

## *Editorial*

by *Antonio Garofalo*

Nowadays, the true greatest challenge for humanity is that of what we call “Sustainability empowerment”, meaning: “the ability to make the right to Sustainability a constitutive principle for the project of a new society, in which well-being and its sustainability are the fundamental aim” (*Simone Cesaretti Foundation, 2017*).

The United Nations have expressed a straightforward negative judgement on the unsustainability of the current development model; not just on an environmental level, but also in terms of economics and society, overcoming the idea that sustainability is purely a matter of the environment and asserting the multi-dimensional character of development (ASviS, 2016). That is the underpinning of the action plan presented in 2015 to aid people, the planet and overall prosperity: the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development, or the 2030 Agenda. The plan takes into consideration – thanks to the work of the experts who have put it together – the challenges that, to this day, appear to be the main obstacles to the achievement of Sustainable Development. Inequalities are among these challenges.

As a matter of fact, the reduction of inequalities is one of the pillars of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. The perilous road to the birth of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10 has brought about a lively debate regarding the nature and implications of inequalities on our global development model.

Though many contributions have come from an economic standpoint, the conversation around inequalities and development has evidenced the intrinsically plural character of the phenomenon. Part of the scholarly debate has dealt with the interconnection among wealth and/or income disparities and other issues, such as wars or political violence. Others, on the other hand, have delved deeper into the social component and have produced studies on inequalities in terms of gender, race or ethnicity, religion, and more.

Furthermore, a significant stream of literature has reconceptualized the issue of inequalities in terms of accessibility, posing the question that wealth

*Rivista di Studi sulla Sostenibilità, (ISSN 2239-1959, ISSNe 2239-7221), 2024, 1*

Doi: 10.3280/RISS2024-001001

distribution might not be enough in ensuring that equality of opportunity and equality of outcome is guaranteed for all.

Such investigations into inequalities, despite their different points of departure and concerns, evidence how this theme is central to the debate on the state of contemporary society.

Starting from these considerations, this issue of the Review of studies on sustainability hosts papers that address inequalities in their different dimensions.

In the paper “*Social entrepreneurship as a catalyst for addressing inequalities and promoting sustainable development*”, authors Saule Okutayeva, Emin Askerov, Zubirash Smagulova, Nurgul Yesmagulova, Saida Kaidarova, highlight the vital role of social entrepreneurship in addressing inequalities and fostering sustainable development by solving concrete social problems.

Karakat Nagymzhanova, Bakhyt Tusupbekova, Aiyym Otep, Azamat K. Nagymzhanov in the paper “*Gender inequalities: Understanding gender identity and changing trends*”, examine gender identity and its implications for gender inequalities. The purpose of this study is to explore the concept of gender identity and its modern trends of change, with a focus on how they relate to gender inequalities and sustainable development in the context of Kazakhstan.

Study “*Preconditions and causes of inter-ethnic conflicts in Central Asia*”, by Aibek Kumysbekov, Natalya Kalashnikova, Alexandr Danilov, Assel Ayaganova, aims to analyse the main factors contributing to inter-ethnic conflicts in the region of Central Asia, examining their impact on its stability and proposing measures to promote inclusive development and multicultural coexistence.

Sustainable development cannot be achieved by leaving behind vulnerable and marginalized groups like older persons who experience multidimensional inequalities and social exclusion. The paper “*Causes of social exclusion of the elderly: Barriers to inclusive sustainable development*”, by Aigerim Zhakypbek, Indira Sarybayeva, Gulzhan Alimbekova, Gulnur Yesbergenova, investigates the root causes, manifestations, and impacts of social exclusion faced by the elderly population in Kazakhstan through an interdisciplinary socio-anthropological lens. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods, including surveys, interviews, and empirical analysis, the research examines subjective experiences of loneliness, isolation, low social engagement, and barriers to accessing essential services among older adults.

We close this issue of the Review of studies on sustainability with a “Focus” dedicated to the in-depth analysis of issues/challenges connected to the pursuit of the objectives of the 2030 Agenda: climate change, food security,

recycling, the narcissism-workaholism dilemma, and accounting of infrastructure assets.

Particularly, in “*Legal regulation of climate change in the context of global warming*”, authors Gulnar Aigarinova, Nellya Kairova, Nuradin Nakyshov, Turdaly Karatayev, Gylshat Rakhmetova, Sadykh Yessimkulov, analyze the direct negative impact of the climate change, focusing on global warming, on most life-supporting human processes: production, agricultural sector, safe and secure dwelling of population, and more. The purpose of this article is to study the effectiveness and efficiency of harmonization of the national legislation of the developed countries in accordance with international legal treaties in the field of climate in the context of global warming.

The paper “*Food Security and Sustainable Development: West Africa case study*”, by Iuliia Zolotareva and Francesco Zecca, focuses on the delicate problem of food security in a particular area of the world: West Africa. The paper shows a significant variability in food security across the region, with notable challenges in the stability pillar. The authors underscore the importance of enhancing regional cooperation, improving political stability, and targeting policies to improve food security and guarantee sustainable development.

Although recycling is one of the main solutions proposed in the waste hierarchy established by the Waste Framework Directive, the effective recycling of plastic packaging waste in Italy is still insufficient. The paper “*Discussion on plastic waste management hierarchy*”, by Max J.A. Romero, Cristina Moliner, Elisabetta Arato, aims to help fill possible knowledge gaps and guide decisions in both, the public sector and the private sector, in the development of policies that enhance the management of plastic packaging waste. Among the results it was found that the low recycling rate of plastic packaging is in part due to the technical and regulatory limitations that exist at European level for the growth of innovative solutions in the plastic industry.

Narcissistic workaholics are preoccupied with establishing themselves as authoritative figures in order to hold status. The need to achieve the highest status can become obsessive for certain people, driving them to continuously test their limitations. The same can be said about the mind when it comes to any kind of addiction and work life-stressor. This is the theme of the paper “*Unmasking the Narcissism and Workaholism Dilemma: A Parallel and Sequential Mediation Dance of Perfectionism and Paranoia in Diverse Organizational Environments*”. Authors Ahmed Elnadif Elmanssury, Yasir Hayat Mughal, Muhammad Fiaz, Irfan Ullah, Asif Mahmood show that narcissism is positively linked with workaholism, while perfectionism and paranoia mediates this relationship. Employee mental health should be prioritized, and positive workaholism should be encouraged.

The study “*Accounting of infrastructure assets of state institutions as an element of sustainable development goals*” showed that the valuation of infrastructure facilities is one of the main components for ensuring the efficient functioning of the economy. The main research methods used in this study were modelling and forecasting. The conclusions drawn in this study can be applied both to the management of public institutions and to the creation of policies in the field of accounting principles development.

I believe that this issue of our Review constitutes an important addition to the global strategy of transition towards Sustainability. In the same way, the Focus section has contributed, through its focus on specific issues, to offering important food for thought and, in some cases, solutions for achieving the Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

To all the authors goes my deepest gratitude.