



المركز العربي للأبحاث ودراسة السياسات
Arab Center for Research & Policy Studies



DOHA INSTITUTE
FOR GRADUATE STUDIES

Hikama for Public Administration and Public Policy Studies

The Governance of Environmental Policy in the Arab Countries

Risks, Opportunities, and Reform Programs

Workshop/ Special Issue: Autumn 2024

Background Paper

By the mid-20th century, there was mounting demand for international collective action to combat climate change and its consequences. Governments were expected to take notice of the dangers and ramifications that the depletion of natural resources poses for development trajectories now and in the future. An active international movement has come about to promote worldwide solidarity around ending forms of environmental depletion and combatting policies promoted by special interests with no regard for sustainability or the rights of future generations. The calls of many academics and intellectuals have led to promising efforts to incorporate the principles of sustainability in economic programs as an important developmental foundation.¹

UN climate and sustainability efforts ramped up at the 1992 Rio Conference, culminating in the signing of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; next came the Kyoto Protocol in 1997, then the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015. The Conference of the Parties (COP) is now held annually to promote government accountability and cooperation on the protection of the global environment, under a slogan reflecting this spirit of solidarity: “Think globally, act locally”.

These debates about environmental responsibility and how it ought to be distributed as a shared global concern have rekindled interest in reconsidering many of the principles of state sovereignty.² Transnational hazards characterized as an environmental tragedy of the commons³ have become a limitation, with some governments using sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs as an excuse. Given the numerous intersections between national and international dimensions, these debates have shed light on the significance of promoting joint responsibility and international cooperation.

With the rise of environmental sustainability, the legitimacy of achievement sought by governments has become linked to the fulfilment of what can be termed environmental stipulations. Simultaneously, other non-state actors such as international corporations with their role in environmental policy have taken on responsibilities, wherein it has become clear that the private sector plays a role equivalent to that of governments and civil society. Governance has become an essential benchmark for environmental sustainability through the guarantees it can make, such as launching environmental development programs with tangible results and proposing alternatives that efficiently minimize environmental infringements.

In the Arab world, the scope of public policy on the environment and sustainability has broadened to include a variety of issues related to the region’s many environmental dangers, especially drought, desertification, water poverty, global warming, the fragility and waste of many natural resources,⁴ and poor funding allocated to environmental issues in Arab state budgets.⁵ This is to say nothing of

1 Joseph Stiglitz, *Amartya Sen and Jean-Paul Fitoussi*, Report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (2009), at: <https://rb.gy/sc1tf>

2 Robyn Eckersley, *The Green State: Rethinking Democracy and Sovereignty* (Cambridge Massachusetts, Ed MIT, 2014), p 48.

3 Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons: The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

4 Houcine Chougrani, “A Perspective on Climate Change/Conflict Drivers Syndrome”, *Siyasat Arabiya*, no. 59 (November 2022).

5 Mey Jurdi, Rim Fayyad, and Abbas El-Zein, *Environmental Deterioration: The Challenge to the Sustainability of Life* (Beirut: Center for Arab Unity Studies; American University of Beirut, 2013), p. 191.

substantive hindrances that affect the Arab states as much as other countries of the Global South that remain marginalized in global sustainability debates. Arab cooperation remains limited, as Arab countries do not perceive the added value to be gained through joint Arab action. Many environmental commitments are being delayed due to the slow implementation of some common policies.

To deepen the discussion on this subject, *Hikama Journal for Public Administration and Public Policy* will release a special issue titled *The Governance of Environmental Policy in the Arab Countries: Risks, Opportunities, and Reform Programs* and invites researchers and specialists on the environment and related policy areas to submit research papers on the following topics:

- International environmental treaties and agreements: their provisions, the commitments they set forth, their foundational and regulatory mechanisms, and associated debates.
- Transformations in environmental legislation in Arab countries and the impact of international agreements within this framework.
- The development of environmental policies in Arab contexts, the incorporation of sustainability issues in public policy across sectors, and related issues of governance, planning, funding, implementation, etc.
- The roles of public institutions, environmental decision-making mechanisms in Arab countries, and associated dynamics, structures, and instruments.
- The roles of social actors in meeting environmental challenges: civil society organizations, partisan actors, the private sector, as well as the youth, women, and other social powers.
- The roles of regional and international organizations involved with environmental policy and related initiatives.
- The position of Arab countries in international activities and negotiations on issues of climate change and environmental development, and related international frameworks and agreements.
- Evaluating public policy in Arab countries on various environmental issues, as well as their assessment in the light of the outcomes of the 2015 Paris Agreement, the COPs, environmental diplomacy events and climate diplomacy events.
- Evaluating issues of Arab cooperation on environmental development and sustainability.
- Specialized and sectoral issues in environmental policy, including but not limited to: the effect of neoliberal economic policies on environmental issues; environmental litigation and associated legal debates; issues of environment and security; evaluating public-private sector environmental protection partnerships; decentralization and its consequences for environmental policy; environmental policy in post-conflict state building contexts; the impact of occupation policies on Palestinian ecology and impeding sustainability; sustainability issues in the cultural, education, and media sectors; and the impact of technology, information, and artificial intelligence on environmental policy and sustainability issues.



Hikama welcomes research papers using case study methodology or comparative studies. Analyses may be quantitative, qualitative, or a mix thereof. Papers will be subject to the same peer review process as all submissions *Hikama* receives. Critical reviews of books and international reports relevant to the topic of this special issue are also encouraged, between 1,500 and 3,000 words in length.

Regulations and Timelines

- Proposals (250-500 words) must be submitted by **15 January 2024**. This should include the project title, research question, and methodology.
- Deadline to submit draft manuscript with preliminary findings (Research Paper 7,000-10,000 words; Policy Paper 3,000-5,000 words): **15 June 2024**.
- Only **original** research paper intended specifically for this special issue will be accepted. Authors must ensure that their submissions have not previously been published elsewhere.
- The papers chosen for discussion during the workshop planned for autumn 2024 will be selected based on their adherence to the *Hikama* stylistic and objective criteria.
- The papers that have been revised based on the workshop discussions will undergo a peer-review process.
- Proposals and detailed CVs should be submitted via the ACRPS Researchers' System: <https://bit.ly/3MJujJA>
- For inquiries, please contact *Hikama* by email: hikama@dohainstitute.org