
Editorial

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Biographical notes: Cody Morris Paris is the Deputy Director – Academic Planning and Research at Middlesex University Dubai and Associate Professor in the School of Law and the Business School. He is a Senior Research Fellow with the University of Johannesburg. He obtained his PhD in Community Resource Development, MSc in Tourism Studies and BIS in International Geography and Political Science with minors in Cultural Anthropology and Tourism from Arizona State University, USA. He is a Social Scientist with varied research and teaching interests within the areas of: tourism, international politics, community development, sustainable development, technology, global security, and experiential learning.

Daphne Demetriou is a Senior Lecturer and PG Law and Politics Campus Program Coordinator at Middlesex University Dubai. She holds an LLM in Public International Law from the University College London (UCL) and PhD examining the international legal framework on human trafficking from Middlesex University London. Her research focuses on issues relating to human rights, labour law and public international law. She is dedicated to the UN Sustainable Development goals, and through both her teaching and research promotes all SDGs, with a focus on peace and justice, reduced inequalities and decent work.

Sreejith Balasubramanian is a Senior Lecturer in Supply Chain Management, and Chair of the Research Committee at Middlesex University, Dubai. His areas of expertise include supply chain, operations management, sustainability, higher education and knowledge management. He is also an Expert Data Analyst with skills in statistical modelling and forecasting. He has more than 12 years of experience in teaching, research, and consultancy and project management. His work has been published in leading international journals and conferences.

It is our pleasure to present the special issue of the *International Journal of Society Systems Science*. This special issue titled 'Sustainable development and international business' contains a collection of five papers presented at the Fourth Emerging Research Paradigms in Business and Social Science (ERPBS) international conference in Dubai, UAE, in January 2018. Previous editions of the conference were held in 2011, 2013 and 2015.

The 2018 ERPBS conference was very successful. The conference hosted by Middlesex University Dubai was attended by over 170 delegates from across the world. The three-day conference saw over 100 oral presentations in 27 sessions across nine conference tracks. In addition to oral presentations, one workshop, one-panel session, and a visual paper session, which included 13 poster presentations were held.

This special issue received an excellent response from conference delegates. Several submissions were received initially, of which only selected submissions that are aligned with the theme of the special issue were considered for the review process. After a few rounds of review and revisions, five excellent papers were accepted for this special issue.

The topic of the papers considered in this special issue addresses a diverse spectrum of sustainable development issues. Of the papers, two papers discuss the significance of education for sustainable development, while two papers highlight the issues facing indigenous people in Canada and Malaysia. In the following paragraphs, a short review of each of the accepted papers is provided along with its key contribution and its significance.

The first paper, 'Enshrined education rights: a three state comparison', Thomas Mc Donagh, highlights the importance of education rights for sustainable development. This is, as he contends, a prerequisite for the development of economic and environmental sustainability. In view of this, he conducts an in-depth comparative study into the education rights in three English-speaking western democracies, namely, Ireland, the UK and the USA. Mc Donagh, compares the constitutionality of Ireland's educational rights, with the non-enshrined education rights of the USA and the UK, the latter emanating from jurisprudence and ordinary legislation. He questions whether the nature of rapidly changing societies and evolving technologies is conducive to enshrining such rights. Whilst finding value to both, Mc Donagh concludes that the merit of an enshrined right to education may lie in the fact that it cannot be easily limited or altered, thus better securing sustainable economic development that will both foster and attract international business in regions where education is prioritised.

In the second paper, 'The career women of Kabul and their struggle for an empowered identity', the authors, Waslat Lema Atifmal, Cody Morris Paris and Mahine Rizvi Ahmad also discuss the importance of education for the whole of society and its role in sustainability. In their article, they highlight the efforts made by the women of Afghanistan to further their educational and career prospects when countered with the challenges of various types of oppression. During the oppressive rule of the Taliban, access to education was stymied for women and remedies were sought to strengthen their social capital for personal and gender advancement. The authors conducted e-asynchronous interviews with participants to enable thoughtful and comprehensive responses to the questions posed. The findings highlighted the efforts of the women of Kabul to gain economic autonomy.

In the third paper, 'Sustainable development: perspectives from Canadian jurisprudence on First Nations' Aboriginal rights and title', Tracie Lea Scott conducts an examination of Canadian jurisprudence on First Nations' Aboriginal rights and land title

as identified in jurisprudence, through the prism of sustainability. The study considers the extent to which such judicial determinations implicitly support and potentially contribute to the discourse on sustainable development. Specifically, she argues that the courts' definition of the inalienability of such property creates positive obligations on States to protect such land, whilst the communal characteristic given to it can lead to optimal results in sustainable development. Notably, as Scott argues, acceptance by courts that the use of such land should not be inconsistent with the future use and enjoyment of that land, gives voice to future generations, aligning it with the rationale of sustainability. Whilst highlighting how aboriginal rights and title have attempted to incorporate some of the broader social, economic and environmental concerns into a legal framework, Scott notes that courts, in attempting to perform a balancing act between economic development and sustainable development, seem to fall short of international sustainability standards. Despite this, she concludes that such jurisprudence still presents a possibility for creating a forum for the discussion of preserving resources that are not easily valued, in particular valued for their importance to future generations.

'Community development model for poverty eradication of indigenous people in Malaysia', the fourth paper in this issue, the authors, Muhamad Azahar Abas, Mohamad Faiz Mohd Amin, Lee Seong Wei and Nor Hizami Hassin tackles an important issue of poverty and sustainable development using an indigenous population in Malaysia as their case study. In the study, the authors assess the effectiveness of the CDM in implementing the catfish farming program for the Orang Asli community at Sungai Rual Village, Kelantan, Malaysia. The authors highlight the benefits of this program for the specific community, while also identifying the problems encountered and proposing solutions to improve this model, as a medium for the development of the social and economic quality of the particular community. As the authors argue, the particular community, through this model, can better mobilise existing skills, work cooperatively, and use community assets in new ways. The authors conclude that learning through participation is an effective tool to transfer knowledge and emphasise the importance of comprehensive planning in the implementation of such community development projects.

In the final and fifth paper, 'Stakeholders' role in delivering sustainable supply chains in the construction sector', Sreejith Balasubramanian explores the importance of all stakeholders to work together coherently in addressing issues of environmental pollution, climate change, and resource depletion. Using the UAE construction sector as the research setting, Sreejith conducted multiple semi-structured interviews with stakeholders, namely, developers, architects/consultants, contractors and suppliers, regulatory bodies, buyers/end users and non-government organisations to understand the contribution of each stakeholder and the dyadic relationships that exist between stakeholders. The study also found various conflicting interests and challenges in engaging stakeholders to implement sustainable practices. The findings of the study are useful for environmental policymakers and industry leaders to make (informed) stakeholder specific policy changes, devise actions, strategies, and support mechanisms to effectively maximise/leverage the potential/contribution of each stakeholder, especially those who are lagging behind the others.

In general, we are confident that the topics discussed in this special issue, spanning from aboriginal rights and education rights to poverty, women empowerment, and sustainability of supply chains, will be useful for practitioners and academics to extend their discussion and debate on the underlying issues. We extend our sincerest thanks to

the authors of the papers in this special issue and the organisers and participants of the fourth ERPBSS conference. Also, we extend our thanks to Prof. John Wang, Editor-in-Chief and the administrative team of *International Journal of Society Systems Science*, and the reviewers for facilitating the publication of the papers in this special issue. We hope that the readers enjoy the special issue.