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Journal of Research & Reviews in Social Sciences Pakistan

Journal homepage: http://journal.kinnaird.edu.pk

WHY THE DEVELOPMENT PARADIGM TRANSFORMED INTO THE SUSTAINABILITY DISCOURSE:

"The 'environment' is where we live; and 'development' is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable."

(Brundtland Commission, p. 1987)

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Keywords
Strategic Partnerships, Eco-Justice, Eco-Leadership, Value-Rational Social Action, World Systems Theory

Abstract

This article argues that the transformation of the development paradigm into the sustainability discourse introduces the prospect of establishing strategic partnerships for addressing one of our most pressing global issues. The strategic partnerships would facilitate multi-level cooperative social action that would contribute to improving the quality of multi-level social relations. Thus, the strategic partnerships would contribute to the sustainability discourse by establishing a means of cooperating to protect one of the greatest values shared by humanity – the natural environment. The article argues that applying the concepts and principles connected with sustainability in the Asian-Pacific would make evident the complementary connection between social-economic flourishing, eco-justice, and cooperative interstate activity. This article contributes to the literature addressing the factors that shape the global arena by explaining how the sustainability discourse transforms the established approach to development into the prospect of cooperative strategic partnerships in the Asian-Pacific.

1. Introduction

Applying the sustainability discourse to social economic planning reduces conflicts associated with the established approach to development. This is because the sustainability discourse proposes a strategy for engaging stakeholders in the process of collaboratively co-creating options for mutual gain and they agree to work toward a common goal (Fisher & Ury, 1991, pp. 70-74). The sustainability discourse proposes a strategy for engaging stakeholders in a new type of multi-level strategic partnership that operates as the means of co-creating improved conditions for the global community and for co-constituting a social reality based on shared values and principles. The sustainability model engages stakeholders in value creation processes that are heralded by theorists of social economics, marketing, governance, and intercultural relations as an effective means of addressing one of today's most urgent global issues. Cooperating to create a mutually desired value outcome is defined as collaborative interactions between stakeholders in order to integrate the world's natural resources so that they increase the benefits for and satisfy the interests of a larger number of global stakeholders. When applied as a strategy for sustainability it is an eco-justice model for increasing the flourishing of the global arena, it works to establish an infrastructure for peace, and to establish a model of eco-leadership. Establishing strategic partnerships is an example of how the Constructivism concept works at multi-levels to co-constitute social reality. Co-constituting social reality involves structuring interactions between a system and its agents by means of engaging stakeholders in value creating networks. The network acts as a neutral value creation sphere where the participants cooperate in Constructivist communication processes to determine the common goals they would like to achieve. Co-creating a sustainable global future is a knowledge age strategy that cultural agents employ in order to realize "The kind of life that they have reason to value" (Sen, 1999, pp. 10, & 30-32). "The shared values are then shaped into interstate social reality by employing the same interactional processes that increasingly prove to be successful for establishing the foundation for an infrastructure of peace" (Miller, 2016, p. 64). Thus, the sustainability discourse employs collaborative dialogic processes to determine how to incorporate the most cherished values of a culture into planning future social economic reality. In spite of the inevitability of conflict between various interest groups, the reduction of conflict occurs due to willingness to work toward experiencing common values and shared goals and relating in accordance with common principles. Consequently, the stakeholders constitute their agreement as a social contract – because they have come to realize that safeguarding their personal interest occurs by reducing conflict and agreeing to cooperate to

achieve a common goal. Parties commit to the process based on the conviction that common values and goals without fail work to shift the emphasis away from conflicting interests toward peaceful cooperation when stakeholders engage in participatory Constructivist-type communication processes (Fisher & Ury, 1991, pp. 3-7 & 9-14; Nye, 2004, pp. 31-91; & Habermas, 1997, pp. 113-154).

Thus, the sustainability discourse is a model for social-economic planning, conflict reduction, and peacebuilding while, at the same time, a method for increasing solidarity between multi-level stakeholders. The assumption is that the members of a society desire a future where they can maximize material satisfaction and realize higher order values. Thus, the concept of co-creating shared values is based on the inherent human desire to work together toward protecting one of humanity's most cherished values – the environment. This article contributes to research on sustainability by explaining how disputes over resources and their use (i.e. factors that affect security, conflict, and stability) can be resolved by employing the strategic partnership approach to sustainability and cooperating to co-create a more reliably sustainable future.

The following section explains the relationship between development and conflict (e.g. issues such as the right of people to self-determination, the use of the world's natural resources, distributive justice, and Human Rights). Section three explains the emergence of the sustainability discourse and how it evolved into a model for a sustainable future, reducing conflict, and peacebuilding. Section three also explains how reconceptualizing the value concept provides a viable approach to planning sustainability in ways harmonious with natural patterns thus favorable for establishing a complementary relationship between a society and natural patterns. Section four explains how the application of the reconceptualized perspective on value establishes models of eco-justice, eco-leadership, and sustainability in the Asian-Pacific (i.e. including South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Far East). In addition, section four explains how the transformation of the development paradigm into the sustainability discourse contributes to international relations research on conflict, peace, and security. Thus, section four explains how the transformation of the sustainability paradigm into the sustainability discourse serves as a model for enhancing strategic partnerships in the Asia-Pacific.

2. Development, Cultural Values, Resource Management, and Eco-justice

For many people the hope that development would create freedom through self-grounding has in fact turned out to be a realization of the need for re-connecting with the environment (i.e. a realization of the need for security through re-grounding). Is there a way of reconciling these two yearnings?

(David Loy, 1995, pp. 9 & 30).

Development experts introduced modernization as a theoretical model for facilitating the decolonization movement and for implementing economic growth strategies that would spark progress, reduce poverty, and improve the quality of life during the post-colonialism era (US president Truman, 2006, p. 528). However, from the initial stages developing countries found themselves caught in a global bipolar stand-off to which their development planning and political systems were subject. Because the Cold War involved two contesting strands of political economy vying for being the primary influence over the direction a developing country would take many developing nations were handicapped from being entirely autonomous in their planning (Baran, 1973, pp. 44-45). In actual practice development strategies, aid, and development loans were aspects of the political, economic, and military ambitions of the superpowers. Because the power struggle was global the hope that development would result in self-determination and full liberation was diminished by the

endeavor of the superpowers to increase their power capabilities and advantage by obtaining the natural resources needed to fuel their economies, industries, and militaries — primarily in form of offering development proposals to entice developing nations into alignment. Experts proposed the initial post war development strategy as a means for advancing nations beyond the subsistence social-economic level by applying the modern industrial techniques that worked for generating wealth in the developed nations. It assumed that applying industry and technology was preferable to traditional methods of social economic activity, would produce a greater amount of wealth in a shorter time, and would facilitate integrating a local economy into the global market. Modernization theory had an impact on developing countries by creating dependence on developed countries for knowledge and technology transfer. The most prominent examples were chemical intensive food production, the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and mono cropping. However, development also created the challenge of sudden urbanization and mass migrations.

Development strategists proposed that strengthening the institutional structures of developing countries would enhance development (Street, 1967, p. 45). However, Modernization Theory failed to account for the uniqueness of each cultural context, the particular identity concerns of the people, their cultural worldview, and the value orientation of the society. There were, at the time, viable theoretical models emphasizing the fact that social reality is necessarily co-constructed and that deliberation is the only authentic basis for establishing a progressive society. However, because development experts narrowly focused on the economic aspect of planning their strategies

failed to be inclusive of the Constructivist notion of social formation. John Dewey for example — renowned for his views on social processes and the prospect of co-creating valued social outcomes — asserted that because human interests are mutually interpenetrating it is best to construct social reality by a process of co-creation (2004 [1915], p. 93). Consequently, development strategies suffered from failing to apply the available theoretical insight regarding Constructivist-type relational, interactive, and dialogic processes to assure that development progresses in a way that is compatible with the value interests of the people and their culture and in a way that reconciles the dichotomy between social and economic values (Escobar, 1995, p. 44).

A failure to employ a participatory approach to planning inevitably resulted in incompatibilities between the development vision of international experts and local populations — which were evident in terms of conflicting interests, needs, and goals (Wallensteen, 2007, pp. 15-16). Cultures in the Asian-Pacific experienced disruption when the impact of development economic values prompted individual utility maximization to supplant the cultural communal value for mutuality and reciprocity. Consequently, "The failure to address the issue of culture [became] the most important single theme that underlies Asian-Pacific economic development" (Rigg, 1997, p. 62).

Value in economic terms means increasing the abundance of material things and the frequency of their consumption. In the developing world traditional values typically urge the preservation of things and higher order values are equally if not more important than material values. Thus, it was inevitable that the early development strategies resulted in controversy — at the very least. Clashes over interests and values evolved into forms of organized resistance to the intervention of superpowers in shaping the direction of a culture's development. However, at the very worst, the conflicts intensified into violence (see Figure 1 below for an explanation of how the initial development strategies created conflict). The established paradigm resulted in conflict over resources, resource management, and resource distribution, and conflict over the lack of a participatory approach to planning (Rigg, 1997) – which sparked movements to resist the direction of development proposed by the superpowers (Baran, 1973; & Frank, 1969). However, there was also conflict resulting from the environmental crisis that occurred as an outcome of the initial development strategies (The UN & EU, 2012).

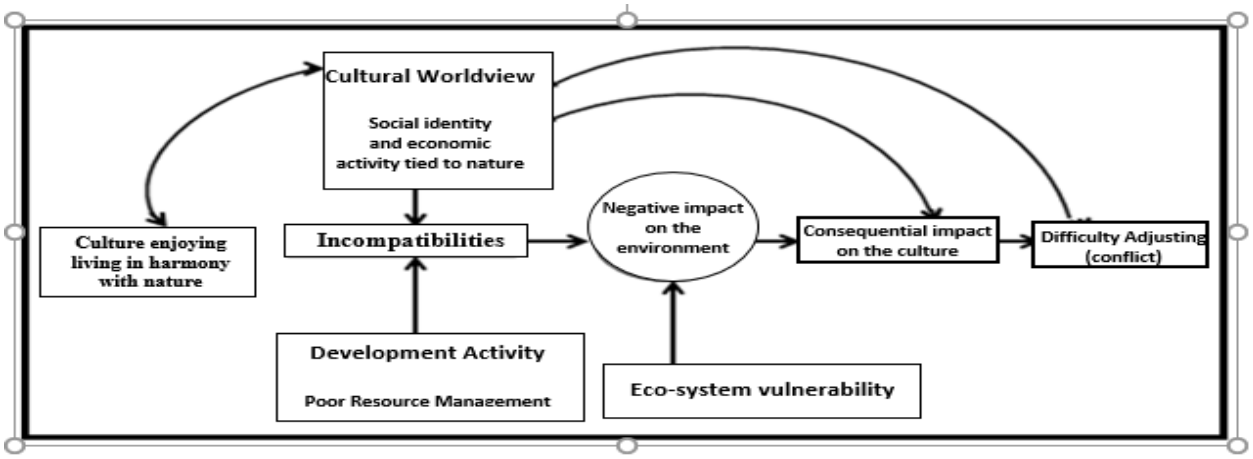

Figure 1: An illustration of the correlation between cultural stability and the environment (e.g. its resources). The illustration also indicates that an alteration of the nature-culture relationship disrupts the society resulting in the need for social adjustment or change. Difficulty adjusting or if the change is too severe causes conflict (Adapted from Homer-Dixon, 1991).

2.1. Resistance Movements

By the 1960's the de-colonialization movement became increasingly critical of the extent of dependency on prescriptions for development imposed by external experts and the extent to which planning overlooked the cherished values and internal vision of their cultures. Consequently, resistance took the form of a critical response to the established approach, on the one hand – expressed in terms of Dependency Theory. However, on the other hand, resistance escalated into social conflict that in some cases took the form of militant reactions to the established approach to development. "The movements [can be] referred to as postcolonial. The postcolonial is a 'field of force' that came into being with decolonization in which groups are engaged in conflictual encounters over the forms, directions and meanings of development — which [sparked] the dynamics of these struggles" (Motta and Nilsen, 2011, p. 3).

Dependency Theorists stressed that the retardation of development and the lack of progress and growth in terms of increased human well-being and social-cultural flourishing results in *the development problematique* that creates resistance (Baran, 1973, pp. 117-120; Sunkel, 1969, p. 23; & Dos Santos, 1971, p. 226). Dependency Theorists admonished that the development problem inevitably creates conflict between the profit interests of conservative elite and the social welfare interest the public. Planning can only be effective by reconciling the social concerns of the proletariat and the political economic pursuits of the special interest groups (Frank, 1969, pp. 221-230 & 248-317).

Due to the ideological warfare that accompanied the Cold War most developing countries were subject to the revolutionary spirit of the time — which sparked nationalism in parts of the Asian-Pacific. Consequently, there were two contrasting responses to the pursuit for greater national self-direction. First, were endeavors to legitimize a regime by promoting social economic strategies

for eliminating poverty by means of adopting *laissez-faire* market Liberalism. The second response occurred "Almost coincident with the time when the New Right was infiltrating the corridors of the establishment. At stage left notions of community development, empowerment, sustainability, and participatory planning were leaving the radical ghetto where they had been nurtured and were incorporated into mainstream thinking" (Rigg, 1997, p. 42).

The alternative strategy – in line with ideological rhetoric of Dependency Theorists – was a "Demand for greater political participation and redistribution in the developmentalist alliance, for the transcendence of the accumulation strategy altogether, and a move towards national socialist development mediated by the popular classes and their representatives in the state" (Motta and Nilsen, 2011, p. 8). By the end of the 60's there was clearly a need for a perspective on development that would resolve the dichotomy between the economic strategies promoted by the established elite and that of the growing number of populist movements emphasizing inclusiveness of culture and values (Said, 1983, p. 221).

2.2. Culture, Development, and Economic Performance

"Max Weber was right. If we learn anything from the history of economic development, it is that culture makes almost all the difference" (Landes, 2000, p. 2).

The definition of culture is a social system consisting of a plurality of individuals who have learned to cooperate with each other in order to shape out of their social and natural environments the optimization of satisfaction and fulfillment (Parsons, 1991, p. 3; & Miller, 2014, p. 148). Max Weber argued that a culture's worldview is a major factor in economic performance. He described the economy as one aspect of the overall social system. According to Weber the social system, is comprised of four essential parts: the traditional (i.e. meaningful actions), the passionate (i.e. affectual acts), value-rational social action (driven by ideal interests), and instrumentally rational social action (i.e. material interests) (Weber, 1978, pp. 24-25; & Miller, 2014, p. 148). Renown development expert, Immanuel Wallerstein, argues that planning is inadequate if it fails to view society from a Holistic perspective (i.e. from the perspective of the totality of the social sciences – which necessarily means taking culture into consideration) (1991, p. 14).

Development experts "Tend to emphasize moving boldly forward to the immediate future and strongly emphasize futurism. This can result in clashes between members of groups with different orientations: e.g. members who favor a past-present focus" (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 63). The modernization development theory stressed replacing the old with the new. However, in traditional cultures progress means improving on established cultural practices. "Those who subscribe to the past-present focus tend to believe in the importance of understanding historical factors and the background context that frames *the self*. For those who place an emphasis on planning based on cultural values, in order to understand the present *self* it is important to understand the

historical contexts that pave the way to it (Ting-Toomey, 1999, p. 62).

Wallerstein claims that the problem is two-fold. First, is the claim that economics is *the queen of the social sciences* – resulting in a tendency for it to dominate views on what is best for society. Secondly, along the same line, experts of economic development focus on one aspect of what is best for society (e.g. accumulating wealth) – typically measured in terms of an increase in material gains. However, "Culture refers to the higher arts and signifies that which is symbolic as opposed to that which is material" (Wallerstein, 1990, p. 32). Consequently, the demands for economic growth came in conflict with the social goals for order and stability, self-determination, the reduction of poverty, social equality, and national autonomy – "And there is no universal agreement on the best way of their integration" (Zhang, 2003, p. 3). Because of the failure to take culture and heritage, identity, and cultural values into account development strategies meant to increase peace and economic stability often results in conflict (Mirovitskaya and Ascher, 2014, p. 1; also see *Redclift, 1993, p. 3; &* Costanza et al., 2007, p. 268).

Wallerstein, in response, proposed World Systems Theory – which implies acknowledging global interdependence. His basic conceptual claim is that "The arenas of collective human action – the economic, the political, and the social or social-cultural – are not autonomous arenas of social action" (2000, p. 134). Wallerstein envisioned that World System Theory would be a movement toward eliminating the contradiction between economic value theory (the pursuit of instrumental means) and a culture's endeavor to experience higher order values (1990, p. 38). He asserts that because of the increased interdependence of the world system the global arena would benefit from increasing the prominence of marco sociology – which would make economics a subfield of the social sciences (Wallerstein, 2007, pp. 427-437). In fact, he believes that the potential that the sociology of knowledge has for enhancing global social existence prompts acknowledging the need to integrate economics and social sciences plus theorizing on the basis of an integrative approach to what shapes the global social future.

The *development problematique* sparked a worldwide movement in the late 1960's and early 1970's that had an impact on the decolonization movement. That is to say that there were heightening of efforts to stress the importance of identity, culture, and values in nationalistic-oriented social movements; an increase in eco-feminist movements emphasizing the environmental crisis created by the established development paradigm; and intensified efforts to broaden the knowledge-base of global relations to include intercultural relations and cultural studies. Thus, "A good deal of the new theorizing centered around the revalidation of identities, quite regularly expressed in terms of the centrality of culture — [and] a radical reanalysis of social processes" (Wallerstein, 2007, pp. 434-435). Therefore, there was a heightening of the recognition of the fact that development creates the dire consequences of resistance, conflict, and violence if not inclusive of insight into cultural

values and identity plus knowledge regarding conflict reduction and peacebuilding.

2.3. Resource Management, Resource Distribution, and Conflict

The assurgency of Neo Liberalism in the 1970's heightened tensions between strategies for economic development and strategies regarding what is best for a particular society based on traditional values. The tensions heightened with the increasing scarcity and depletion of resources and conflict over resource management and resource distribution (i.e. distributive justice and Human Rights). "The controversy [regarded] civil and political rights, on the one hand, and economic, social, and cultural rights on the other" (Kothari, 1980, p. 331). In other words,

conflict "Arises from the practical constraints on resources, the conviction that the prevailing

patterns of development violate basic values, and the [right of individuals and] nations to freely pursue their own paths of self-reliant development and cultural autonomy" (Kothari, 1980, p. 331). Conflict emerges when the commercial corporate interests (local and international) are incompatible with the religious, cultural, identity, value, ideological, survival, and economic commitments of local people. Thus, conflict between private rights and public interests accompanied Neo Liberalism's rise to becoming the established approach to development in the 1970 (e.g. conflict resulting from the impact that private interests was having on the resources of *the commons*).

The Neo Liberal model of development stressed <u>*laissez-faire*</u> economic practices: e.g. reducing government interference in economic activity, privatization, and the reduction of government spending on social welfare. This created a tendency for privatization to result in self-interest and utility maximization – with private agents benefiting from activities that had damaging effects on *the commons*. In other words, a *tragedy of the commons* results from a private agent — and in some cases an international corporation — becoming the primary beneficiary from utilizing the resources of the commons to the detriment of and cost to the public. The *tragedy of the commons* is a situation in which members of a culture who have learned to rely on a common resource system in order to experience a good quality of life find themselves in a situation where their benefits from the commons is reduced. However, individual private users are able to increase the benefits derived from use of the commons in order to maximize their individual profit. The situation is exasperated when the use of the natural resources creates outcomes that are detrimental to the common good, to the overall society, and damages the environment (Hardin, 1968, pp. 1244-1245). "The accepted definition of natural resources is materials that occur in nature and are essential or useful to humans such as water, air, land, forests, fish and wildlife, top-soil, and minerals. Often referred to as the earth's gift to humanity, natural resources provide basic sustenance, economic and social development, and cultural identity" (Burnett, 2016, p. xxix).

2.4. Environmental Conflict Resulting from Development Problems

"No other issue in Asia's contemporary history has so swiftly assumed prominence as the

emergence of an increasingly politicized ecological awareness. A complex mix of profligate resource extraction and local controversy created an environmental awareness which has broadened into the political agenda" (Clad and Siy, 1996, p. 52).

During the 1970's traditional cultures realized the extent of incompatibility between their cultural values and the established approach to development. Cultural groups increasingly found themselves waking up in the morning to the sound of bulldozers, chainsaws, and heavy equipment (i.e. heavy machinery drilling into mountain rock) — which were *leveling their farms,* clearing their forests, stripping the mountain-side, and *desecrating* sacred ancestral burial grounds (Gedicks, 1993, p. 28). Thus, it was obvious that traditional conceptions and perceptions of the nature-human relationship conflicted with the established approach to development resulting in movements that advocated resolving the environmental crisis. The 1970's environmental movements were not just a protest against development, "Resistance reflected, above all, a struggle over symbols and meanings, a cultural struggle" (Escobar, 1995, p. 167).

For example, the *Hug the Trees* movement was started South Asia in the 1970's as a non-violent protest of *hill peasantry* against the devastation of their forests. This movement – known as the Chipko movement or chipko andolan – sparked a worldwide response that raised awareness of the fact that cultural knowledge and the Human Rights of traditional people are necessary aspects of effective planning. Cultural worldviews and philosophies emphasize that harmony is essential and, as well, that enhancing personal and social flourishing results from maintaining a harmonious connection with nature. "Environmental movements all share a specific core dichotomy: the environment/nature (whether it is a particular river, endangered animal, etc.) is sacred and *the profane* are the particular practices that represent the defilement, rape, or extermination of the sacred — literally pollution (e.g. the construction of a nuclear power plant, chemical fertilization, logging, etc.)" (Hsiao et al., 1999, p. 212).

Traditional values and lifestyles reflect a model of sustainable ecological efficiency. Many cultural groups still live according to values cherished during the many long years of their heritage — based on maintaining a harmonious and ecologically balanced relationship with nature. The worldview of traditional cultures consider harmony with the environment as essential to a sustainable approach to meeting both the material and higher order needs of the society. In addition, the culture's ritual practices, sense of identity, and heritage (e.g. the story of their origin) involve the culture's connection to the environment. Traditional cultures foster the belief that there is an ethical and aesthetic aspect of the nature-human relationship that serves as the basis of the normative principles for "Their values of life and the index of the social, cultural, and emotional evolution of society" (Shangpliang, 2010, p. 45).

As a result of the obvious problems created by the modernization theory of development and its subsequent Neo Liberalism counterpart, the continuous critiques of their inadequacies, the

persistence of resistance and conflicts, plus the violence sparked by the *development problematique* there was a growing awareness of the correlation between the established approach to economic development and environmental degradation. "By the 1970's grass-root environmental resistance emerged from oppositional movements motivated by anticolonial, national independence, Marxist, and feminist aspirations. Some – discovering the inextricable linkages between poverty, domination by outsiders, and environmental degradation – have become ecologically and politically radicalized" (Lee & So, 1999, p. 5). Thus, environmental crises sparked a new form of social-economic movement in the 1970's. The public, policy-makers, and theorists of developmental economics increasingly began to express concern regarding the exploitation and depletion of natural resources, the contamination of the soil/land, pollution, regarding the fragility of the ecosystem, and climate change (Bapat 2005, p. 28; Pereira & Seabrook, 1996, p. 5).

The connection between the use of natural resources and the tragedy of the commons caused the United Nations to acknowledge that "Exploitation of natural resources is a key factor in triggering, escalating and sustaining conflicts around the globe [which is] further aggravated by environmental degradation. Mismanagement of land and natural resources is contributing to new conflicts and obstructing the peaceful resolution of existing ones" (UN, 2012, p. 1). Thus, the public, policy makers, and social economic theorists increasingly acknowledged that the environmental and subsequent climate change problems – aggravated by the established approach to development – are threating any appreciable sense of global existence.

The United Nations responded with a series of international conventions in an attempt to re-conceptualize development, highlight the emerging environmental crisis, and admonish sustainability. For example, The United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972) advocated a "Common outlook and common principles to inspire and guide the peoples of the world in the preservation and enhancement of the human environment" (UN, 1972, p. 3). *The Cocoyoc Declaration on the Environment and Development (1974) was* a joint effort of The United Nations *Environment* Program and The *United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Also, T*he Brundtland Report — *Our Common Future* (1987) and *The* Rio Declaration on Environment and Development adopted by the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — better known as the Earth Summit — significantly raised awareness of the urgency of the environmental and climate change challenges.

3. Sustainability, Conflict Reduction, and Peacebuilding: a new discourse

Without trees there is no food, and without food, no life. The forests are disappearing, and there are increasingly problems with the soil of our fields. There will be no soil left by the time our children are grown. What, I wonder, will become of our children? How will they survive?

(paraphrase from Broad, 1994, p. 814)

Modernity — the paradigm that triggered expansionism, an intensification of globalization, the subsequent integration of the global economy, and the initial notions of development — was based on the assumption that modernization by applying advances in science and technology is the solution to the world's problems. Consequently, the modernization development discourse emerged as a powerful force shaping the post war global arena, notions of developed and undeveloped/developing, and perceptions of advanced and backward societies. However, by the latter part of the 20th century considerable criticism amounted over the impact that assumptions regarding Modernity had on the environment, on creating *the development problematic*, and on international relations. That is to say that critics of the established development theory began to assert that there is a need for re-conceptualizing the entire notion of Modernity, development, modernization, and human values. Thus, the persistence of the development problem, the role of the established approach to development in contributing to the environmental crisis, and the climate change challenge resulted in a welcomed discourse transformation by the latter part of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century.

During the third quarter of the 20th century an emancipatory aspect was introduced to the discourse on how the global arena evolves (e.g. in the form of eco-justice and the contribution of feminist environmentalism). The new discourse conceives of the possibility of sustainability as liberating, as creating a more balanced human experience, as resolving the nature-human dichotomy, plus as emphasizing interdependence, interconnectedness, and mutuality. The movement, in terms popularized by environmental activists and eco-feminists is an "Ideology of liberation [that] makes justice and peace possible" (Shiva, 2014, p. 13). The movement coincided with and contributed to the emergence of Social Constructivism as a paradigm that proposes a means for co-creating social reality and for improving international relations (i.e. a dialogic approach to knowledge generation and empowerment that creates mutually beneficial and satisfactory outcomes for the participating agents).

The eco-justice movement emphasized that the problem of imbalance is not only evident in the human relationship to nature but in many other aspects of human social existence. The proponents of the eco-justice movement stressed the need for establishing a Holistic approach to the overall human experience. That is to say that they made it clear that the north-south, advanced-undeveloped, and capitalists versus Neo Marxist perspectives on the problems are indicative of a more pervasive and universally inclusive issue: e.g. how essential and urgent it is to conceptually affirm the "Ontological continuity between society and nature" (Shiva, 2014, viii & 39). In this respect, the eco-justice movement became a primary representation of the outcry for a new development discourse — proclaimed by Critical Theorists, postmodern development theorists, and peace researchers who stressed the role of eco-justice in reducing conflict and in peace-building (Adams, 1990, pp. 76, & 167-172; Spring et al., 2014, p. 1).

Thus, the eco-justice movement within itself – initially characterized as merely being the outcry of an internationally coordinated group of nature lovers – gained support from the increasing assertion on the part of scientists from various disciplines that the current approach to economic development has put the earth and its peoples on a non-survivable course. This added credence to the Critical Theorist argument that there is a need for a new paradigm and introduced "A science-based movement that – in the very name of science – is capable of questioning the foundations of modernity and contesting its logic. In fact, the ecology movement seems to be the first anti-modernist movement attempting to justify its claims with ecosystems theory, which integrates physics, chemistry and biology" (Sachs, 2010, p. 29). The sustainability concept not only offers the hope of reconciling the modernity-postmodernity, science-post-positivism, and nature-human dichotomies but also offers the promise of integrating Eastern and Western knowledge in order to co-create a more sustainable world. In fact, the scientific study of the connection between environmental problems and human well-being (e.g. including the use of natural resources, conflict over resources, and the problem of the commons) reveals that development within itself is not enough for fulfilling the human desire for a secure future with reduced threats to existence. That is to say that the scientific study of the connection between environmental problems and development in the late 20th century revealed that by persisting with the dominant paradigm it is almost certain that "Many human needs will not be met, life-support systems will be dangerously degraded, and the number of hungry and poor will increase'' (NRC, 1999, p. 276). The sustainability discourse emerged as the crisis increasingly became 'scientized,' 'politicized' and 'securitized' with the realization that the threat is equally true for developed and undeveloped countries. Thus, the sustainability discourse emerged in an effort to resolve the 20th century development problem/dichotomies by broadening the discourse from its narrow developmental economics scope to include social psychology, studies of the various aspects of culture and cultural worldviews (e.g. indigenous knowledge), Human Rights, the environment, conflict reduction, and peacebuilding. Theorists increasingly agreed that the sustainability concept resolves the development problematique by establishing a linkage between "Four social science research programs: peace studies, security studies, development studies, and environment studies — which [play a role in establishing] sustainable development, human security, and sustainable peace" (Brauch et al., 2016, p. 3). The sustainability concept reconciles the aspirations of the decolonization movement for freedom and self-determination with the endeavor to experience a sustainable peace (i.e. improving living conditions in a way that creates a healthy environment). Thus, the sustainability concept represents a fundamental change in the way we think about creating a flourishing global social order and reducing threats to human existence. The new paradigm weds the discourse on peace with that of eco-justice — which actually produces a

liberating strategy that uses integrative power to create *sustainable and peaceful* social orders (Boulding, 1990, pp. 10-230).

4. Sustainability, a Constructivist Approach to Co-creating Value, and Peace-building

This section of the article explains the advantages of applying a strategic partnership approach to the sustainability discourse in South Asia. The argument is that the application demonstrates the complementary connection between social-economic flourishing, eco-justice, and sustainability. This is because the co-creation of a sustainable future approach empowers cultures in a way that enable them to live in accordance with what they have reason to value and is a sustainability strategy that simultaneously works to establish the foundations of peaceful cooperation. The concept is a viable approach both to sustainable social economic planning and for establishing a Constructivist approach to international relations because it works to harmonize the human relationship to nature while, at the same time, it enhances interstate cooperation (Broome & Anastasiou, 2012, p. 293; & Gawerc, 2006, pp. 437-443). The strategic partnership approach to co-creating value is an effective model for sustainability because it resolves the dichotomy between creating value in cultural terms as opposed to value in economics terms (e.g. GDP and the interests of the international corporations versus traditional values) (Redclift, 1987, p. 34).

Collaboration between stakeholders to establish agreement to work toward a future that all participants accept as a basis for sustainability, prosperity, and peace is a strenuous process. It involves integrating the knowledge and resources of many segments of the society, its institutions, various government and community leaders, and the media (both established and alternative) in order to increase benefits for all stakeholders (see figure 2 below). Effectively incorporating sustainability into social economic planning involves negotiating intercultural, interethnic, and interstate relations. In addition, there is a need to resolve the difference between industrial activity that the people believe is in the best interests of their culture, industrial activities that reflect the interest of the state, and those of private international corporations. The complications also involve the extent to which cultures are empowered by the state with self-determination. Thus, complexity creates the need for planning that is inclusive of and incorporates the interests of a wide range of stakeholders at multi-levels – from local to international. The strategic partnership approach to co-creating value is a means of reducing the conflict in what otherwise are volatile contexts (Nath, 2015, pp. 30-31).

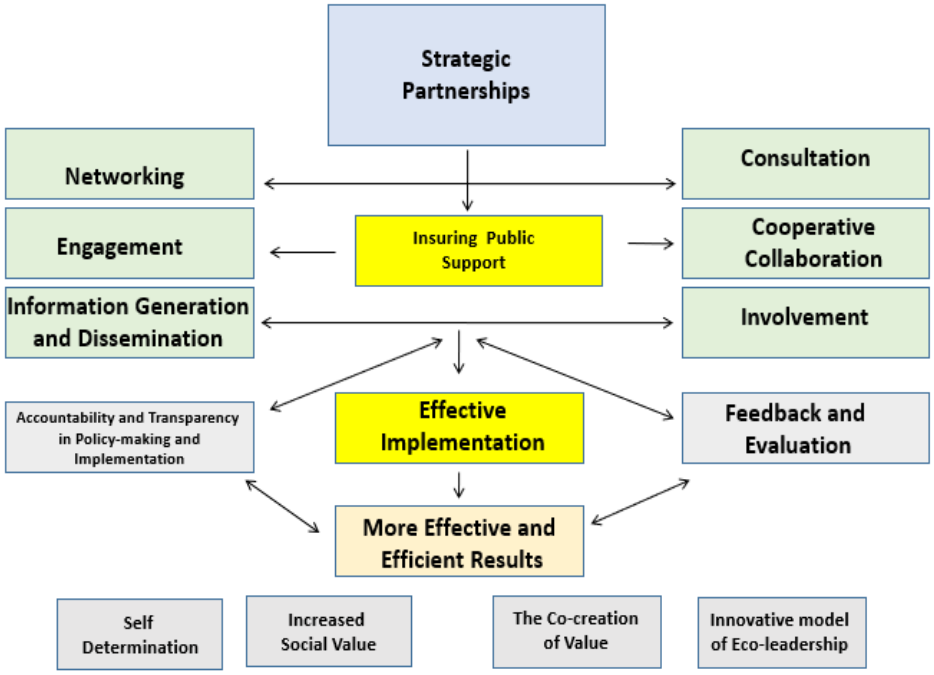

Figure 3: An illustration of the value creation network in Meghalaya which is a participatory approach to planning sustainable social economic development (adaptation of M. S. Mishra's model of participatory culture; also see Nath, 2015, pp. 35-39 for a detailed explanation of how a participatory approach to planning sustainability would work in the Asian-Pacific).

The question concerning South Asia is then what must happen for collaborative and cooperative interactions to work successfully for co-creating the type of life that the people value most? In other words, what processes empower people to transform the power of techno-economic determinism into outcomes they are content with? The answer is a theoretical strategy for transforming the conflicts resulting from the established approach to development into a Constructivist model of complementary engagement between multi-level stakeholders (Conca, 2002, p. 9). This knowledge age strategic partnership model presumes that all members of society – due to unavoidable interconnectedness – are engaged in an attempt to integrate the available resources of society for the common purpose of improving social-economic conditions (Vargo & Lush, 2011, p. 181).

The confrontation of the cultures of South Asia with Modernity created a dichotomy that they experience *as facing a crossroads.* On the one hand, they look back at vibrant cultural traditions and values that have shaped their cultural identity and continue to be significant in envisioning the future – thus they clearly see enormous potential for flourishing in a contemporary sense based on such values. In this respect, they envision the possibility of shaping their future by transforming the values inherent in their heritage into a sustainable, flourishing, and peaceful future social reality – cultures that are also models of eco-

leadership. On the other hand, many cultures groups look ahead in apprehension realizing the need for effectively adjusting to the techno-economic demands calling for the renewal of the structure of their governance, social-economic, and cultural systems (Singh, 2008, p. 10). The strategic partnership approach to co-creating value resolves the dichotomy between a perspective on existence based on traditional cultural values (i.e. the perspective from look back) and the pressures placed on traditional cultures to adjust to the techno-economic determinism of the modernization and Neo-liberal theories (the apprehension that is created when looking forward). Enhancing cooperation and peacebuilding result from creating channels of open communication in which stakeholders freely participate (CORE Policy Brief, 2013, p. 3). Establishing strategic partnerships and cooperative networks are essential aspects of the co-creation of value process because it creates a means for integrating all the natural, social, and economic resources in a way that benefits multi-level stakeholders (Miller, 2015, p. 21; & Vargo & Lusch, 2011, p. 184; Escobar, 1995, pp. 194-195; & 1998, 60-67). This means that establishing strategic partnerships and cooperative networks – when applied as a strategy for peaceful coexistence – works to integrate the interests of the multi-level stakeholders to create outcomes beneficial to individual social agent while, at the same time, improves the conditions of the global arena. Thus, the model establishes an infrastructure for peace by using advances in communication media to create multi-level social value. This new perspective is based on the Constructivist theoretical claim that "Resource[s] (focused via signification and legitimation) [create] structured properties of social systems, [which are] drawn upon and reproduced by knowledgeable agents in the course of interaction" (Giddens, 1984, pp. 4 & 15-16). "In other words the strategic partnership approach to the sustainability discourse proposes Constructivist processes to create shared values (e.g. Holistic well-being, improved environmental conditions, the establishment of common goals, increased material satisfaction, as well as maximizing the enjoyment of higher order values)" (Miller, 2016, 64). Co-creating a sustainable global future becomes a strategy for realizing the future hoped for by the global community, is rooted in cultural values and heritage, a future based on state of the art sustainability planning, a future that satisfies both material and higher order values and that draws from the inherent human desire to work together toward achieving a *sustainable peaceful future*. "Recursive forces – the fundamental principles that promote the peace – act as a factor in [creating an] infrastructure for peace when the apparent conflict of interests between agents are effectively mediated by the discursive structures of the system so that the collaborative interaction creates solidarity" (Savrum & Miller, 2015, p. 19; & Giddens, 1984, pp. 24-25).

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