

Preface

“Sustainability is defined as a requirement of our generation to manage the resource base such that the average quality of life that we ensure ourselves can potentially be shared by all future generations... Development is sustainable if it involves a non-decreasing average quality of life.

Geir B. Asheim, "Sustainability,"
(The World Bank, 1994, p. 1)

In the years to come, the issue on sustainability will be of a major concern. Humans plough the earth of her resources for the betterment of mankind. At times, not a moment's thought is given to consider the the repercussions from a single plundering action. The key to sustainability is not to break the cycle of harmonious coexistence with our natural environment. Such action is to ensure that our future generations will have the same opportunity the benefits as we do today. In fact, the present generation need to start recovering what has been lost in order to leave behind something worthy for the future generation to remember us for.

This issue is devoted to a discussion on sustainability beginning with Shaharir Mohd Zain's critical evaluation of the concept of optimization. In 'A Review on Sustainability as an Optimization Problem' he points out that the present concept of sustainability relies on the concept of optimization but he argues that optimization is incomplete as it lacks the most important element that sustains human souls, namely, the spiritual dimension of man. Consequently, capitalism and related philosophies that are incompatible with sustainability tend to come into play. Hence, he proposes that the existing concept of optimization be replaced with *wusta*, an islamic value, as the basis of a new model of sustainability.

Abdul Latif Samian in 'The Epistemology of Values and Sustainability' begins with the premise that in order for science, a problem solving activity, to be sustainable, there ought to be sustainable problems. He outlines the process of macro creative process that forms the general basis of any sustainable scientific solution. The Cycle of Sustainability presents innovation as endless possibilities of the micro creative process by way of mathematics. This is further examined in this article as a subset of the macro creative process. Two issues of scientific realism -

the distinction between observables and nonobservables and scientific claims- are argued and presented.

Ahmad Murad Merican in ‘Sustainability Journalism as Discourse among Civilizations: Concept and Dialogue’ expands the concept of sustainability journalism as a form of storytelling and discourse. Thus, as a form of storytelling, readers act as both producers and receivers of the information given. There ought to be a platform for dialogue to create a worldview on sustainability that acknowledges different cultural and values are intertwined. Hence, in modern journalism events, facts, ideas and imagination are manufactured to sustain a story. It is proposed that Sustainability Journalism be repositied as part of journalism education and be a vessel for a forum for advocacy. News therefore is “the exception, not the rule.” The objective nature of this form of journalism is culture’s storytelling system.

Siti Korota‘aini Omar and Mazlan Che Soh’s put forward the plight for a sustainable local industry in the Eastern Coast of Peninsular Malaysia in ‘The Paradox of Traditional Boat-Making: Indigenous Knowledge Vs. Globalization’. Marked as a dying trade, traditional boat making in Malaysia is fighting a losing battle with the onset of globalisation and the unavoidable encroachment of aggressive international market of consumers and suppliers. Master craftsman could not sustain a livelihood as their forefathers used to. Somehow, indigenous knowledge of boat-making ought to be protected and issues, challenges and limitation related to this particular industry are discussed. There seems to be an obvious gap between the local economic policy to attract international investors and the need to preserve this national heritage of boat-building industry. It is of a dire need that there be an effective mechanism to protect this valuable indigenous knowledge.

The ideas and deliberations put forward by the authors call for due attention and continuous dialogue of issues on sustainability.

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