



Sustainability: An approach to sustainability

Nowe podejście do zrównoważonego rozwoju jako praktyki działania

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Abstract

Global warming is affecting humankind and other alike. It is evaluated that if humanity does not act for what happens in today's world, both current and future generations will face irreversible consequences. In this sense, in order to decrease the effect of global warming, it is necessary to focus on the aspect of sustainability. Especially, implementing sustainability in individual, political, economic, and global perspective is significant.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the effects of climate change, which is a consequence of globalization and global warming, to examine a proposal of a solution to one of the significant problems of today, to contribute to the proposal of a solution, to present a different approach to sustainability and to gain a new dimension to the sustainability. The other aim of this article is to explain the understanding of sustainability, sustainability on the basis of

Abstrakt

Globalne ocieplenie dotyka zarówno rodzaj ludzki, jak i inne gatunki. Ocenia się, że jeśli ludzkość nie będzie przeciwdziałać zmianom w dzisiejszym świecie, zarówno obecne, jak i przyszłe pokolenia staną w obliczu nieodwracalnych konsekwencji. W tym celu, aby zmniejszyć wpływ globalnego ocieplenia, należy skupić się na aspekcie zrównoważonego rozwoju. Szczególnie istotne jest wdrożenie zrównoważonego rozwoju w perspektywie indywidualnej, politycznej, gospodarczej i globalnej. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest omówienie skutków zmian klimatycznych, które są konsekwencją globalizacji i globalnego ocieplenia, zbadanie propozycji rozwiązania jednego z istotnych problemów dnia dzisiejszego, by wnieść swój wkład w rozwiązanie problemu, by przedstawić inne podejście do zrównoważonego rozwoju i zyskać nowy wymiar zrównoważonego rozwoju. Innym celem tego artykułu jest

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companies, sustainability on the basis of states and sustainability on the basis of individuals. The research question is: what is sustainability?

Key words: climate change, environmental politics, globalization, sustainability, sustainability

wyjaśnienie zrozumienia zrównoważonego rozwoju jako praktyki działania, praktyki wynikającej ze zrównoważonego rozwoju firm, praktyki wynikającej ze zrównoważonego rozwoju państwa i praktyki wynikającej ze zrównoważonego rozwoju jednostki. Pytanie badawcze brzmi: czym jest zrównoważony rozwój jako praktyka działania?

Słowa kluczowe: zmiany klimatu, polityka środowiskowa, globalizacja, zrównoważony rozwój

Introduction

Aggressive climate change, a consequence of global warming, is exceptionally influential in people's lives. Discussing global warming and producing solutions to it, leaving a livable world to future generations, is one of the crucial tasks of humanity. Temperatures are rising with harsh consequences on climate change, and these high temperatures have a significant effect on humans and other living beings alike. If the temperatures continue to rise so aggressively, it will cause mass migration of people in the foreseeable future. Because of drought, flooding, and another extreme climate-related disaster, which is a consequence of the increases in temperature, people will be forced to search for a new place that they could continue their life. For example, it is estimated that Bangladesh will lose of her its by 2050, and it is approximately equal to 20-30 million people who will be affected (Ahsan, Kellett, & Karuppanan, 2014). It can be considered as one of the consequences of global warming. Globalization has an essential influence on global warming. To minimize the influence of globalization on global warming is the duty of human beings. A sustainable life is the right of future generations, and that is why the present generation is responsible for it.

People's surging appetite, excessive and unbalanced production, and the desire to gain more consistently cause a situation that does not let humankind see what is going on around the world. It is such a situation that it prevents humankind from seeing that future generations also have a right in the world. The issue caught the eye of the scholars. The idea of sustainability has been raised in past decades. There are various articles, books, reports, and conference papers, generally mentioning a more significant number of researchers have been focusing on the drawing picture of circumstances, which is also significant in order

to understand the matter rather than providing solutions to the problem. For instance, the following studies have called for a solution to the urgent problem: *The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future* is one of the most critical reports which has been benefited and cited repeatedly; similarly, regarding the subject, the book *Silent Spring*, which was written by Rachel Carson and aimed to explain the effect of humankind on nature, was a call for action when it comes to sustainability.

This article attempts to clarify how a global policy can be made by offering a distinctive way to sustainability. On the other hand, as a matter of fact, these policies, which are essential for the future of the world and future generations, will be possible with the active participation of global organizations, states, companies, and individuals. The following pages will address this in further detail. At this point, firstly, an examination will be made in terms of words and concepts.

Understanding the concept of sustainability

It is usually more effective to start with the lexical sense and philosophical point of the term in order to make it clear for the reader to understand the entire article. With this object in mind, first of all, the article will discuss the lexical sense and philosophical point of the term of sustainability.

The term sustainability has emerged by the combination of the “sustain,” which means to last over time, and the “ability.” According to the Oxford dictionary, the noun sustainability means the ability to be kept at a specific rate or level or/and to be able to maintain something. The term sustainability has been reinterpreted in social, political, economic, and environmental fields (Kuhlman & Farrington, 2010). In other words, from a philosophical point of view, the scientific community used the term sustainability to explain and define different subjects. For instance, the term has been used as a set of criteria, a vision or goal, an object, or it has been referring an approach (Salas-Zapata & Ortiz-Muñoz, 2019). Figure 1, which is created by Salas-Zapata and Ortiz-Muñoz, helps understand the uses and meaning of sustainability among the scientific community.

Again, it is necessary to state that the term sustainability differs in meaning depending on the content it has been used in, for instance, legal, industrial, behavioral, economic, political, financial, and social as well as environment. On the other hand, the term sustainability is also associated with “health, poverty, equality, human rights and protection of cultural artifacts” (Zinn, 2009). Therefore, there are different approaches to sustainability, and there is no universally

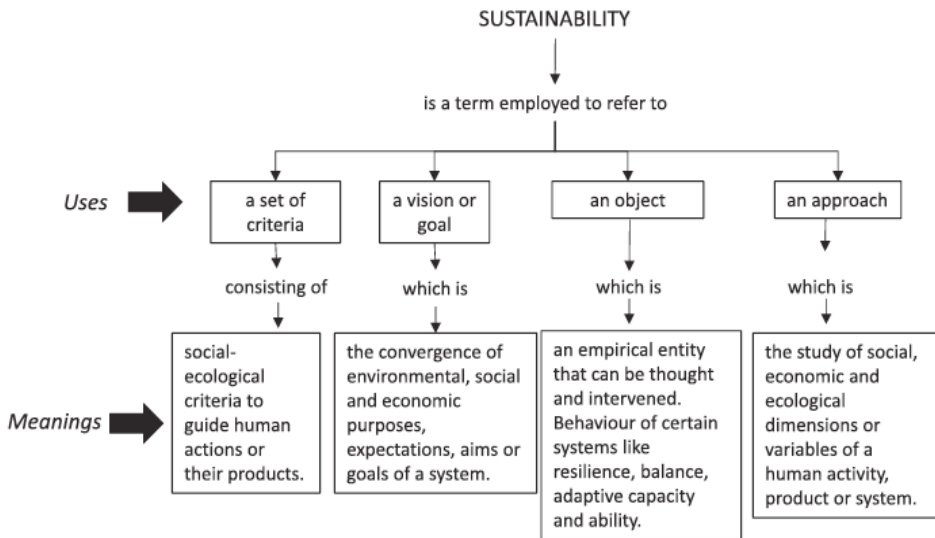


Figure 1: Uses and meanings of the concept of sustainability among the scientific community. Taken from Salas-Zapata & Ortiz-Muñoz, 2019.

accepted definition of sustainability (Gorun & Birău, 2018). Thus, since there are many definitions of sustainability, it is not possible to write down all existing definitions. However, it is always better to write a few definitions of sustainability in order to make the term of sustainability clear. For instance, in the *Global Focus: the EFMD Business Magazine*, sustainability has been defined as the capacity for continuance into the long-term (What does sustainability mean?, 2010). One of the articles in the *Public Management Magazine* has defined sustainability differently than “being green,” but rather attempting to grow in a balanced way (Murphy, 2018). In the book *Opportunities and Challenges for Environmental Sustainability: A Socioeconomic and Political Analysis*, sustainability has been defined as a system which is alder to provide needs without decreasing the ability of the future generation (Dufour, 2019). Again, in the ecology perspective, it has been defined as maintenance of ecosystem resilience (M, 2013). Similarly, the 1987 World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainability as follows: meeting the need of the present without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet their own needs (Portney, 2015). Lastly, Fünfgelt and Baumgärtner have formalized the term of sustainability in the context of the utilitarian notion of responsibility for sustainability as follows: meeting the basic needs of the present generation and not compromising the ability of future generations and, if possible, to the point of marginal utility (Fünfgelt & Baumgärtner, 2014). Generally, to sum up, it is possible to state that the focus on sustainability is about maintaining something which will last over time.

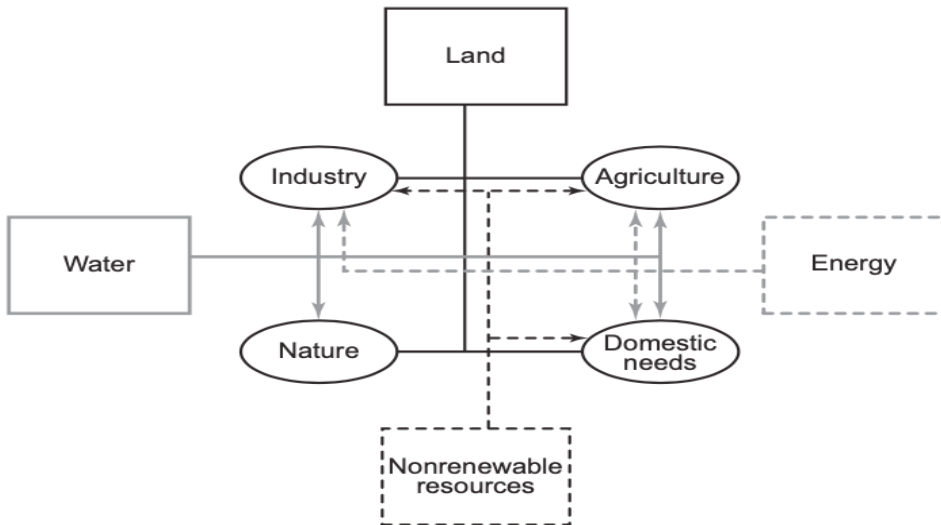


Figure 2: The connection between the needs for and limits of sustainability. Taken from Graedel & Voet, 2010.

It is not simple to reach a sustainable level, but at the same time, it is manageable to reach a sustainable level. On the other hand, it is not possible to sustain unlimited human needs with limited resources; that is why it is also not probable to ignore the importance of sustainability within the earth, where each dynamic is directly or indirectly interconnected. On earth, industry, agriculture, local needs (with the effect of the globalization, it is also possible to mention global needs), and the needs of nature are met. However, for example, water resources are essential for meeting local and global needs, maintaining industry, maintaining agriculture, and water is also a need for nature itself to renewing. In a simple sense, sustainability becomes imperative when such an interconnection exists.

The fact is that there is a connection between needs and necessities. Figure 2 presents the physical necessities of sustainability as rectangles and needs as ellipses. However, tradition and specialization encourage a focus on a selected ellipse and all the rectangles, or a preferred rectangle and all the ellipses (Graedel & Voet, 2010). In addition to this, according to the Brundtland report, simultaneous protection of the environment, preservation of economic growth and development, and promotion of equity will make sustainability achievable (Brundtland, 1987).

Role of Globalization

The term “globalization” is widely used to explain a variety of cultural, economic, social, and political changes that have formed the world (Guttal, 2017). Most authorities would acknowledge that globalization as a process has been continuing for more than 500 years, as it is associated with the 16th-century emergence of capitalism in Europe and the subsequent expansion of the capitalist world-system around the globe (Dokos, 2017). Even 500 years ago, undeniably, there was an enormous interaction between human beings which can be described as globalization. For instance, approximately 45 thousand years ago, first time maritime communities developed on the Indonesian archipelago (Harari, 2014). It would not be surprising that such developed maritime communities would have had communication between regions. The fact is that globalization with technology has become more effective and faster in the last 500 years. On the other hand, globalization goes back to more than 500 years, which has a direct and indirect effect on the environment (McAusland, 2008). Since globalization is faster with technology, it also has an influence on the environment, and it also threatens the climate. In other words, globalization is effective in environmental degradation and climate change (Gorun & Birău, 2018). Environmental pollution, which is a result of industrialization and excessive consumption, has spread all over the world due to globalization. It is necessary to look at the formation of industrialization and capitalism to examine the emergence and foundations of the global environmental problems that have emerged as a result of the historical dimension. As it is known, environmental problems have begun to be experienced with industrialization intensively (Tuna, 2000). Moreover, the threat of climate change was clear since the late 1980s, but still, there is no globally recognized joint progress (Palmer QC, 2016). Consumer frenzy culture has led to further development and increased production of the industry. Hence, the process of globalization is affecting the increase of environmental problems (Baykal & Baykal, 2008). Therefore, increasing production and consumption madness causes environmental destruction. The deterioration of the natural equilibrium of the environment as a result of this interference distorts the balance of the world. Depending on these, the climate is deteriorating. As a result of the aggressive destruction of climate change and destruction of the environment, living spaces for living human beings and other living species are narrowing.

The limited resources, along with the deterioration of the natural balance, will be unable to meet the unlimited human needs. Already, the equilibrium will be degraded, and the water resources will be reduced as a result of the industry. Because of the increase in temperatures, the ice in the poles will melt (Qiu, 2008). The water level will increase every year. In this case, where there is complete chaos, competition between people will increase, wars will follow, and

other conflicts over resources will become more common. When it comes to the literature, it is already possible to see pieces of evidence on climate-related conflicts or potential conflicts in different regions, for instance, land use conflict in Northern Africa and water conflict in the Middle East (Scheffran & Battaglini, 2011). Although this picture we have drawn above seems far away from us at this moment, if it remains in this way, humankind will bring their ends because people do not have a sustainable life. In this way, as a consequence of reckless living, endangering future generations would be nothing less than the preparation of the end of humankind.

As a consequence of environmental destruction and climate change, the inefficiency of the lands is going to be inevitable. Flooding or other climate change-related effects will force significant numbers of people into internal or external migration (Dokos, 2017). Therefore, the impetus for continuing the generation will push people to migrate to newly habitable areas. As these migrations take place in bulk, the world population will be concentrated in specific regions, and humankind will face various new economic, sociological, security, and political problems.

Besides, globalization goes beyond internationalization. It implies a higher plane of organization, and all major political and economic decisions will ultimately be transmitted globally (Stalker, 1997). In a world where decisions are taken globally, international organizations, undoubtedly, play essential roles. In this sense, it is possible to mention that international organizations and international companies play an active role in globalization. On the other hand, it shows that nation-states have diminished their influence and continue to threaten their existence in every sense.

Nevertheless, it would not be wrong to mention that humankind, this very day, and in a sense, still has a deep connection to the nation-states. This means that states will play an active role in terms of sustainability. However, it will only be fully realized with the support of international organizations and the inclusion of global companies. Since the world becomes a small village (Giddens, 1999), due to globalization, all players have to be in a close relationship with each other.

Concept of sustainabilitism

The society of consumers (Bauman, 1998) creates a consumption frenzy and overproduction, which causes the destruction of the world's natural resources. However, overproduction and consumption have an impact on the world ecosystem. In this sense, the increase in greenhouse gas percentage is a notable

example. Greenhouse gas triggers climate change, and it has a vital effect on humankind and other living beings (Vries, 2012). Due to global warming, many habitable areas are under risk, and it is expected that due to climate change, the number of migrants will increase (Brown, 2008). Here, it is possible to mention that the migration issue is a critical one for the world society. For instance, recently, world society has been faced with a migration wave from Syria to all over the world. Due to the war in Syria, many people decided to leave Syria with families since it was not possible to live in Syria due to a matter of life or death. From that example, the world society experienced that migration issue is not an easy issue to manage. Migration from Syria is not a climate change migration issue, but it is a small example that shows us what kind of crises humanity can face if such notable migration happens. However, the migration issue is only one of the problems of the world that the world will face if humanity does not aim for sustainability.

On the other hand, the population of the world is growing day by day. Projections show that it will surpass 9 billion by 2050 (Dedeurwaerdere, 2014). A growing population also means that the number of consumers is increasing. An increase in the number of customers may call for a market expansion, but at the same time, the limited sources will not remain longer due to high demand.

In addition to this, the issue of poverty is also essential when it comes to sustainability. An individual who lacks in education and access to daily needs will have different priorities than the one who does not. In other words, perhaps, those individuals do not or cannot think/focus on future generations since they are not able to manage their current situation. That is why it is also crucial to make it possible for everyone to reach equity. Inequality is growing even in countries such as Denmark, Japan, and Sweden (Dedeurwaerdere, 2014).

Humanity can achieve sustainability by making sustainability more efficient, using limited resources in the longer run, making sources renewable, achieving maximum benefit with minimum disruption, but making sustainability a part of everyday life in societies of the world. Establishing a sustainability consciousness will be one of the greatest effects to spread among people and to make them act upward. Making sustainability more efficient, using limited resources in the longer run, making them renewable, achieving maximum benefit with minimum disruption, but making sustainability a part of everyday life in world societies is critical for the future. It will be possible for states to ensure that global companies come to a sustainability structure, but only through the spread of people among them. This idea spreading among people will cause a tendency in politics to pass this direction. This tendency of politics, directly or indirectly, will affect primarily global politics and then global corporations. As a result, a maximum sustainability attitude will be inevitable. This quest will also lead humanity to new, sustainability technologies.

States need to implement the laws, and corporations should be willing to participate and support the states at every level, even the law regulation does not exist the corporation should not take responsibility. Since the issue is concerning the future of the world, then the issue is also ethical and moral. For reaching the level of sustainability, all actors play essential roles. Without the collaboration of states and corporations, and the participation of the individual level of sustainability is not looking possible.

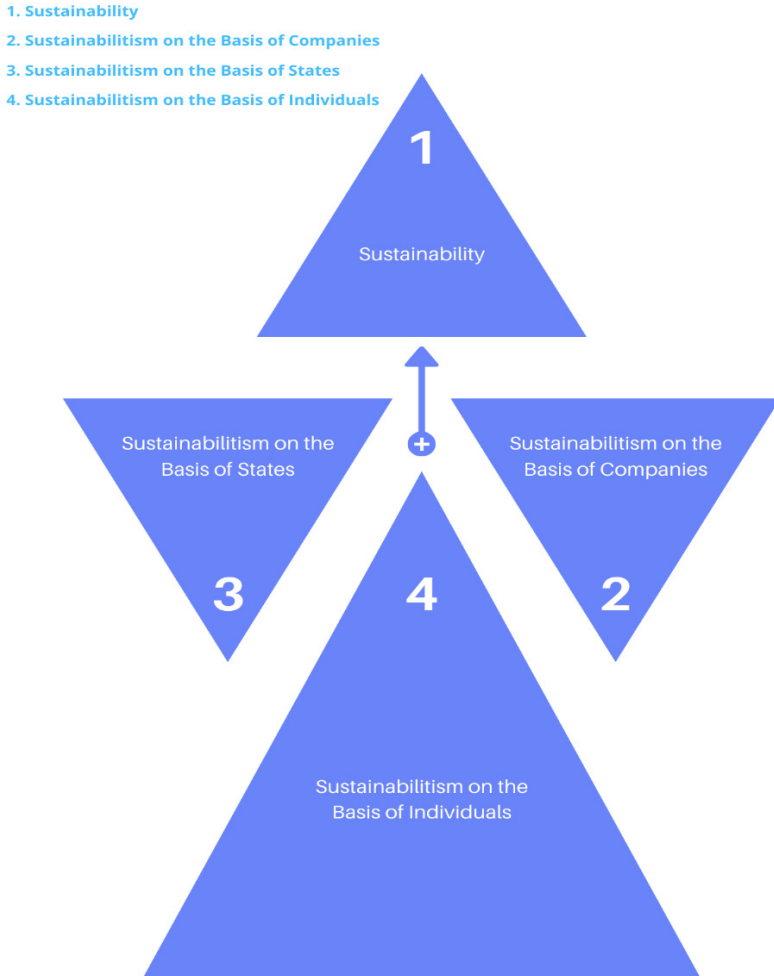


Figure 3: Sustainabilitism; sustainabilitism on the basis of individuals, sustainabilitism on the basis of companies, sustainabilitism on the basis of states. Diagram created by author.

At this point, the study offers sustainabilitism. The term sustainabilitism is an aid for reaching sustainability level. The term sustainabilitism suggests a so-

lution in which all players collaborate and make it possible to reach the level of sustainability, which is critical for humanity. Figure 3 shows the diagram of sustainabilism. The diagram shows the role of states, companies, and individuals in order to reach sustainability. Each player has a significant role which are interconnected to each other in order to reach sustainability.

Sustainabilism on the basis of companies

As is mentioned above, the term sustainability has been used for different subjects. Here, the study does not determine sustainability, which refers to businesses to grow with lesser expenses. Since the corporations have been established for the maximum capital, they are naturally focused on the minimum expenses no matter what term has been used for the fact. At this point, the study indicates environmental sustainability. For instance, usually, global firms are concentrating on local laws of regions. Regularly, they run their activity on the local laws no matter what the ethics and global exigence require. From this point forth, the corporation should focus on global requirements rather than what a local law dictates. It means that companies should focus on maximum in order to fight against inequality, poverty, and sustainability. However, trends show that joining the social and environmental process is also positively affecting global companies. In other words, the participation of global companies in the social and environmental processes increases the proactivity of the companies. Although sustainability appears to be harmful to firms in the short term, it has a significant positive impact in the long term. Here, what is meant by the positive effect is that the firms which tend to have a reputation of sustainability have a higher income than those that do not have (Gürünlü, 2019).

Some researchers argued that economic development and jobs are more important than sustainability (Sheffi, 2018). It is true that economic development and jobs are necessary, but at the same time, it should not be omitted that if humanity does not reach the sustainable level, there will not be any more jobs and economic development. Humankind needs more long-term goals than short term winnings. Much evidence, as it has been mentioned before, shows that there is a global risk due to global warming. That is why it is essential to concentrate on long term devising; it is slightly more accurate than focusing on short term plans. Even if the companies have a small impact on sustainability, they should focus on it.

Sustainabilism on the basis of companies, in this context, is that the companies that provide sustainable goods and services to consumers respect the environment, respect the rights of future generations, provide a fair wage, and maintain their existence based on sustainable technologies and products.

Sustainabilism on the basis of states

Nowadays, the problems do not remain within the boundaries of the states but become global with the effect of globalization. In addition to this, the destruction of the world ecosystem affects all humanity, regardless of all borders and laws. Therefore, the destruction of the world as a global problem comes before all states and individuals. For example, the Chernobyl catastrophe can be given as a small example of the destruction of the environment. The problems caused by the Chernobyl catastrophe were an event that threatened not only the particular region but the whole geography. Even this example is a minor one of the threat caused by environmental disasters.

The right to life is one of the most fundamental rights of humanity. Therefore, sustainability is, in a sense, a right to life, which must be guaranteed by all the states and internationally. Some scholars suggested that individual criminal accountability should be implemented under the topic of crime against future generations (Jodoin & Saito, 2017). Furthermore, it can be determined that it will also be more effective if sustainability is implemented as a constitutional right and is incorporated into the state constitutions. The inclusion of such a provision in the constitution will require states to take into account sustainability in all their affairs, and only in this way it will have a real impact. Furthermore, teaching sustainability as a compulsory subject starting from elementary school will also foster this awareness in individuals' upbringing.

Sustainabilism on the basis of the states, in this context, is that states which use sustainabilist goods and services in state affairs and functioning, centralizing the individuals and nature while regulating laws, regulating production and service permit within the framework of a sustainabilist approach, and support sustainabilism as a global phenomenon.

Sustainabilism on the basis of individuals

This study aims at presenting a system in which all actors interact. The role of international organizations, states, and corporations is essential, but at the same time, the role of individuals is also critical. If the individuals are not cognizant of the situation, then their tendencies will be different, and they will not support the sustainable sources and goods. That is why suppliers should focus on renewable sources as much as possible, and at the same time, consumers should demand such goods. If trends show an increase in the demand for renewable goods afterwards, the producers will be more likely to offer such goods.

Perhaps, the prices will drop respectively, and attainableness will be more comfortable. All the actors process in a nest with each other.

In particular, strengthening the motivation of individuals in this regard is extremely necessary to reach the level of sustainability. Indeed, the legacy of humanity is transferred to the next generations again through individuals. In other words, it should not be forgotten that individuals create global corporations, international organizations, and states, while global corporations, international organizations, and states are consisting of individuals. In this sense, individual sustainability is essential.

Sustainability on the basis of individuals is that individuals contribute to sustainability in every sense in their daily life; in this context, individuals request and purchase sustainable goods and services. Individual sustainability politically puts the individuals in the center of everything, supports the present and future generations by supporting sustainability; however, individual sustainability is far from partisanship.

Conclusion

The term sustainability does not have a universal definition. In other words, the definition of sustainability differs in meaning, depending on the content that it has been used in. Generally, it is likely to mention that focus on sustainability is about maintaining something which will last over time.

Globalization is one of the ancient processes of the world. However, nowadays, globalization is more efficient with the technological process. Since it is easier to reach distant destinations, it is also increasing the number of potential consumers.

The human being is able to see and reach different kinds of products with the process of the technology. Seeing all kinds of products and at the same time being able to reach all those products creates trends in the world. Hence, due to trends, it is whetting the appetite of humans. At this point, it is possible to mention that everybody wants everything, even if it is not a need. Consequently, the situation creates a consumer frenzy and overproduction. Accordingly, globalization affects environmental degradation and triggers climate change. In such a situation, sustainability is vital.

This article intended to propose the design of sustainability, which will require a collective enterprise. The term sustainability has three dimensions. Those three dimensions are: sustainability on the basis of states, sustainability on the basis of companies, and finally, individual sustainability. Those three dimensions are firmly connected, and each player has a vital role. That is

why all actors should perform their tasks in order to reach the sustainability level.

Not technology and machinery, but people themselves are endangering their future. Misuse of natural resources, destruction of the environment, and the increase in the population of people bring some requirements for the future of humankind and the world. If those required obligations are unfulfilled, the human race will inevitably be at risk as well as other living beings. In the event of such a crisis, it will be sure that there will be harsh conflicts among nations. This mentioned situation is not a pessimistic approach to the issue; it is an inevitable future of the humankind instead.

It is one of the tasks of humanity to see the actual danger, to take measures against these hazards, and to conduct research in this sense. However, in order to put research into practice, it is a necessity to raise awareness of policymakers and motivate them to take steps in this context. At the same time, these policies should be for the long term and should also be in people's lives. Since day-to-day, short-term policies are favorable only for individual politicians in the long run, they will lead to a further critical danger for future generations. For the future of the human generation and other creatures, regional and daily interests should be compromised, and global interests should be given priority. Global interests are undoubtedly vital for all humanity in the long run. In this sense, for instance, the Paris agreement is of critical importance. Within the framework of the agreement, the future of the world and humanity was addressed directly. The Paris climate agreement, by recognizing the costs of climate change, taking steps in this sense, keeping the global temperature rise at a certain level, cooperating with other countries, and enhancing cooperation, became fundamental in terms of preparing a sustainable progress environment. Not only is it selfish and ugly that some politicians do not approve of the agreement due to various reasons, but it is also no different than ignoring the danger by sticking their heads in the sand. At this point, it should also be mentioned that sustainability is undoubtedly essential for the security of the human future.

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