

What is drought?

Comparing past and present

Understanding droughts

Droughts as ‘natural events’ caused by:

“absence of significant rainfall, groundwater levels, spring discharges and river flows” (Environment Agency, 2002)

Droughts as differentiated events:

“Some droughts are short and intense – for example, a hot, dry summer – while others are long and take some time to develop. Some droughts affect a large area while others are concentrated in a few place. Every drought is different and each has a different effect on people and the environment”

Droughts defined by social, economic, political, technical, cultural conditions and contexts in which they develop...

Rationality	Problems	Solutions	Likely outcomes
Ecological	Scarce or finite resources plus high populations	Limit population growth	Water wars
Technical	Mismanagement and inefficiencies	Improve management and efficiency	Progress
Political	Uneven distribution of power and resources	Reduce power and resource inequalities	Winners and losers

Jan Selby (2003). Water, Power and Politics in the Middle East