



A Great Disruption Against the Family (Part-2): Liberalism Shrinks the Family Size

The meaning of disruption in this article is the disturbance and chaos that afflict millions of family units from the West to the East and that have become a humanitarian catastrophe that has been caused in large part by the capitalization flows of women's empowerment. In its contemporary form, classical feminism married with the economic system of capitalism, which then gave rise to a new era of disruption of motherhood. The first part of this article examined one of the causes of this disruption i.e. the feminization of migration driven by the capitalist economic system in exploiting mothers, thus, having a direct role in the abandonment of tens of millions of children.

Now the second part will review how liberalism, one of the inherent values of secular capitalism, has caused the size of families to shrink, and even resulted in an endangered civilization due to the policy of 'womenomics'.

"The Death of the Family" in the Secular Industrialized World

This 'death of the family' is highlighted by Japan's fertility crisis. It is creating economic and social woes never seen before, as described by Mary Brinton, a Harvard sociologist, to Business Insider last year. The International Monetary Fund also warned other Asian countries to be wary of Japan's trajectory of *"getting old before becoming rich."* In 2016 a UBS report showed changing attitudes toward work and gender roles could lead a number of industrialized nations, including the US, to face similar economic hardship. The fears of many economic communities are that demographic trends playing out around the world will lead many of the world's biggest economic powers to suffer the same fate as Japan. In other words, people are worried the global economy will turn Japanese.

Capitalist "Womenomics" policy in Japan, a product of economic liberalism, is coercing women into the workplace, but as more women entered the workforce, fertility began to plummet. Today, Japan's fertility rate sits at 1.41. Consequently, the population is falling, while brutally long work hours remain the norm. Over the past two decades, stories regarding young Japanese couples fighting to make relationships work amid a traditional work culture that expects men to be breadwinners and women to be homemakers are presented as a losing battle. Rather, many newlyweds are forced to watch their free time disappear, surrendering everything from the occasional date night to starting a family. At the same time, many women view being employed as giving them a higher status than being a mother, resulting in them losing their passion to become a wife and to have many children.

This fertility crisis also hit South Korea. Research by the National Assembly Research Service (NARS) in Seoul in August 2015 suggested alarmingly of the potential of South Korea to become extinct due to the decline in its birth rate to a new low of 1.19 children per woman in 2013. Responding to that, *The Diplomat* described an even bigger demographic threat i.e. that **Extinction** will also hit the region, and not only South Korea and Japan. Taiwan and Singapore are also struggling to finance huge numbers of their elderly population due to a declining general population. It is an irony and paradox that the countries which have been dubbed as the "East Asian miracle" due to their success in transforming to become a high economic growth region, currently face the risk of their own race becoming extinct as a nation.

Almost the same as its neighbours is the situation in China. The People's Daily reported on December 2016 that industrialized China is also quickly becoming a country of bachelors and spinsters as its unmarried population touched a whopping 200 million. According to research conducted by Tencent in 2016, 36.8 per cent of single Chinese women believe marriage is not necessary to live happy lives. Demographers believe that the independence of modern Chinese women is one of the main causes of the growing unmarried population. China – the most populated country in the world - will certainly also depopulate following its seniors in the West, as well as in the East, Japan and South Korea. The high rate of unmarried women will also be followed by the decrease of birth-rate that finally leads to dire depopulation. It happens in every advanced capitalist country. When women prioritize material success over building a family, do not believe in commitment to marriage, and even consider children as an economic burden, then this is truly an initial symptom of a dying nation who continues to age awaiting its death. It is a nation that no longer has control over the huge damage to its social life of its society – a heavy price it is forced to pay for the economic progress it sought at any cost.

Western countries were actually pioneering these social crises long before the East Asian countries, and it is from them that we can learn that “the death of the family” is not only driven by economic liberalism with its womenomics, but also coupled with social liberalism with its acute individualistic values, which have caused a massive health epidemic. These conditions radically destroy family life and have resulted in demographic deserts in various European countries and the US. On January 2018, the UK appointed a minister for loneliness to deal with what Prime Minister Theresa May called “the sad reality of modern life” for too many people i.e. more than 9 million people always feel lonely and around 200,000 elderly people in the country have not had a conversation with a friend or a relative in over a month. However, people in the UK are not alone in feeling lonely. In the United States, as an article in Harvard Business Review wrote, *"Loneliness is a growing health epidemic. We live in the most technologically connected age in the history of civilization, yet rates of loneliness have doubled since the 1980s, today over 40% of adults in America report feeling lonely, and research suggests that the real number may well be higher."*

Islam Offers Solution for Family Resilience

The severe waves of disruption that shook the family structure in the secular industrialized countries resulting in “the death of the family”, is now also increasingly felt within the Muslim lands. In Malaysia, for example, the excitement of pursuing development and status in the manner of the developed countries has led Malaysia to face a 'Chicago Cultural Syndrome' - where a high-income nation is achieved but is accompanied by a moral decline. The Professor from the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), Mohd. Kamal Hassan warned the Malaysian government to NOT develop similar symptoms to the West. He said, *"It's also happening in Malaysia and will be worse if it is not contained because moral values and self-esteem are so low, this is significant through crimes such as snatches to death, killing and rape"*. Indeed this is the profile of many secular industrialized countries today, where rapid development is often accompanied by a social crisis, the collapse of the family institution, widespread criminality, violence against women and children, and high suicide rates, in addition to falling birth rates which are in large part due to the massive involvement of women in the labor force. It is a reflection of the narrow ideological viewpoint of capitalist secular states which place material and economic interests over the wellbeing of the family and society overall.

Therefore, it is vital for Muslims to return to the Islamic teachings and to engage in non-stop campaigning for the implementation of the noble Islamic political system in preserving

human offspring and maintaining the sublime Islamic civilization. Remember Allah (swt) has stated: ﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا﴾ **“O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul and created from it its mate and dispersed from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed, Allah is ever, over you, an Observer.”**

Islamic teachings can be a powerful recipe for survival in this era of disruption. The important principles of Islamic teachings will never be obsolete and will always be relevant to modern families and hence should be embraced tightly. Among them are:

1. Islam promotes marriage and glorifies the institutions of marriage as the only method of preserving offspring.
2. Islam also has a set of family laws that organize the role of husbands and wives to create a harmonious and stable family life as well as to establish tranquility between the spouses.
3. Islam emphasizes how prestigious the role of a mother is for women.
4. The purpose of marriage in Islam is to worship Allah (swt) i.e. to preserve the offspring and realize serenity (*sakinah mawaddah wa rahmah*), not to merely satisfy sexual instincts or as a social status. Therefore, Islam strongly emphasizes the paradigm and the importance of having a responsible mentality when educating the present and future generations.
5. Islam also provides the foundation of faith and trust (*tawakul*) in *Rizq* (provision) for Muslims so as not to destabilize the arrangement of the roles in the family, i.e. that men are the breadwinner for the family.
6. Islam has an economic system that creates a healthy and productive economy and is able to overcome mass unemployment, ensures the basic needs of its citizens and at the same time allows individuals to have luxuries. The foundation of its policies is directed at seeking the distribution of wealth that is effective in guaranteeing the basic needs of all citizens, preventing the economic exploitation and mass dehumanization of women. It would also enable men to meet their obligations to provide the financial needs of their family, while at the same time the state is obliged to provide for women who have no male relatives to support them.
7. Islam obliged the Muslim rulers to unite under the shade of the Islamic Khilafah, as indeed it is the true shield of the Muslims that will protect the family structure, honor the mothers, and glorify Muslim generations, bestowing them with dignity. At the same time the Khilafah will protect the family from the fallout of the greed of Capitalism and the social chaos caused by liberalism.

Therefore, the Khilafah (Caliphate) will be able to build family resilience and will annihilate the factors that disrupt it, as reflected in the words of Uthman (ra) ***"Surely Allah gives authority to the ruler to eliminate something that cannot be eliminated by the Qur'an."*** Wallahu a'alam

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