Research Paper

Governing Sustainability in an Urban Society.

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Sustainability is the property of elements to remain productive without getting depleted. In essence, this normally applies to the environmental, which means that the environment, including the natural resources and forests and other physical features, can be beneficial to the current and the future generations (Bell & Morse, 2013). In a generalized term, sustainability involves the endurance of systems in the society. It ensures that the natural systems providing the development will still offer the same development in the future. The target result for any sustainable development activity is usually a situation where the needs of the people are handled accordingly without having to compromise the stability and suitability of the natural systems that contribute to this development.

The world is increasingly getting urbanized. More cities are being developed, and people are shifting from rural areas to urban areas to have a feeling of the urban life (Landry,2012). Urbanization is expected to increase massively in the future. On this note, the sustainability of the current and upcoming urban societies is important as the society need to address all the issues that concern the proper living of the people in such areas. Indeed, one can note that the many cities and urban areas have modern accommodation and entertainment facilities. National governments and large multinationals have taken note of this and are promoting the development of the cities to accommodate all the people properly. The parties are increasing the rates of urban growth as well, by implementing methods that enhance efficiency of doing things and increasing productivity among the people and entities. Experts predict that the number of individuals living in cities by the year 2050 will be more than two-thirds of the total population (Knight &Gunatilaka, 2010). However, in as much as the countries and business organizations have high ambitions concerning the growth and development of the cities, the issue of sustainability and resilience of the cities for the sake of future generations remains a concern for all.

Sustainable development in the urban societies is a matter that takes the efforts of multiple agencies and institutions so that the societies can experience holistic sustainability (Næss& Vogel, 2012). The current state of most cities around the world, especially in the developing countries, does not portray sustainability and resilience of the urban societies. As a result of this, the cities are vulnerable to compromise in matters of conservation of the environment, economic development, and social cohesion. The authorities in charge of the cities need to look into adopting plans that would provide for the sustainable development of the urban societies. The various elements that make up the city, including the social amenities and shopping spaces, as well as the residential spaces, are linked in a perfect manner that promotes cohesion among them. For this to be accomplished, the different private and public entities in the societies need to identify ways of partnering and creating relationships to promote the desired sustainability (Næss& Vogel, 2012). The partnerships enable the societies to create a sustainable development of the various sectors like the cultural heritage of the people, the historical issues, and the physical environment of the society as well. Apart from that, the sustainability of the urban societies involves designing and developing construction patterns that are friendly to the humans as well as the environment. The construction and architecture designs have features like reduction of environmental and can balance between the artificial and natural environments in the community.

Sustainable development in the urban societies involves shaping the urban societies in a manner that will make them provide sustainable services for the needs of the people concerning, commercial, educational, institutional, and residential matters (Carley, Smith, & Jenkins, 2013). It is important to note that cities have people from all backgrounds and social status. In other words, it is common to find people from the low-class and those from the elite class as well. On this note, the authorities of the urban areas need to identify the needs of all these people and create sustainable solutions for them.

It is worth mentioning that one of the most debated issues concerning the sustainable development of urban societies is the relationship between economic development and environmental conservation in the areas.

In essence, sustainability involves conservation of the environment and natural resources as its primary objective. Therefore, creating sustainable development in the cities and urban societies should give clear outlines of how the authorities of the city would integrate the element of environmental conservation with economic development. The creators of the urban societies for the future need to plan the designs for the structures and settings carefully so that they could incorporate the relationship between the two elements and facilitate sustainable development for the people as well as the societies at large. By doing this, the societies are also expected to contribute to social justice and equality among all members. It is observed that if the growth of the economies of the urban societies is allowed to go beyond the rates of sustainable development, the societies will face serious challenges in the future. Therefore, this issue is a priority for the entire, and more specifically the developing nations, as they are the most affected by the matter. In essence, the economy grows at the expense of the natural and environmental resources, including oil, natural gas, forest products, and water resources among others. On this note, it is important to ensure that these resources are protected from over-exploitation.

MODELING SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS AND TECHNOLOGICAL LOCK-INS AND URBAN SUSTAINABILITY IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH.

The global south is comprised mostly of the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and South America. Such countries face many issues concerning urbanization and their urban developments. According to statistics by the United Nations, the global south, especially Africa, has experienced massive movement of people to the cities over the last ten years (McMichael, 2011). Currently, more than half of all people in this part of the world live in the urban areas. However, due to lack of adequate resources as well as poor governance, the development of these urban areas does not meet the needs of all the people. The effects of this include an increase in informal settlements around the cities, increased crime and prostitution, and other social ills that come as a result of urbanization. Compared to the urban societies in the Western world, which achieved urbanization many years ago, the cities and urban areas in the global South do not have the natural resources and other elements that facilitate faster growth of urban societies, since most of them are facing depletion (McMichael, 2011). Therefore, there needs to be a change in the model of how these cities and urban societies achieve sustainable development and catch up with their counterparts in the developed world.

Indeed, the urban societies in the global south have serious issues regarding sustainable development (Watson, 2009). Distribution of resources in these areas is highly unequal as the members of the high class get almost everything that the cities have to offer, leaving the members of the lower classes with almost nothing. Further, the economies of these areas also pose massive inequalities as they only favor the rich, who continue amassing wealth while the poor are not given opportunities to build themselves within the same economies. On this note, the sustainable development of these areas is faced with several challenges. Perhaps these countries have been relying on the models that were used to develop European cities in the 18th and 19th centuries, and do not apply in the modern sphere.

It is important for the international community to develop a plan that is directly related to sustainable development of urban societies in the global south. Technology is key in facilitating this. Perhaps an area that needs technology in the sustainable development of the cities and urban societies in the global south is the energy sector. Apparently, Africa, South America, and large parts of Asia lag in the quest for sustainable energy due to lack of the necessary infrastructure and technology. Essentially, sustainable energy is a major factor that contributes to sustainable development of societies. Therefore, a lack of this important factor means that the rate of achieving sustainability in these areas continues to be low and unreliable. The authorities that govern the urban societies in these areas are now increasingly partnering with professionals in the technology of energy management and installation of sustainable forms of energy in the cities to meet the energy demands of the people and promote sustainable development.

Many experts in urbanization and sustainability in urban societies believe that technology is a major factor in the creation of sustainable societies in the global south (Glaeser& Kahn, 2010). Apart from energy, the cities and urban areas in these areas also need to address other issues that entail urbanization. Notably, providing solutions for the transport and movement of people in the major public places in the areas is an important step towards sustainable development. The transport networks create links between the various parts of the urban societies, facilitating the enhancement of cultural and economic development of these places. Modern technology offers these communities options that would enhance quick achievement of sustainable development. For instance, they could incorporate rapid transport system for transport services around the city centers and bus or coach transport for transport in the suburbs and outskirts of the urban areas. These services enable the cities to achieve sustainability in some ways. First, the urban areas would not experience massive congestion on their roads. Observably, since these countries are still developing, they still do not have structures and infrastructure to support the many people migrating from the rural areas; their roads are not properly developed to handle heavy traffic, and they probably do not have mechanisms to control traffic in case of

congestion properly. Therefore, these systems help to ease such challenges and facilitate easy movement of people, creating an enabling environment for all people and their activities of economic development. Exchange of cultural heritage gets easy as well. Apart from facilitating the flow of traffic, the modern transport systems would also lead to conservation of the environment (Glaeser& Kahn, 2010). The developing countries still have quite a long way towards the achievement of energy-efficient vehicles, largely because they are still developing. As a result of this, most vehicles on the roads in these societies are not friendly to the environment as they produce harmful carbon emissions. On this note, the introduction of the rapid transport system in the urban areas would enable the people to use their vehicles less often and choose the systems due to convenience and affordability. Sustainability would, therefore, be created.

Apart from technology, sustainable development in the global south is also dependent on other important factors, notably visionary leadership, proper institutions, and agencies related to the matter, and the inclusion of all people, inside and outside the urban areas, in the development of sustainability (Meadowcroft, 2007). For instance, most of the cities in the western world were developed out visions of notable individuals. The individuals had visions that addressed the sustainability of the areas at that time. This is the reason why the cities and urban societies are still standing and resilient. The African, Asian, and South American leaders need to have visions that go beyond the needs of the current generations. When creating the public structures and implementing policies, they need to address the needs of the people in the society now and predict the needs of the future generations and address them as well. By doing this, the societies achieve development that is sustainable and fulfilling at the same time.

Proper institutions and agencies that address sustainability need to be developed in the global South (Meadowcroft, 2007). Having agencies dealing with specific matters would help to address the issues conclusively and help the concerned parties to get solutions that could be applied in future encounters. It is an aspect of sustainable development because it addresses current issues and creates a platform to address future issues as well. Apart from that, including all the members of the society in the sustainable development plans enables the communities to incorporate the needs and opinions of all the people in their plans for sustainable development.