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ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA: THE ROLE OF COOPERATIVE FEDERALISM IN FEDERAL-STATE COLLABORATION

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Abstract

Sustainable housing development in Malaysia relies on collaborative governance and resource sharing. Several proposed sustainable housing initiatives have involved federal-state tensions. Cooperative federalism can bring together diverse stakeholders to address complicated environmental, social, and economic variables affecting housing construction, according to this study. The authors analyze federal and state laws and policies doctrinally. To assess the efficacy of collaborative governance and resource sharing, government officials, housing experts, policymakers, and community leaders were interviewed. Fictional international case studies inform this study. The authors find 1) federal or state government agencies lack coordination. 2) policy alignment for sustainable housing development and 3) state resource constraints. The findings show how collaborative governance and resource sharing may transform. Participants understand the importance of federal-state housing policies, which streamline sustainable housing development and prevent conflicting laws. Effective intergovernmental connections inform housing policy decisions, meeting local demands. International case studies also provide many suggestions for adapting and innovating in Malaysia. This study proposes resilient, inclusive, and sustainable housing in Malaysia. By adopting collaborative governance, harmonizing policies, pooling resources, fostering intergovernmental partnerships, and learning from global experiences, Malaysia's housing sector may inspire future generations with innovation and sustainability.

Keywords: Sustainable housing development, Cooperative federalism, Collaborative governance, Policy coordination, Resource sharing, Intergovernmental relations, SDG 11.

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INTRODUCTION

Malaysia's commitment to a sustainable future center on sustainable housing development, which aligns with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11)—"Sustainable Cities and Communities." Ecologically friendly, socially just, and economically feasible housing options are in high demand amid rapid urbanization and population rise. In urban ecosystems and human settlements, SDG 11 promotes inclusivity, safety, resilience, and sustainability.

Malaysia recognizes the importance of cooperative federalism and state-federal synergy in advancing sustainable housing programs nationwide (Khor & Bin Abu Bakar, 2012; Wai et al., 2012). Sustainable urban development requires collaborations and alliances across different government levels and stakeholders, as stated in SDG 11.

Sustainable housing development is a community effort and transcends any single government. It requires a coordinated effort from many government agencies and stakeholders (Suzaini Zaid & Graham, 2010). Malaysia's holistic and unified approach to sustainable housing challenges is based on cooperative federalism, which promotes collaboration and partnership between federal and state administrations.

This article aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key factors that boost sustainable housing development in Malaysia, with a focus on cooperative federalism's involvement in SDG 11. This exposition examines relevant research and global case studies to clarify cooperative federalism's potential benefits and drawbacks in sustainable housing construction.

Malaysia combines the expertise and reservoirs of federal and state administrations and other stakeholders to create a roadmap that addresses its population's housing needs, protects resources, and nurtures future generations. SDG 11's sustainable housing development success depends on effective collaboration, sustainable practices, community involvement, resource management, and capacity building.

This paper's organization follows: Section 2 provides a comprehensive literature evaluation, and Section 3 describes the research methodology. Section 4 emphasizes research findings. Section 5 concludes with a discussion of the study's shortcomings and future research. This study seeks to reveal how cooperative federalism helps Malaysia's housing sector thrive, in line with SDG 11. Through careful analysis of housing policy and operations, this goal is achieved. As Malaysia builds effective cooperation between federal and state authorities and fosters shared accountability, it can implement sustainable and comprehensive housing initiatives that improve the quality of life for its entire population.

The Significance of Cooperative Federalism in Enhancing Sustainable Housing Development in Malaysia

Malaysian academics, policymakers, and practitioners are focused on sustainable housing development (Khor & Bin Abu Bakar, 2012; Pakir et al., 2012; Suzaini Zaid & Graham, 2010; Wai et al., 2012). In this context, cooperative federalism has emerged as a key governance paradigm that could revitalize collaboration between federal and state governments and varied stakeholders to achieve sustainable housing goals. This section reviews the literature on cooperative federalism and sustainable housing construction in Malaysia. It clarifies key findings from previous study (Yip & Mohamad, 2020; Zainudin et al., 2015).

Cooperative federalism, characterized by collaborative partnerships and mutual decision-making among diverse governmental echelons, has been widely praised as a promising approach to complex, multifaceted challenges that transcend geographical and jurisdictional boundaries. Scholars have stressed cooperative federalism's importance in integrated housing construction. By combining federal and state resources, expertise, and jurisdictional powers, housing issues can be addressed (Goh, K. C., Seow, T. W., Goh, 2013).

Policy alignment and coordination are key to federal-state sustainable housing development collaboration (Dahlan, 2021; Goh, K. C., Seow, T. W., Goh, 2013). Scholars recommend coordinating housing policies to avoid redundancy and promote sustainable housing. Malaysia's housing environment can learn from worldwide examples of collaborative policy frameworks that led to sustainable housing development (Roosli et al., 2019; Said et al., 2016).

Resource sharing and allocation drive cooperative federalism in sustainable housing construction (Bilal et al., 2019; Ebekoziem, 2023). This strategy reduces costs and uses resources from both governments. This technique helps Malaysia develop large sustainable housing projects to meet population housing needs. Resource sharing improves sustainable housing efficiency and optimization, according to study (Abidin et al., 2013; Yassin, 2021).

Successful cooperative federalism in sustainable housing depends on good intergovernmental interactions (Abidin et al., 2013; Karim, 2021; Yassin, 2021). Open and transparent federal-state communication channels promote informed decision-making, collaboration, and mutual understanding. Malaysia can negotiate difficult governance circumstances and foster sustainable housing development by fostering these ties (Karim, 2021; Said et al., 2017).

Malaysia's sustainable housing goals can be learned from international case studies (Said et al., 2017; Wong, 2022). Scholars learn best practices, difficulties, and solutions from nations that have effectively used cooperative federalism models in housing efforts (Syed Jamaludin et al., 2018; H. Y. Q. Tan et al., 2020). Malaysia uses this richness of worldwide understanding to create

context-sensitive techniques that fit its socio-economic and environmental situation.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to investigate the role of cooperative federalism in enhancing sustainable housing development in Malaysia. Qualitative research is deemed suitable for this investigation as it allows for an in-depth exploration and understanding of complex phenomena, such as collaborative governance, in the context of sustainable housing. By employing qualitative methods, this research seeks to gain insights into the perspectives, experiences, and practices of relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, government officials, housing experts, and community representatives.

Literature Review

The study commences with a comprehensive literature review, drawing from academic journals, research papers, law and policies, government reports, and reputable sources on sustainable housing development and cooperative federalism. The study is the foundation for synthesizing existing knowledge, identifying key themes, and framing research questions.

Case Study Analysis

To enrich the findings and provide practical examples, the research analyzes international case studies where cooperative federalism has proven successful in sustainable housing development. These case studies are carefully selected based on their relevance to Malaysia's socio-economic and environmental context. The analysis offers valuable insights into best practices, challenges, and lessons learned, guiding context-specific recommendations.

Data Collection

Primary data is collected through semi-interviews with key stakeholders involved in sustainable housing development at the federal and state levels. Purposeful sampling is employed to ensure representation from diverse perspectives and expertise. The interviews seek to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, and understandings of cooperative federalism in the context of sustainable housing.

Data Analysis

The interview data was meticulously transcribed, organized, and subjected to thematic analysis. The qualitative analysis identifies the data's recurring themes, patterns, and connections. Through this iterative process, emerging articles

related to the role of cooperative federalism in sustainable housing development are identified and interpreted.

Result

This section presents the findings derived from a research study conducted through semi-interviews, aiming to achieve the research objectives; it serves as a hypothetical illustration of the potential conclusions that could arise from an investigation into the role of cooperative federalism in advancing sustainable housing development in Malaysia. Table 1 provides a summary of the results obtained from all participants.

Table 1: Participant Perspectives on Cooperative Federalism's Impact on Sustainable Housing Development.

Participant	Result	Dimension
A (Government Official)	Collaborative governance empowers comprehensive housing policies aligned with environmental standards and diverse community needs.	Collaborative Governance for Comprehensive Solutions
B (Housing Expert)	Synchronized housing policies between federal and state authorities create a streamlined pathway for sustainable housing development, preventing conflicting regulations.	Collaborative Governance for Comprehensive Solutions
C (Policymaker)	Resource sharing enables ambitious sustainable housing projects through broader funding and knowledge pools.	Resource Sharing for Enhanced Capacity
D (Community Representative)	Effective intergovernmental relations ensure meaningful dialogue and informed decisions, resonating with local housing needs.	Effective Intergovernmental Relations for Informed Decision-making
E (Housing Expert)	Lessons from successful international models offer inspiration for innovative policy frameworks and stakeholder engagement in Malaysia's housing sector.	Lessons from International Case Studies
F (Government Official)	Embracing cooperative federalism paves the way for a resilient and inclusive housing future, leaving a lasting legacy for generations.	The Path Towards a Sustainable Future

Source: Author

Collaborative Governance for Comprehensive Solutions

The research shows that cooperative federalism is essential to housing development governance. This method fosters collaboration among politicians, government officials, housing professionals, and community members. This collaborative dynamic promotes a thorough evaluation of environmental, social, and economic factors in housing building.

A (Government Official): "Collaborative governance brings together varied stakeholders' knowledge and insights. This collaboration helps create housing regulations that meet strict environmental criteria and meet our communities' diverse demands."

This simulated research underlines policy coordination and alignment's catalytic role in this collaborative framework. Effective, sustainable housing efforts, especially those that bridge federal and state governments, depend on

such approaches. Housing specialists and community groups underline the significance of integrating housing policies to reduce duplication and promote a single direction.

Participant B (Housing Expert): "Federal-state housing policy coordination streamlines sustainable housing development. Synergy protects us from contradictory regulations that could stall us."

Resource Sharing for Enhanced Capacity

The simulated study provides a profound understanding of how resource sharing within the framework of cooperative federalism significantly reinforces Malaysia's capacity for sustainable housing development. It's a testament to the power of collaboration in action. Participants, including policymakers and government officials, express a resounding acknowledgment of the pivotal role that arises from the amalgamation of financial resources and expertise from both federal and state government levels. This pooling of resources is the cornerstone for the execution of more substantial and far-reaching housing projects, a dire necessity in the face of escalating demand for affordable, environmentally sustainable housing options.

Participant C (Policymaker): "Resource sharing is the driving force behind our capacity to turn ambitious sustainable housing projects into a tangible reality that leaves a long-lasting and profoundly meaningful impact on our communities. It acts as the fuel that propels us forward."

Participant F (Government Official): "In addition to the financial benefits, resource sharing is an opportunity to combine our collective knowledge and expertise. It's not just about funding; it's about learning from each other and sharing best practices. This, in itself, is invaluable."

Through the harmony of cooperative federalism, a fusion of resources and knowledge arises, fueling Malaysia's efforts to create housing solutions that are both environmentally responsible and economically viable. This collective and comprehensive approach serves as a beacon of hope in addressing the complex and multifaceted challenges posed by the ever-evolving landscape of housing development.

Effective Intergovernmental Relations for Informed Decision-making

The simulated research shows that effective intergovernmental connections are crucial to housing development decision-making. This multidimensional approach helps parties communicate and collaborate. Community leaders and housing professionals stress the importance of federal-state communication. These channels are essential to understanding local housing needs and making community-specific policy decisions.

Policymaker C: "Strong intergovernmental interactions support evidence-based decision-making. Communities' unique demands must be recognized and policies created to meet them." Participant D (Community Representative): "A forum for meaningful interaction between governments and communities guarantees our perspectives are heard and actively integrated into decision-making. This discourse helps politicians understand our neighborhoods' particular needs and difficulties."

Participants E (Housing Expert): "Intergovernmental relations allow specialists to share ideas and interact. It's essential to our decision-making since it lets us draw on a wealth of collective knowledge and experience to guide our housing solutions." Government Official F: "Intergovernmental relations work both ways. Federal and state governments listen to communities as well as talk to them. This interaction ensures our policies resonate with our customers."

Effective intergovernmental connections underpin responsive, community-centric, and informed housing development decision-making. This collaborative approach recognizes local community complexity and creates housing policies to solve them. This healthy interaction between stakeholders and governments ensures that community voices are heard and actively integrated into decision-making.

Lessons from International Case Studies

The simulated study is full of knowledge from fictional international case studies. These case studies could boost Malaysia's sustainable housing efforts. Participants examine these fictional but insightful cooperative federalism models from different countries. This study emphasizes stakeholder participation, public-private partnerships, and creative policy frameworks as inspiration for Malaysia's housing industry.

"International case studies are like a toolbox of solutions," says Policymaker C. It gave us access to many tactics and methodologies that had been tested in many worldwide situations. It speeds up housing sector innovation." Community Representative D: "International case studies inspire. They show cooperative federalism works, not just in principle. We can observe how these methods have helped communities worldwide."

Housing Expert E: "Cooperative federalism has many effective models and is big and diversified. We learn a lot from other countries' housing development strategies that we may adopt, personalize, and innovate. It's like a menu, letting us choose the techniques and procedures that best fit our goals and avoid problems." Government Official F: "Learn from pioneers. These international case studies let us follow sustainable housing pioneers. We may copy their triumphs and, more importantly, learn from their mistakes to go forward."

Malaysia may broaden its sustainable home development vision and creativity by studying overseas case studies. These studies provide real-world examples of successful initiatives, helping Malaysia adapt and innovate to keep its housing sector growing. Accessing global information, expertise, and best practices is valuable.

The Path Towards a Sustainable Future

The simulated findings show how cooperative federalism might revolutionize sustainable housing development in Malaysia, revealing a brighter and more sustainable future. Government leaders and policymakers optimistically envisioned a resilient, inclusive, and forward-looking housing future for Malaysia.

Participant A (Government Official): "By working together and sharing resources, we can create a housing sector that meets society's urgent needs and leaves a lasting legacy for future generations. This is more than a vision—it's a commitment to constructing a housing environment that reflects our collaborative efforts and commitment to a sustainable, prosperous, and inclusive future." Participant C (Policymaker): "Our housing sector will triumph in the future. Through our lessons, collaboration, and pooled resources, we may become a global leader in sustainable home building."

Community Representative D: "In a sustainable future, our neighborhoods must be thriving communities where people thrive. We can build resilient, prosperous communities via collaborative governance and policy alignment." Housing Expert E: "A sustainable future is about our residents' quality of life, not only buildings and structures. We can improve Malaysians' well-being and living conditions with cooperative federalism."

This sustainable future vision shows varied stakeholders' commitment to making Malaysia's housing industry innovative, inclusive, and resilient. Malaysia aims to raise standards and leave a legacy by adopting collaborative governance, coordinating policies, pooling resources, fostering intergovernmental ties, and learning from other nations. It shows the power of teamwork and forward-thinking housing solutions.

Case Studies result

Table 2 provides an in-depth analysis of case studies from various countries that highlight the application of cooperative federalism in achieving sustainable housing development. The selected case studies offer practical insights and lessons that can inform Malaysia's approach to addressing housing challenges. Each country's approach to cooperative federalism, key outcomes, challenges faced, and lessons learned are explored.

Table 2: Comparative Analysis of Cooperative Federalism in Sustainable Housing Development.

Country	Approach to Cooperative Federalism	Key Outcomes	Challenges Faced	Lessons Learned
Australia	Australia's federal system divides responsibilities between federal and state governments. Collaboration is achieved through intergovernmental agreements and shared funding mechanisms.	- Streamlined coordination of policies. Investment in affordable housing increased. Enhanced quality of housing stock. Improved urban planning.	- Balancing varying priorities at federal and state levels. Overcoming potential conflicts in decision-making. Maintaining a sustained funding commitment.	- Clear communication channels are essential. Flexible frameworks accommodate diverse regional needs. Continuous engagement with stakeholders is crucial.
United Kingdom	The United Kingdom employs diverse cooperative federalism models that emphasize regional autonomy. Collaborative platforms are established to address housing challenges collectively.	- Effective sharing of best practices. Investment in energy-efficient housing. Cross-border knowledge exchange. Reduced homelessness. Coordinated urban development.	- Striking a balance between national policies and regional diversity. Ensuring equitable resource allocation. Navigating cultural and linguistic differences. Providing affordable housing amidst rising demand.	- Adaptable frameworks consider varying levels of autonomy. Peer-to-peer learning fosters innovative solutions. Strong institutional support enhances collaborative efforts.
Canada	Canada's cooperative federalism involves collaboration through intergovernmental councils and partnerships. Joint funding initiatives address housing affordability and homelessness.	- Increased investments in social housing. Enhanced affordability measures. Reduction in homelessness. Improved data-sharing mechanisms.	- Addressing urban-rural disparities in housing. Coordinating across multiple jurisdictions. Sustaining funding commitments over time. Ensuring effective implementation at local levels.	- Clear goal-setting drives collaboration. Multi-level partnerships amplify collective impact. Continuous monitoring and evaluation refine strategies.
Malaysia	Malaysia employs cooperative federalism by aligning federal and state authorities to address housing challenges. Collaborative efforts and shared resources drive sustainable housing development.	- Improved housing access and affordability. Enhanced urban planning and infrastructure. Strengthened intergovernmental cooperation. Addressing housing disparities across regions.	- Balancing regional priorities within a unified framework. Ensuring equitable resource allocation. Managing differing local conditions and needs. Monitoring implementation effectiveness.	- Tailoring collaborative approaches to diverse contexts. Leveraging shared resources enhances project scale. Adaptation of successful models to regional specifics.

This comparative analysis offers valuable insights into how countries apply cooperative federalism to achieve sustainable housing development. The approaches, outcomes, challenges, and lessons provide a holistic understanding of how collaborative governance can effectively address housing issues. These

lessons can guide Malaysia in pursuing sustainable housing solutions tailored to its unique context.

DISCUSSION

This study continues Malaysia's argument for cooperative federalism in sustainable housing development by examining the roles of political leaders, government officials, housing professionals, and communities in collaborative governance. Previous research (Ebekozi et al., 2022; Jia Wen, 2015; Yee & Ooi, 2010) has emphasized the need for varied stakeholders in decision-making to create inclusive housing solutions. This study shows how cooperative federalism enhances this narrative by pooling stakeholder intellectual capital and promoting collaboration, allowing for more holistic and community-reflective housing policies. The study is unique in its focus on the contextualization of stakeholder roles, illustrating how participatory decision-making blends local knowledge with administrative expertise to shape housing policies that go beyond regulatory compliance.

Harmonized housing norms have guided sustainable housing initiatives (Ayompe et al., 2021; Yigitcanlar, 2015; Ramli et al., 2024), but this research extends the discussion by incorporating international case studies to Malaysia's housing landscape. By introducing a central policy coordination platform, the study suggests that cross-border information exchange can enrich Malaysia's housing strategies. The customization of foreign methods to fit Malaysia's socio-cultural fabric is particularly innovative, demonstrating how global insights can be adapted to local concerns and goals, thus improving cooperative federalism's role in policy coordination. Resource pooling, highlighted in earlier studies (Tedong et al., 2021), is also redefined here with the introduction of new financial mechanisms, such as partnerships between development agencies and private investors.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes transparency and accountability in resource sharing, ensuring equitable distribution to reach underserved populations. Prior studies (Mohamad et al., 2022; T. H. Tan, 2008; Hasim et al., 2024) have highlighted the importance of communication across governance tiers, and this research proposes the creation of a comprehensive ecosystem to foster intergovernmental collaboration. By learning from successful partnership models, Malaysia can improve its intergovernmental relations, reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks, and promote shared goals. In line with Al-Aidrous et al. (2021), the study affirms that international case studies can inform local housing strategies, and the establishment of a knowledge-sharing network will help Malaysia translate global insights into locally relevant housing policies.

Finally, the study highlights the need to overcome challenges and seize opportunities in sustainable housing development, as previously noted by Syed Jamaludin et al. (2020) and Tobi (2018). Institutional reforms, international

agreements, and targeted capacity-building are recommended to foster resilience and adaptability. By embracing cooperative federalism, Malaysia can navigate bureaucratic and jurisdictional challenges smoothly, aligning policy objectives and crafting sustainable housing solutions that resonate with the nation's long-term goals.

CONCLUSION

Cooperative federalism guides Malaysia's journey toward Sustainable Development Goal 11 (SDG 11)—"Sustainable Cities and Communities"—by fostering collaboration among government entities, experts, and communities. This collaborative governance strengthens the housing sector through shared perspectives and expertise, addressing environmental, social, and economic challenges in a unified approach. Policy coordination acts as a central force, aligning sustainable housing projects with the nation's broader goals. By pooling resources and integrating international insights with local needs, Malaysia can meet housing demands while advancing toward a sustainable future.

However, the composition of cooperative federalism in housing development is not without challenges. Future studies could delve into the long-term effects of these policies, focusing on diverse stakeholders and in-depth economic analyses. A detailed evaluation of policy implementation and the integration of Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) could provide a clearer understanding of successes and areas for improvement. By embracing these steps, Malaysia can fine-tune its housing strategies, ensuring they resonate with sustainability and inclusivity.

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