. Redirecting resources from broad fossil fuel subsidies toward PT/NMT investment is therefore more consistent with public welfare and prudent fiscal management.	Supports SDG 8.1 on sustainable economic growth and SDG 8.5 on decent work and productive employment.
5.	Protection of posterity (hifz al nasl)	The protection of posterity relates to intergenerational justice and the duty to safeguard the welfare of future generations. Islamic stewardship rejects the exploitation of natural resources in ways that harm descendants or disturb ecological balance.	Sustainable transport contributes to climate mitigation, lower greenhouse gas emissions, reduced pollution, and long-term urban resilience. Shifting toward public transport, walking, and cycling helps reduce car-dependent urban development and supports a healthier environment for future generations.	Supports SDG 13.2 by integrating climate-change measures into policies, strategies, and planning, and supports long-term sustainable urban development.

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Source: Author's synthesis based on the maqaṣid al-shari'ah framework, Islamic environmental ethics, and sustainable transport literature, particularly (Kamali, 2019; Pucher & Dijkstra, 2003; Rice, 1999; Sallis et al., 2016; Sunitiyoso et al., 2025)

Islamic Public Policy on Sustainable Transport

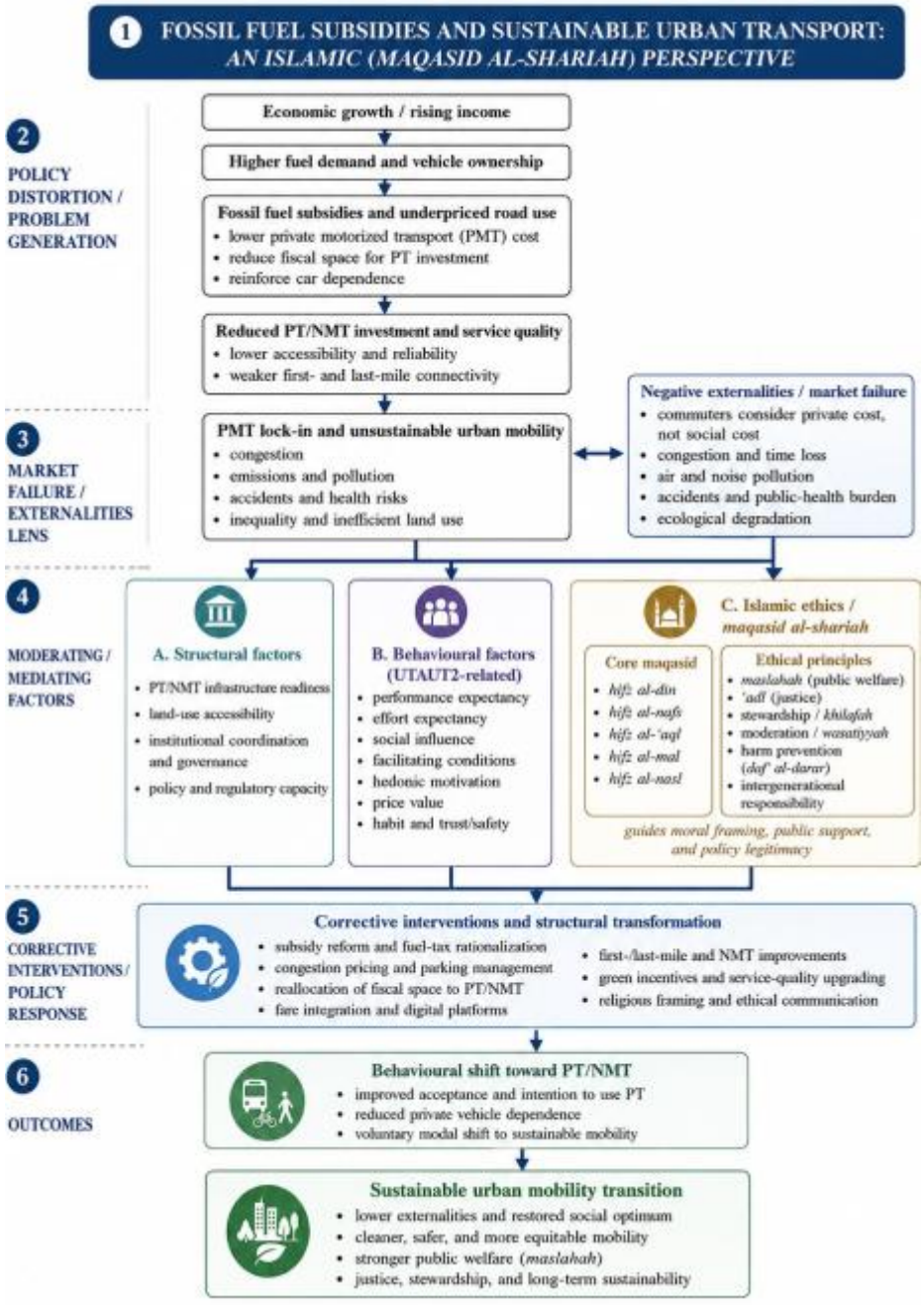

Figure 3. Fossil Fuel Subsidies and Sustainable Urban Transport: A Maqaṣid al-Shari'ah Perspective

Figure 3 synthesizes the central argument of this study by linking fossil fuel subsidies, transport externalities, behavioral constraints, and Islamic ethical principles into a single policy framework. The framework shows that fossil fuel subsidies do not operate merely as fiscal instruments; they shape mobility behavior, influence investment priorities, and affect the ethical legitimacy of transport policy. In this sense, sustainable urban transport reform requires not only price correction, but also structural readiness, behavioral acceptance, and maqaṣid-based ethical justification.

1. Fossil Fuel Subsidy as Policy Distortion

Figure 3. shows that fossil fuel subsidies become problematic when they lower the private operating cost of private motorized transport (PMT), reduce the fiscal space for public transport (PT) and non-motorized transport (NMT), and reinforce car-dependent mobility. In this framework, subsidies function as a policy distortion because they weaken the relative attractiveness of PT/NMT, while indirectly encouraging continued reliance on private vehicles. The result is a policy contradiction: governments may formally promote sustainable urban transport, yet simultaneously sustain private motorization through underpriced fossil fuel and road use.

The figure also shows that this distortion is not limited to fuel prices. Subsidies affect a wider transport system by reducing the fiscal and political capacity to invest in PT/NMT infrastructure, service quality, fare integration, digital platforms, and first-/last-mile connectivity. As PT/NMT becomes less accessible, less reliable, or less convenient, commuters remain locked into private vehicle use. This creates a reinforcing cycle: fossil fuel subsidies support PMT dependence, PMT dependence increases congestion and emissions, and poor PT/NMT provision weakens the feasibility of behavioral shifts.

From this perspective, fossil fuel subsidies should be evaluated not only by their short-term affordability benefits but also by their system-level consequences. When subsidies primarily support routine or excessive private motorized commuting rather than essential mobility needs, ethical justification becomes weaker. Within a maqaṣid-based hierarchy of needs, such consumption is difficult to classify as ḍaruriyyat, when viable PT/NMT alternatives can be developed. It is more appropriately assessed as ḥajiyyat or taḥsiniyyat when it serves convenience-oriented mobility. This interpretation strengthens the argument that broad fossil fuel subsidies should be gradually restructured and redirected toward sustainable mobility investments.

2. Maqasid-based Ethical Evaluation

Figure 3. places Islamic ethics and maqaṣid al-shari'ah as a moderating and legitimizing dimension in the sustainable transport transition. The framework indicates that the consequences of fossil fuel subsidies should not be assessed only through economic efficiency, but also through their implications for public welfare, justice, harm prevention, stewardship, moderation, and intergenerational responsibility.

From a maqaṣid perspective, excessive PMT dependence and its externalities may undermine several essential objectives. Congestion, pollution, road safety risks, and inactive mobility threaten life (ḥifẓ al-nafs). Inefficient fuel consumption, fiscal waste, congestion costs, and excessive private vehicle expenses weaken the protection of wealth (ḥifẓ al-mal). Stressful and polluted urban environments, together with limited knowledge of sustainable mobility, relate to the protection of intellect (ḥifẓ al-'aql). Long-term emissions, ecological degradation, and climate risk affect the protection of posterity (ḥifẓ al-nasl). Meanwhile, stewardship of creation, understood through khilafah and amanah, connects sustainable transport to the broader moral responsibility associated with ḥifẓ al-din.

Ethical principles are presented in Figure 3: maṣlaḥah, 'adl, khilafah, wasatiyyah, harm prevention, and intergenerational responsibility therefore provide a normative basis for reform. They justify moving away from policies that subsidize excessive private vehicle use and toward policies that reduce harm, allocate resources fairly, and support collective mobility. In this framework, sustainable urban transport is not only a technical infrastructure agenda but also an ethical policy instrument for protecting public welfare and preventing social and environmental harm.

3. Policy Pathway for Sustainable Urban Transport Transition

The lower part of Figure 3 shows that fossil fuel subsidy reform should be embedded within a broader policy pathway and should not be treated as a stand-alone fiscal measure. Corrective interventions include subsidy reform, fuel tax rationalization, congestion pricing, parking management, fiscal reallocation to PT/NMT, fare integration, digital platforms, first-/last-mile improvements, green incentives, and service quality upgrading. These measures aim to internalize external costs, while simultaneously improving the attractiveness and credibility of sustainable alternatives.

However, the framework also emphasizes that structural reform alone is insufficient. Behavioral factors such as performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions,

hedonic motivation, price value, habit, and trust/safety influence whether commuters perceive PT/NMT as a realistic substitute for private vehicles. Therefore, a sustainable transport policy must improve both the objective quality of PT/NMT and the subjective perceptions of users. Reliable services, integrated routes, ticketing, safe access, comfort, affordability, and digital information are necessary to convert fiscal reform into actual behavioral change.

In Muslim-majority contexts, ethical-religious framing can strengthen public acceptance of these reforms. Islamic values do not replace economic instruments; rather, they provide moral legitimacy for difficult policy changes by framing subsidy reform and PT/NMT investment to prevent harm, reduce wastefulness, protect vulnerable groups, and promote public welfare. The expected outcome is a behavioral shift toward PT/NMT, reduced private vehicle dependence, lower externalities, restored social optimum, and cleaner, safer, more equitable, and more sustainable urban mobility systems.

CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper establishes that the maqasid al-shariah framework provides a robust and holistic ethical, philosophical, and policy-oriented basis for the re-evaluating of fossil fuel subsidies and the advancement of sustainable urban transport in Muslim-majority countries. By examining fossil fuel subsidies, transport externalities, and behavioral barriers through the lens of Islamic higher objectives, this study shows that fuel subsidies may create fundamental policy contradictions. Although they are often justified as instruments of welfare protection and economic stability, they may also lower the perceived cost of private motorized transport, encourage excessive private vehicle use, and intensify negative externalities including congestion, air pollution, public health risks, inefficient use of public space, and fiscal constraints on public transport investment. These outcomes may undermine key objectives of Islamic law, particularly the protection life (ḥifẓ al-nafs), wealth (ḥifẓ al-mal), intellect (ḥifẓ al-ʿaql, posterity (ḥifẓ al-nasl), and the broader moral moral responsibility of stewardship through khilafah and amanah (ḥifẓ al-din).

This paper contributes theoretically by integrating transport economics, behavioral science, and Islamic jurisprudence into a unified ethical-policy framework. It extends the literature on sustainable transport by applying maqasid al-shariah and al-qawa'id al-fiqhiyyah to evaluate the ethical legitimacy of fossil fuel subsidies, an issue that remains underexplored in conventional transport policy research. The proposed framework suggests that fossil fuel subsidies, particularly when they primarily support excessive private motorized mobility, are difficult to justify as daruriyyat or essential needs. Instead, where viable and socially beneficial alternatives, such as public transport and non-motorized transport can be developed, routine private consumption may be more appropriately associated with haajiyat (secondary needs) or tahsiniyat (luxury needs). From this perspective, redirecting fiscal resources toward toward public transport and non-motorized transport is not only economically rational but also normatively aligned with Islamic principles of public welfare (maslahah), harm prevention (la ḍarar wa la diror), stewardship (khilafah), moderation (wasatiyyah), and justice ('adl). The study also contributes to behavioral transport research by connecting UTAUT2 with Islamic moral constructs such as altruism, stewardship, moderation, and social responsibility, offering a culturally grounded perspective for understanding modal shift in Muslim-majority urban contexts.

In Practically, this study provides policymakers, planners, and religious leaders with a normative roadmap for sustainable mobility reform. It supports gradual and socially sensitive fossil fuel subsidy reform, internalization of transport externalities, and reinvestment of fiscal savings into affordable, safe, integrated, and low-carbon public transport systems. The study also emphasizes that sustainable mobility cannot be achieved through infrastructure provision or price reform; it requires attention to social norms, habits, perceived convenience, affordability, service quality, trust, safety, and moral motivation. Rather than framing sustainable mobility merely as a technical, fiscal, or environmental agenda, this study positions it as a broader public welfare obligation grounded in Islamic ethics. In this sense, sustainable urban transport can be interpreted as part of the collective responsibility to prevent harm, protect vulnerable groups, preserve resources, and safeguard the interests of future generations.

As a conceptual-normative study, this study does not empirically test the proposed framework across specific cities or commuter populations. Future research may apply this framework to comparative case studies of Muslim-majority megacities, examine public acceptance of fuel subsidy reform, or empirically test whether Islamic ethical framing strengthens the behavioral intention to use

public transport and non-motorized mobility. Future studies could also investigate how religious leaders, community institutions, and culturally resonant communication strategies influence public support for sustainable transportation policies. Such research would help determine how far maqasid-based reasoning can inform not only normative policy evaluation but also practical strategies for achieving sustainable urban mobility transitions.

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