

The imbalance of sustainability in the middle east critical thinking

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Arguably, sustainability is one important factor in every society. For so many decades, Middle East and North Africa has been facing imbalance of sustainability. In fact, the issue of water, climate change as well as population pressure are the most determinants and cause of imbalance sustainability in the region. Its impacts in the Middle East and North Africa are felt in all sectors of human life, which include social, economic, as well as political. Perhaps, the history and culture of this is somehow different a compared to other parts of Africa and Europe. North Africa and Middle East are in continues state of insecurity and influence from other nations. The imbalance of sustainability is attributed to nature, but more so human influence on the environment.

Undeniably, the history of north Africa and Middle East have feeble form of identity, as well as well noticeable form of European imperialism in the region. Leaders in the Middle East and North Africa, and other international organization struggle to attain sovereignty and achieve sustainable development in the region regardless of the many internal and external barriers¹. Certainly, Middle East has been in continues fight trying to protect their resources, forgetting to view the dangers it was exposing their people to, and other neighboring nations. For example, the invasion of Kuwait and the Iraq war, it resulted to various resource crisis, which later caused an imbalance in sustainability, as well as launching the beginning of a great recession².

Middle East and North Africa was critically affected by the recent global history. Apart from the pressure exerted from water shortage, climate

change, and population, its imbalance in sustainability was pressed further to the worse scenario. Economic recession and global financial crisis posed foremost pressure to food safety measures in the region³. People in Middle East and North Africa were pushed into more state of undernourishment and hunger. Organizations in the world began to put its focus on long-term sustainability of food security.

Throughout North Africa and Middle East, civilians are in continuous revolts and protests; this is because of the frustrations the public face with the way conditions appear. Their main blame cause to leadership crisis, forgetting the issue of climate change population pressure and water shortages. To some extent, the public are justified in causing unrest; leaders in North Africa and Middle East led by authoritarian style, which include dictatorship, monarchies, as well as religious republics.

Water is one of the natural resources that a community or a nation cannot live without. It always sounds easy when one talks about water crisis, but the outcome of the crisis is devastating. In the Middle East and North Africa water usage is unsustainable; hence, its shortage is likely to persist, leading to extreme instability. If the government of these nations does not take action to solve water crisis, then national progress and sustainability will come to a standstill. In the last few years, repression, poverty, mass unemployment and injustices are cited by scholars as the main causes of political seizure in the North Africa and Middle East. But, the unrecognized cause of turmoil in the region is regional crisis of water.

As a matter of fact, diverse nations that make up the Arab World, stretches widely from Iraq to Atlantic Ocean, of which they have the prime oil stock in the world, but the fact that they occupy most hyper-arid regions disguises the reality. Water demand is tremendously in the increase, yet water sources are remarkably few. Furthermore, the dependable underground reserves of water are fading away so easily, leading to constant dependants of imported food of which come at inflated prices⁴.

Water crisis in the Middle East and North Africa have led to inter-wars among communities in the region. Sustainability is rarely achieved in an in secured region; hence, water crisis has led to imbalances of sustainability in the region. For example, North Africa communities depend on camels for survival of which they are given much credit; communities invade neighbors in search of water for their camel, causing insecurity. Convesably, water issues is becoming the main cause of conflict in North Africa and Middle East as compared to oil. Funny enough, Anwar Sadat, the president of Egypt sighed a peace treaty that they will not be part war, except if it is meant to protect their source of water. In the same scenario, King Hussein signed that Jordan will go to war to preserve its waters.

The Middle East and North African countries are characterized by a shortage of water. Almost all countries have less water though other sources or rain. The population in these regions is rising persistently, leading to a reduction of per capita water availability. Generally, the imbalance of sustainability in North Africa and Middle East caused by water crisis has various impacts. These include agricultural crisis, environmental crisis, health issues, water

stress, as well as increased tension. Food safety in the expanse has been enhanced in these regions through imports, but the absence of water strains the economy further; this is because the agricultural activities cannot take place.

Additionally, environmental crisis arises not because of increase demand of water, which affects the aquatic ecosystem. Hence, shortage of water in these regions disturbs environmental balances, rendering it incapable of playing its natural regulatory roles in stabilizing the climate. Another impact of water crisis is water stress; it leads to deterioration of water resources that is fresh in terms of its quality. Deterioration of water quality exposes people in the region to health issues⁵. Moreover, water crisis in North Africa and Middle East is the main cause of tension and conflict. As water resource becomes scarce, tension among users intensifies, at both international and national level.

Climate change is not only cause of imbalances of sustainability in Middle East and North Africa alone, but it has affected the entire globe. Its impacts are severely felt by nations in the Middle East and North Africa, even if there are not the causes of it. Perhaps change of climatic conditions in the globe presents a real and new threat of economic, political, security, as well as environment impacts in North Africa and the Middle East⁷. In fact, North Africa and Middle East are already vulnerable to various non-climatic stresses, but the potential socioeconomic and physical impacts of climate change will worsen this vulnerability, which in turn leads to large scale imbalances for sustainability.

Additionally, climate change is a risk and a causal factor of water crisis. Hence, climate change aggravates the existing scarcity of water in the region. The correlation in this case is very clear; scarcity of water, caused by climate change threatens agricultural production, hinders human health, as well as increasing food security. Currently, North Africa is in great danger of desiccation incidents, this is because climate change has led to a reduction in rainfall as well as persistent increase of prices. Hence, this predicts suffering and misery to vulnerable and poor population. Therefore, climate change has caused and will continue causing imbalances of sustainable conditions in the Middle East and North Africa region.

Undeniably, IPCC (The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) depicts that there will be a tremendous increase in intensity and frequency of critical climate events caused by climate change in North Africa and Middle East; this include drought and floods. Hence, it will strain the progress in achieving sustainability in various fields. Drought and floods will be destruction to the already established housing premises, business, as well as small agricultural practices. As a result, people living in the Middle East and North Africa will have no choice but to move around to other parts of the world or unaffected region. In this case, sustainability achievement will take decades, as it will always be disrupted by the impacts of climate change. The stakeholders in this region should act swiftly to contest the challenges of change in climate, as well as protecting the lives of its people and alleviate its impacts⁸.

Perceptively, climate change is a multiplier of other causal factors of sustainable imbalances. In fact, it increases the existing tension, instability, and trends in North Africa and Middle East. The main impact of

climate change on these regions is that it overburdens them, of which they are already conflict prone and fragile⁹. Risks caused by climate change on sustainability are security and political risk, as well as those that are humanitarian in nature. The issues of climate change are global, but the, most hit regions are North Africa and Middle East; hence, the globe should work together in trying to achieve sustainability¹⁰. Generally, climate change threatens the sustainability in North Africa and Middle East by causing conflicts over scarce resources, increasing economic risks and damages, destroying infrastructure, increase of boarder and territory disputes, environmentally induced migrations, radicalization and fragile situations, pressure on various international governance, as well as tension over middle east energy resources¹¹. Basically, climate change is an issue that should be addressed with agency if the imbalances of sustainability are to be eliminated.

Population increase is also another cause of imbalances in sustainability issues in the Middle East and North Africa. Population pressure in Middle East is correlated in one way or another to climate change and water crisis. North Africa and Middle East are with the highest population rates in the world. Its population is increasing enormously, which is inversely proportional to the available resources. For example, countries in North Africa and the Middle East consume water at a higher rate than its natural replenishment. Hence, rising population has a led to water crisis in the region. Middle East alone is a home to approximately 6.3 % of the population of the world, yet is only containing approximately 1.4 % of the renewable fresh water in the globe. These statistics shows how population increase exerts more pressure on

sustainability, through an increase of water demand¹².

Strategies in the Middle East to increase water recourses depend on topography, water scarcity degree, technical institutions, as well as local conditions. The insecurity in the region does not allow implementation and formation of policies to ensure sustainable development. Rapid population in the region increases water scarcity, human activities, and conflict. Certainly, rapid population increase exerts pressure for climate change and water scarcity. Population increase has become a problem because it increases the need for water, yet per capita consumption increases¹³.

In the near future, if the trend continues the Middle East and North Africa will be among the most horrible regions in the world. As a result of this, problem will spread to the entire world, causing turmoil globally. Hence stakeholders should intervene on the causes of imbalances on sustainability in the region. Main issues that should be addressed should include climate change, water crisis, as well as population increase. When these issues are addressed, other consequences will be eliminated. Furthermore, if these problems are addressed imbalances of sustainability in Middle East and North Africa will be something of the past. Some of strategies to be used should include research, policy making, law implementation, and use of technology to overcome natural calamities. Sustainability is essential in every country; hence, countries in Middle East and North Africa should overcome the challenges and work towards achieving social, political, and economic sustainability.

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