

Chapter 1

Sustainable Development in Muslim Economies: Peace at What Cost?

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses geopolitics and sustainability and their interrelations with peace and stable economic conditions. Historical events in energy and geopolitics often suggest economic and social patterns which aim for sustainable growth but result in impoverished living conditions. Through analyzing the downward spirals in supply and demand, behaviors, and lifestyles, economies have the potential to offer diverse strategies for management of change and development. Exploring cultural and economic development, striking a balanced and normative approach which acknowledges the existence of societal dogmas, and finding alignment in educational, political, economic, and spiritual values are keys to sustainability.

INTRODUCTION

Recognizing world power as a viable strategy, and a systematic and iterative process, scholars often agree that the traces of Islamic teachings are found fundamentally in all global government schemes. Economic progress in most Western societies is based on a riba, usury and interest-bearing profits. As these developments gain notoriety, they also fuel debates on attitudes and behaviors crucial to our global societies and real world sustainable growth. Sub-systems and networks based upon local cultures and communities are indeed catalysts in sustainability - for example

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boycotts, strikes, riots, and social unrest. As Islam is the religious foundation in many governing nations, Emile Durkheim's model (1858-1917) suggests that the Islamic contribution to establishing and maintaining sustainable and efficient economies should not be omitted when considering a nation's past, present or potential sustainable development. Using a literature review in this chapter which supports reasoning and evidence in ethics, morals, and global patterns in sustainability, we draw upon a qualitative theoretical framework acceptable in both Eastern and Western economies.

As a part of our mission to offer real world recommendations in sustainability, an Islamic approach is discussed in terms of its potential to assist lasting economic growth. This chapter also offers evidence in the form of a literature review as well as lessons learned and best practices. An analytical timeline of violence and global socioeconomic conditions is compared to peacetime economic conditions. Devaluation of the United States dollar, which the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) used as a pricing and purchasing unit of currency, began in world financial markets, causing geopolitical rifts. Leveraging natural resources, largely oil production, has caused an imbalance in world peace, power, and economics.

Decision making in geopolitical matters calls for problem identification and peace-keeping measures that allow for economic sustainability and growth in governed societies. Based on maintaining security and stability and addressing basic human needs in society, sustainable energy is a vital economic process. A timeline dating back before the 1973-1974 Arab-Israeli conflict is presented in this chapter along with a feasible strategic research plan on energy and sustainability.

HISTORICAL EVENTS SHAPING ENERGY GEOPOLITICS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Some Islamic thinkers now consider global conditions to have been deteriorating since World War II and to be steadily progressing toward the destruction of humanity. Examining a concept of social welfare, Ibn Khaldun, and sustainability, a claim of natural resources depletion and a lack of sustainable measures exist in Islamic societies (Muhammad, 2010). Ibn Khaldun's theory of maintaining a balance between basic human needs and excessive consumption fits well with the Islamic principle of caring for the good of society. Emile Durkheim's concepts, while not labeled Islamic, also suggest a need for moderation in consumption. Durkheim's theory does, however, argue for a separation between labor and religion, or functionalism (Durkheim & Swain, 2015). From this perspective, social phenomenon in our societies are made up of individualism and self-sufficiency, and are united by the common thread found in our beliefs and social behaviors. Sustainability requires a combination of both self-sufficiency, such as nations, and unity, as in the philosophies of our societies.

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