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THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION OF ITS EXTENSIVITY, PRACTICABILITY AND VERACITIES

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ABSTRACT: The prevalent geopolitical prognosis during Brundtland's Commission conceptualisation of sustainable development has metamorphosed, even though the basic core values serve as the conceptual basis and guidelines for understanding the SDG goals. Evolving socio-political behaviours have exposed new social complications. Ideological extremism, global warming, insurgency, poverty, food crisis, social inequality and humanitarian crisis have all challenged the suitability and applicability of the conceptual framework for global development. This paper attempts to analyse qualitatively, the underexplored areas of the concept of sustainable development, vis-à-vis its strengths, weakness and limitations by synthesizing an ideal working definition with regards to existing realities, for developmental theorist. It also reviews how environmentalism and human intelligence can symbiotically drive sustainability of biotic and abiotic factors in the planetary system, by advocating an enfranchising bottom-up, frontier-wide and exhaustively deliberated methodologies that amplifies the voice of all social formations in conceptualising new transformational theories or policies for human development.

KEYWORDS: 1; *Sustainable Development* 2; *Human Development* 3; *Poverty* 4; *Social Justice* 5; *Environment* 6; *Social Conflicts*

1. INTRODUCTION

The expression "sustainable development" first appeared in the World Conservation Strategy of the UNEP and International Union for Conservation of Nature in 1980, by 1987, the UN Commission on Environment under the chairmanship of Brundtland renewed the call for sustainable development to decrement poverty, safeguard the environment and feed the hungry. The 1989 interregional consultation in Manila on people's participation in environmentally sustainable development highlighted that "the concept of sustainability is best understood in terms of the sustainability or non sustainability of a community. Authentic development enhances the sustainability of the community. It must be understood as a process of economic, political and social change that need not necessarily involve growth. Sustainable human communities can be achieved only through a people centred development." Also, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development Practice that emanated from the UN earth summit (Agenda 21, 1992) underscored that "...we are confronted with a perpetuation of disparities between and within nations, a worsening of poverty, hunger, ill health and illiteracy and the continuing deterioration of the ecosystem on which we depend for our wellbeing. However, integration of environment and development concerns and greater attention to them will lead to the fulfilment of basic needs, improved living standards for all, better protected and managed ecosystem and a safer, more prosperous future. No nation can achieve this on its own but together we can in a global partnership for sustainable development".

Agenda 21 is a broad-based comprehensive scope, identified problems and simplified across board solutions far reaching

implications for every social segment. However, like preceding Sustainable Development, it's a policy that are more technocentric designed with hopeful sentiments, with no legally binding statement of principles for implementation in the reality of daily living. From previous arguments, most of the highlighted concerns of this thesis, were obviously encapsulated in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development in 1992. But the reality of global development that is concentrated with unsustainable demeanors of divergent State actors is much more multi-dimensional that the perception and psychology of the velvety developmental theorist. Like other resolutions global consensus without legally binding specific measurable commitments will not provide the necessary answers, goal post will continually gravitate to suit the aspirations of powerful actors. Nevertheless, the Stockholm Statement (2016) reported that the sharp rise in socioeconomic inequality in recent times and the disparity of access to basic social services are ethically untenable, undermine social cohesion, and fuel a spiral of elites' policy capture that exacerbates global inequality. The widely accepted and endorsed abstraction of the Brundtland Commission generally affirms that with sustainable development:

- That there is the present and a future;
- That the present generation should meet its production and consumption needs;
- That to redistribute wealth from the future to the present, will compromise the ability of the future generation to meet their basic need;
- That the present level of production and consumption is divergent with the principle of sustainable development.

Humanity might attain sustainable development by meeting today's needs without jeopardising coming generations' ability to sustain themselves, but not necessarily the capacity, which makes the workability of the conceptualisation practically unattainable. In addition, the definition negates a dynamic human 'insatiability' peculiarity, reflected in the pursuit to multiply and protect private wealth accumulation which has gradually eroded social solidarity. Whilst poverty metrics are disturbing, Forbes reported that the high net-worth of private individuals stood at USD58.7 trillion as at 2015. This will aptly corroborate the axiom that "there is enough for everyone's need but not enough for their greed". The dwindling level of responsiveness presuppose the inability and failure of humanity to feed a sizeable portion of its populations in the face of bounteous natural resources. About 795 millions of people mostly from developing countries lack enough food for healthy life; poor nutrition result to about 3.1million recorded children deaths annually and roughly 100 million children said to be grossly underweight (FAO 2015) amidst plenty. Jean-Marie (2016) highlight of Harry Truman's words in 1949, "...more than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate. They are victims of disease. The economics life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history, humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people" still echoes in the twenty first century. Has the narrative change in today's world? According to recent estimates (World Bank 2013), 10.7 percent (767 million people) of global population live on less than \$1.90 a day, a larger percent of living in Sub Sahara Africa and Asia. This is notwithstanding obvious unmeasured yet measurable unique features prevalent in informal human habitations, which are ignored for lack of compelling arguments that can worsen these statistics.

Recalling Bagliani et al (2010) summary of Sneddon (2000) theoretically emphasizing "the inherent contradiction in combining the concepts of development and sustainability". He considers that the concept of sustainable development has reached a dead end and proposes that sustainability should further be debated only with regard to specific sectors and/or conceptual practice. However, Taylor (2012) argues against using reductionist approaches to address the hyper-complex character of global system. In addition, the concept of sustainable development should transcend scientific explanations to value change (Clark 1989), moral development (Roslton, 1994), social reengineering (Al Gore, 1992) or transformational process (Viederman, 1994) as reported by Gladwin et al (1995), towards a mutually beneficial biosphere for the present and future generations as well.

Enblen and Eblen (1994) espoused for "the management of human use of the biosphere in order to yield optimum sustainable benefits to present generation while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspiration of future generations. Hawkes (2001) highlighted (Gleeson and Low 2000), conception of sustainable development as being about the global achievement of three principles; economic development, social development and ecological responsibility as depicted in figure 1 below.

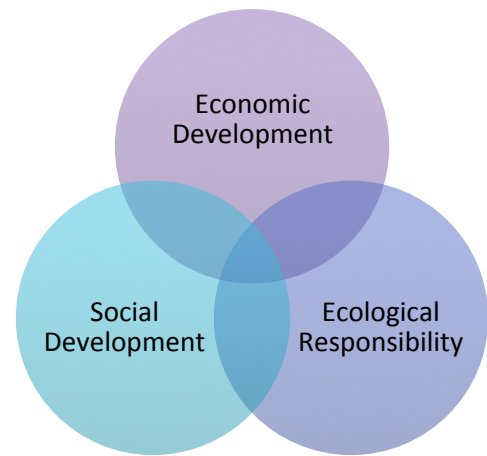


Figure 1. Gleenson and Low (2000) Three Principles of Sustainable Development.

Highlighting that sustainable development practice will always modulate between economics development, social justice and ecological accountability, with different philosophical approaches that varies between "economic development and ecological responsibility in the eco-centric model." The alternating approach to sustainability is to focus on natural capital assets and suggest that they should not decline through time (Barbier and Markandya 1990). This focus more on physical and ecological limits to sustainability (environmental sustainability), the utility approach concentrating more on the role of technical progress and psychological adaptation is known as social sustainability.

But Pezzey (1992) in defining "sustainability" as "non declining utility of a representative member of society for millennia into the future", relates it to economics concept of production functions that describes the transformation of natural and manmade resources into useful goods and services in form of output; and utility functions, determined by the consumption of marketed goods and services to describe human wellbeing. Hawkes (2001) expressed that "in simple terms the concept of sustainability embodies a desire that future generations inherit a world at least as bountiful as the one we inhabit." The evolving challenge of achieving this will always be debatable in terms of values and culture.

The interrelatedness of evolutionary anthropology, natural resource management, technological progress and economic development to the growing sustainability dialectics, highlights the perceptiveness of the fundamental elements driving the rationality of sociocultural, economic and environmental behaviours of man in his ecosystem. Hence, whilst previous works on sustainable development is valid, **it is the opinion of this paper that, sustainable development should originally be perceived as a human development challenge, followed by natural resource management and then macroeconomic growth concept.** Technocentrism progress, as an independent factor can trigger behavioural change, whilst at this time modulates natural resources management, human behaviours and its relationship with the ecosystem to balance ecological resource consumption efficiency.

According to a chronicle by Adams (2009), the politicking at the the UNCED, a key diplomatic conference attended by172 States including 116 heads of sovereign governments sets a shaky foundation for the Rio Principles that later transformed to 'Sustainable Development'. He described five years long lengthy and exhaustive debates across New York, Geneva and Nairobi only agreed on the twenty-seven text of principles⁴⁸

(out of the documents containing the disputed 350 text) was formally adopted as the Rio Principles. However, this challenge in contemporary world is how to depoliticise the sustainability concept and coalesce socioeconomic wellbeing with environmental sustainability, because of the unequal entitlement to natural resources and environmental services. The communique of the UN summit in Johannesburg (2002) states thus, “*we recognize that poverty eradication, changing consumption and production patterns and protecting and managing the natural resource base for economic and social development are overarching objectives of an essential requirements for sustainable development. The deep fault line that divides human society between the rich and the poor and the ever-increasing gap between the developed and developing worlds pose a major threat to global prosperity, security and stability*”; accentuated the differing opinions and debates on the incomprehensibility and practicability of sustainable development in modern-day. Resolving the dilemma of the conceptual framework in global system, will depend on practitioners’ expertise in cogitating broad-based connotations to disentangle the convoluted definition in such a way that its suitability and applicability in the global space does not subjugate the natural evolution of endogenous social class. Taylor (2012) recommended that humanity should not jeopardise its sustainable future by persistently deploying inappropriate analytical models from deficient conceptual framework to engage the hyper-complex global networks of economies, natural environment and demography of culturally heterogeneous people of over 7 billion.

The need for social scientist not to be overwhelmed with the fantasy of quantitative analysis defines the application of comparative assessment for preparing this thematic paper. However, quantitative, qualitative and methodological underpinnings were analysed to review the concept of sustainable development, its extensity, practicability and veracities. Information from previous studies, books, reports, journals, conference papers, work data from multilateral organisations. Inductive technique geared towards identifying patterns related theoretical models and empirical data from other scholars. Applicable United Nations conventions and reports, communiques and proceedings from other multilateral agencies, Non Governmental Organisations, Research Institutes formed the basis for organising the body of literature.

1.1. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS POLICY APPROACH AND SOCIO- POLITICAL FORMATIONS

These varying views of sustainable development demonstrates the asymmetry in the distribution of global wealth in a society that pledge “...to provide for the consumption and production needs of the present generation”. **Rhetorical questions of how humanity amidst unprecedented global wealth adapt to starvation and desert its vulnerable, pledge to provide for future generations if it cannot guarantee the consumption of today?** From the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) “World Conservation Strategy” of 1980, to the 1987 UN World Commission on Environment (WCED 1987) to 1992 Rio Earth Summit Agenda 21 to Kyoto Protocol of 1992 through COP 1(Berlin 1995) to COP 21 (Paris 2015), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) pursues the stabilization of greenhouse gases to ease global warming and unpredicted weather condition. Through the Conference of the Parties (COP), it has made several declarations to encourage member nations to embrace

practices, resources and methodologies that will continually control the menace as well as reassure mankind of its commitment to confront the challenges of a sustainable ecosystem. Interestingly, in spite of the complications of the multilateral agencies and other stakeholders to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2015, it recently launched a broader “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development” with 17 major goals popularly known as SDGs.

The global supervisory efforts to address universal environmental impairments requires the strengthening of institutional structures. Bharat Desai (2005) stated that the United Nations Charter merely allows General Assembly to make recommendation through its resolutions and provide political guidance to States. The Harvard Projects on Climate Agreement in 2010 reported that the classification request for consensus amongst Parties and the decision making process that allocate the same standing to parties irrespective of their vulnerability to climate change and emissions; the protracted divergence between the numerous and diversified developed and developing countries politicised negotiation process. UNFCCC through assessment of parties with low income, weak human asset and high economic vulnerability identified 49 least developed countries, amongst which 33 alone are in Africa, 10 in Asia, 5 in in the Pacific and 1 in the Caribbean. The relative institutional weaknesses coupled with friability of the political actors’ commitment of attaining sustainable development goals illustrates that technical achievements devoid of human wellbeing will only restricted to voluminous reports or exclusive seminar presentations. More so, UNEP, a unit of the UN Secretariat dispense its administrative funding and a contributory funding that is voluntary for its projects. This myriad bottlenecks stifles the practicability of the phenomenon that makes the arbitrariness of reviewing developmental targets frivolous, especially when they become unattainable.

The 2030 agenda for sustainable development encourages country led and driven inclusive reviews of progress vis-à-vis their national priorities and approaches. In 2016, it reported and outlined challenges like extreme poverty, social inequality, natural resource dependence, epidemics; disturbing rate of youth unemployment; conflict and post-conflict situations, vulnerability to disasters and climate change effects as some of the overarching cross-cutting issues that must be tackled in eradicating poverty and promoting enduring prosperity for humanity. More disturbing is that the same global politics that funnelled the underdevelopment of many weak economics around the world have failed to assuage the assault on natural resources in developing nations. These nations are threatened by excruciating debt portfolios, unrestrained demand for developmental aids, the recklessness of multinational corporations, mendacity of imperialists amongst other challenges. This is coupled with the oversimplified policies that occasionally delink local resources from socials needs because of the seemingly powerful interest of the political class. These policies lacking in coherent meanings and mostly at variance with the interest of the governed, are deployed to herd unsuspecting populace and sometimes subjecting social development to totalitarian propositions. Instances abounds where self-serving bureaucrats foist needless developmental projects on the undiscerning beneficiaries either as a result of parochial judgement or self interest.

Interestingly, entities in social formations also aspire social transformation and agonise the anguish of the politics of deceit, yet choose to remain submissive to traditional tenets that

defines the resilience and fortitude of their progenitors' evolutionary pedigree. Perhaps awaiting a perfect opportunity to vent their frustrations. **Until every segment of global populace concurrently enjoy the "Rights to Development" and the tangibility of its transformative strengths without discounting the future of other generations, the conceptualisation of sustainable development will be a fallacy.** The existing top-to-bottom interventions that overlook other qualitative element of human misery, undermine their dignity and subjugate social equality that will possibly stimulate aggressions, social conflicts and possibly exacerbate uncontrolled migration to urbanised settlements around the world.

The report of "Our Common Future", Brundtland commission's (1983) submission that "...no trends identifiable today, no programmes or policies, offer any real hope of narrowing the growing gap between rich and poor nations. And as part of our "development", we have amassed weapons arsenals capable of diverting the paths that evolution has followed for millions of years and of creating a planet our ancestors would not recognize", almost trivialises the enormity of resources and selflessness invested in attaining the sustainable development goals. This erodes the vista of hopefulness of million helpless starving people around the world and the agonizing nursing mothers compelled to superintend the malnourishment of their children daily. For equitable 'intra-generational and intergenerational' distribution of wealth, humanity must re-evaluate the concept of sustainable development. Pragmatic roadmap and technicalities that strengthen the velocity of decision-making, advocate the adoption of ecological responsible lifestyles that balances consumption within its ecological means and conscious of the uneven distribution of natural resource. This Mudacumura et al (2006) emphasis of (Soedjatmoko 1985) words that states "...it is now clear that, in their preoccupation with growth and its stages and with the provision of capital and skills, development theorist have paid insufficient attention to institutional and structural problems and to the power of historical, cultural and religious forces in the development process" becomes very compelling. Aptly, the position of Pope John Paul II "...a society will be judged on the basis of how it treats its weakest members" suggests the culpability of us all.

1.2. SOCIOECONOMIC BEHAVIOURS, NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND THE BURDENS OF SUSTAINABILITY

The apprehension of plundering natural resources for industrial development prompted the 1972 Stockholm Human Environment conference to deliberate humanity's right to healthy and productive environment. The agreements from this conference kick-started the doctrine of global trusteeship upon which the doctrine of sustainable development was anchored. A 1994 survey, (Rolston 2007) that outlined the dominance or partial disturbance of 73% proportion of terrestrial nature, illustrated that nature is presently experiencing the marks of overriding human influence more extensively than ever before. Another (UNFCC 2015) report projected climate change will affect livelihoods of those mostly dependent on natural resources like agriculture, fishing, and forestry. Vitousek et al (1986) accentuated that the magnitude of society appropriation of the products of photosynthesis in terrestrial biosphere reveals about 40% of the present net primary production of organic materials equivalent is being co-opted by its activity annually. This appropriation, diversion and devastation of terrestrial resources clearly contributes to human-caused

extinction of species and genetically distinct population extinctions that could cause greater reduction in organic diversity. Also, Vitousek et al (1986) reported that a British panel in 1972 expressed that the "industrial way of life with its ethos of expansion" is not sustainable. It declared that a stable human society would instigate minimum ecological disruption, achieve maximum conversation and maintain constant population because the growth in population and consumption are undermining survival prospects by disrupting the ecosystem.

A crisis seeded in the form of development is a result of a gradual deceptive process, with political and institutional support fuelled by the elitist greed or ignorance and the yearnings for wanton wealth acquisitions without recourse to a just and enduring ecosystem. The few that profit from the desperation of ecosystem survival disregard the exposure of their avidity on the majority especially the dangerous emission of greenhouse gases. The advancement of consumerism has also exacerbated depleting of natural resources, stimulating nominal growth without tangible development that boost quality of life in real terms. One would be tempted to ask "how humanity got to this untenable path?" This can only reveal the complexities of altering beliefs and behavioural system. Societies unconsciously assume that natural resources are infinite and 'Mother Nature' has auto-replenish-able mechanisms for the impending disaster; providing rationality for denials, procrastination or corruption. But the growing footprints of an interconnected 7 billion populations; driven by expanding consumption pattern on a rapidly diminishing earth resources, exert equal ecological impact on every single individual irrespective of their contribution, status or location.

According to Basole (2016) "evidence is gathering by the day that Euro-American cities are ecologically unsustainable. It relies on large resources and sinks, freely externalising its costs to more disadvantaged parts of the world". Technological innovations have engendered a new lifestyle that is severely triggering environmental limits and threatening sustainability by replacing natural capital with physical capital. But the optimism lies in the global consensus of climate action through collaboratively altering lifestyle and consumption patterns to eliminate unconscious apathy for an enduring planet earth. Even though, in view of the limitations of the MDGs, some scholars might discount the existing framework as superficial, exclusive and publicist, devoid of multidimensional assessments of varying stakeholders' apprehensions and tend to proffer quick fixes.

A case in point, is the national governments backed exploitation of natural resources championed by insensitive multinational corporations virtually devastating local communities and activating environmental crisis on households' sustenance. Geopolitical or developmental politics sometimes ignites conflict of interests or values, that places multilateral agencies and other stakeholders at crossroad in pursuing the sustainable development goals. SCAN (2000) reported that the IFC without adequately considering the socioeconomic and environmental implications financed the USD \$3.5 billion Chad-Cameroun 1,050Km crude oil pipeline for multinational corporations, that it eventually pulled out from. This controversial pipeline project left misery and devastation across some several affected communities. A Nigerian Niger Delta environmentalist, Oronto Douglas, was reported to have cautioned that 'financing the pipeline project with taxpayers' monies was akin to financing 'human right violations, environmental degradation and social injustice'.⁵⁰

Also the conventional post independence multilateral agencies' financed development strategy through local infrastructural credit facilities litters many developing countries host communities with moribund industrial processing plants. This also triggers both socioeconomic and ecological consequences resulting to loss of biodiversity (Basiago 1999). The political economies in weak economics have left trails of displacements and inadequate compensation, lack of respect for cultural traditions, urgent need for land rehabilitation, low crop yields, depletion of aquatic species and other associated environmental and social issues. How can the existing SDG as conceptualised, compensate for the previous human development infractions, without impact on the success of the 2030 Agenda? In the words Annan in 2005 "The interdependent world is not safe and just unless everyone is freed from want and fear, and living in dignity".

Natural resources exploitation and devastation are also known to have compounded agricultural yields in rural communities through the exposure to volatile weather conditions and reliance on traditional knowledge amidst socioeconomic complexities. The disturbing outcomes is the offshoot of industrialised world reckless demand, supply and consumption of natural resources mostly outside the immediate environment. Yet unpredictable weather volatility is expected have greater impacts on sectors linked to natural production, with potential consequences on food security pressured by climate change impacts.

This distortion of the rural livelihood will have its proportional toll on poverty and labour migration to rich Euro-America cities, adding to the pressures on municipalities already grappling with complex challenge. Overlooking the infrastructural deficiencies and social disorder in rural economics have substantiated the case for abandoning agrarian productive life for uncertain future in urban centres. The ease of labour migration has opened gaps in ecological dependent societies and an unemployment crisis in major cities, degenerating to a willing recruitment pool for crimes and other social vices. Authorities are in turn expending huge budget for reengaging redundant migrants to productive activities through modern skill development scheme, thereby creating another sink of avoidable 'welfarist' scheme. Development Initiatives (2016) reported that a total of USD\$20.8billion, USD\$25.1 billion and USD28.0billion for 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively. More disturbing is the recurring security and safety in urbane metropolises that will be dependent on treating social justice in the hinterlands as fundamental. The United Nation (2015) recorded an estimated 244million international migration stock out of which 20 million refugees were documented.

1.3. Macroeconomic Theoretical Dimension of Sustainable Development

Asefa (2005) presented that sustainable development is different from the economic theory of growth and development. "Stating that because natural resources in the ecosystem (natural capital), financial capital, manufactured capital, and human capital all provides goods and services" to humanity; sustainable development can be systematically evaluated using "Gross National Product (*GNP*) and subtracting Depreciation of Manufactured Capital (*Dm*) and Depreciation of Natural Capital (*Dn*) to obtain Sustainable Net National Product (*SNNP*): *i.e.* $GNP - Dm - Dn = SNNP$."

Hence Sustainable Net National Product (*SNNP*) can be expressed as " $SNNP = GNP - Dm - Dn = C + S - Dm - Dn$,

to derive the equivalent of the previous equation. "Note that Consumption is represented by (*C*) and Total Savings (*S*). Calculating the basic sustainability ratio means that Net Savings (*NS*) equals Total Savings (*S*) minus Depreciation of Manufactured Capital (*Dm*) minus Depreciation of Natural Capital (*Dn*), which must be positive: $NS = S - Dm - Dn > 0$."

This simple equation implies that the inability of any economy to reverse the depreciation of the three forms of capital (*i.e.* natural, human and manufactured) make it unsustainable. Hypothetically, the effect of natural resources depletion, deterioration of education and health qualities will result to declining human capital in a given economy. In a related development, another scholar alluded that the factors that explains different pattern of growth can be defined by the organisation of production factors, the efficiency and accuracy of deploying political will, technological change, institutional capacity, sociocultural dynamics and ecological sustainability.

Over the years, macroeconomics theorists have assessed economic development using benchmarks from the industrialised countries in Euro-America countries, rich Gulf States and some countries in Far Eastern region. But economic development achieved in a free market easily promotes the efficient interactions of production factors. These are not automatically attainable in a structurally distorted informal economies of weak economics. More so, these economies that are mostly preoccupied with building robust industrial capacity, infrastructures, socio-political institutions and robust human capability to accelerate the transition of its low income populace through the rigors informal market structures; will be less conscious of the concerns of sustainability at least in the short run. Typically, development should be seen as a process and never a destination, so careful consideration ought to be applied in designing developmental aspiration. This will forestall hastily broadening the inequality gap. Although policy formulation should perceive environmental sustainability as fundamental objective that should be mediated and implemented differently in societal context.

Hence, structures of governance can be then calibrated, in anticipation of market failures symptoms, to essentially bridge the gaps of socio-political and economic inequalities in critical sectors like environment, education, health and income distribution. However, because GDP only measures quantity and not other aspects of production like pollution or its potential impact of the future; sophisticated market fundamentals GDP might not have a trickle down effects and as such will not necessarily translate to better quality of life because complexities of the components for determining quality of life. Therefore, deploying the expansion of Gross Domestic Products performance as universal benchmark, will not succinctly reflect the level of social wellbeing. However, irrespective of the mechanism for measuring economic growth whether market oriented or political institutional structures, if it downplays social wealth, a vital inclusivity pointer that is more connected to households' welfare, then the essence of measuring economic performance in a human society is flawed. The overlap therefore between the concepts of wellbeing, life satisfaction and quality of life in a system that does not consider the economic value of natural resources depletion will support an unevenly distributed demography. Although, such society might be more economical prosperous but morally deficient. A morally poor society where a larger population segment feels excluded, powerless and unhappy, specify that what is good for the economy is not necessarily good for them, can degenerate to social chaos. Therefore, the 51

subject of human wellbeing is multidimensional, including those related to local natural resource management, livelihoods and democratisation of opportunities. Therefore, it should aim for improvements in all extensities valued by the society and not just that of scientific postulations and econometric calculations.

1.4. MARKET FACTORS SPECULATIVE TENDENCY ON NATURAL RESOURCE

The neo-classical economic model creates distressing permanent complications for the larger part of the society operating outside of the formal economic sectors. This introduction of market forces as regulator of natural capital exploration vis-à-vis a wider demand network exerts excessive pressure on the ecosystem. Market driven search for resources underneath the earth crust activates the efficient interaction of production factors between human resources physical capital and natural capital. Owners of production factors earning profits, translates human resources to expertise reimbursed with wages; physical capital to investment earnings interest and natural capital to land compensated with rents in the accounting books. This is isolated from either positive or negative occurrence in the natural ecosystem.

This combination of natural capital and human resources form a constituent part of production factors that constitute the mechanism for the exploration of resources. But labour once remunerated lacks control over outputs and is therefore separated from the entire production process, and from the natural capital that is compensated with rents. Therefore, wholly subjecting the fate of the local vegetation and people to market forces, disempowers them from their ancestral heritage and livelihood sources. Natural resources should therefore be perceived as an integral part of the people and not a commodity devoid of the anthropological connotations from which indignities cannot be excluded. To check market forces speculative tendencies, labour and lands should be judiciously compensated at all levels through a stabilizing force using a robust regulatory tools that holistically cognize the true value of social formations and its natural resources. The attempt of complementing the interplay of natural resources and sociocultural factors with economic growth in a diversified society, can deploy human capability and historic data to strengthen the inadequacies of sustainable development. Additionally, competition over natural resources can lead to environmentally-induced migration and other social conflicts that undermine the whole essence of development itself.

The tragedy of the relentless devastation of the natural resources in the face of chronic poverty, weak infrastructure and poor state of social service in the Niger Delta region in the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in Nigeria readily comes to mind. Youth agitations and social unrest that have resulted to kidnappings, armed conflict and economic sabotage of oil and gas infrastructures, in a region to provide over 80% of foreign exchange earnings to African's largest economy and the world most populous black nation. An earlier study revealed that the several decades of environmental degradation depict the case of social injustice, government insensitivity and private sector reckless pursuit of economic gains at the expense of the sociocultural and ecological wealth in the region (Oka 2017)

The people of Ogoniland in the Niger Delta region are known to have lived most of their lives with oil and gas pollution devastating their ecosystem since in the discovery of oil in the late 1950s by an oil multinational company. In the series of attempts to get the multinational corporations to clean up the

oil spill and remediate the land, Ken Saro-Wiwa, a writer and non violent environmentalist led a movement of his local people. The military dictatorship politically motivated and hurriedly constituted tribunal had him condemned and later executed. Global attention was beamed on the terrible action, bringing embarrassment to the Nigeria government. A UNEP report in 2011 reported that the people of Ogoniland have lived with "chronic oil pollution throughout their lives" and the United Kingdom judicial system that awarded a USD\$1 billion judgement later vindicated him.

1.5. SOCIAL NORMS, CIVILIZATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Cultures are shaped by the biotic and abiotic characteristics in a society where people evolve. But the connection between the community structures to the environment and how its history commingle with their biome and customs defines its cultural formation. Subsequently, using the trends in (Whittaker, 1978) classification scheme to pattern the interconnectedness of communities and sustainability can qualitatively characterise how climate traits and natural ecosystem is a strong determinant in the configuration of a homogenous behaviour. Notwithstanding, human culture cannot be reduced entirely to an organic process. It is predicated on a synthesis of shared practice, relationships or foundations. Indigenous people would however, naively attribute most of the uninterpretable events in their environment to supernatural factors. Gary (2004) stated that culture meanings are handled in, and are modified by, an interactive process used by people in dealing with phenomena that are encountered. Notably, civilisation has transformed universal pattern of study using systematic enquiry, because reliable knowledge can only be derived from objective reviews and observation.

Also, Lamarck (1807) stressed that species slowly adapt to their environment over many generations and gradually diverged as their environmental conditions differed. Darwinian argues that a process of natural selection, through competitive struggle for survival eliminates genetic variants not well suited to the conditions of their habitant. Lamarck inheritance of acquired characteristics theory however endorsed belief to explain the transition of evolution; this nonetheless, defines how human culture connects from one generation to the next in relation to natural ecology (Waddington 1961). Environmental differences favoured different characteristics and so species evolved with different characteristics.

Accordingly, Simon et al (2017), stated that with about 7,099 universal languages (Please see Table 1) with varying cultures, cannot be separated from an integrated development that affects all areas of societal coexistence. Language are vehicles for conveying cultural patterned beliefs, ideas and practices that are applied in deciphering the intricate network of customs. They reflect a dynamic interface between people and environments. Culture is derived from an atmosphere surrounded by social formations and articulates behaviours and defines identity expressed through languages. Therefore, any social class seeking to pursue their socio-political or socioeconomic development will do so without necessarily sacrificing their identity. This exhibit the complexities of social components that should underscore a universal web of socio-political configurations on which sustainable development is predicated.

Table 1. Distribution of World Languages by Areas of Origin.

Area	Living Languages		Number of Speakers		
	Count	Percentage	Total	Percent	Mean
Africa	2,144	30.2	872,310,542	13.4	413,585
Americias	1,061	14.9	50,704,628	0.8	47,789
Asia	2294	32.2	3,981,523,335	59.9	1,735,625
Europe	287	4.0	1,716,625,664	25.8	5,981,274
Pacific	1,313	18.5	6,873,346	0.1	5,235
Total	7,099	100.0	6,643,037,515	100.0	933,771

Source: Simon et al (2017)

A World Bank report (2010) also emphasised that understanding the barrier to behavioural transition is beyond the psychological descriptions of how social factors influences perceptions, decisions and activities because people will naturally defend and deny information that contradicts their cultural values or ideological beliefs. Huntington (1996) highlighted that the “fundamental source of conflict among humankind in the contemporary society will transcend ideological or economic to cultural focus”. This he captured as “the clash of civilisation” that will dictate universal intrigues and given the existing geopolitical imbalance and the inability of developmental practitioners holistically capture diversified cultural sensitivities.

Hence the under-exploration of sustainable development concept that further weaken any social class in the global development chain, will broaden economic inequality, escalate sustenance crisis and complicate an already bad situation. Hierarchies of policymakers must therefore strive to obliterate the benign line between culture, civilization and development; so as to forestall the emergence of what this paper terms “victims of sustainable development”, segregated from the pursuit of the SDGs. One of the objective of this paper is to encourage sustainability advocates to integrate social diversities that consciously captures local cultures without undermining the dignity of any social class. This can be achieved by integrating sustainability goals into community developmental programmes and explore the benefits of seemingly unsophisticated ideas from these social class. Interestingly, Pope Francis (2015) on the issue of morality and spirituality, explained that the “...*progression towards sobriety and ecological citizenship through education, cannot be written off as naive romanticism, for it affects the choices which determine our behaviour. If we approach nature and the environment without this openness to awe and wonder, if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate needs. By contrast, if we feel intimately united with all that exists, then sobriety and care will well up spontaneously...*”

Consequently, while it is important to appraise traditional norms cautiously for lack of empirical basis, actions are also organic process of environment, cultures and economics of where people live. In other words, people often trace historical underpinnings to guide and navigate future actions and occurrences. This is because words that convey cultural peculiarities, count, conveys thoughts and connotes messages that shape human psychology, stimulate important processes that can be subjected to private interpretations. Words also legitimises actions with overreaching influence on global issues. However, interpretations and meanings should not be static, but fluid such that it is open to reviews, revisions and possibly reformed on the basis of experience, new discoveries and beliefs.

1.6. THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

The submission of Rawls (1999) “...*each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive scheme of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar scheme of liberties for others.*” “Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both reasonably expected to be everyone’s advantage...” should be a pointer in addressing social justice in conceptual sustainable development. The social structure that control the global distribution of socioeconomic advantages should understand the formations of demographic dynamics. Then it can fairly provide opportunities for all and sundry to evolve to a better state without trampling on their social values. The UN declaration of the Rights to Development (1986) specified the indisputability of human right that entitles every human person “to participate in, contribute to, and enjoy economic, social, cultural and political development and fundamental freedoms”.

The accompanying right to developments implies “... *the full realisation of the right of people to self determination, which includes, subject to the relevant provisions of both international covenants on human rights, the exercise of their inalienable right to full sovereignty over all natural wealth and resources*”. Under this provision, the ‘interrelatedness and interdependencies’ of all aspects of developments place the “State Actors” as the primary duty bearers to create the necessary conditions for the realisation of the right to development. It also mandates the member countries to either act independently or in partnerships with multilateral agencies both as duty bearers. This requires transparently active, free and meaningful collaboration to articulate and implement a participatory human centred policies, processes and social justice that translate the rights from ordinary political commitment to developmental objectives to filter simplistic expectation from reality.

Also, Ibhawoh (2011), advocated that the right to development should flow from a holistic conception of human right as interrelated and indivisible on the premise that development has political, economic, social and cultural perspective. These rights can only be said to be fully realised, when all are concurrently exercised. For simplicity, Rawls (1999) assumes that the derivable outcome of when the primary goods at the deposition of humankind (i.e. rights, liberties, opportunities, income and wealth), are hypothetically evenly shared, provides a benchmark for judging improvements. However, the existing lop-sidedness in wealth and authority distribution would require the ‘well-off’ to voluntarily give-up some of their benefits, in order to improve the condition of the less privileged around the world. The is the principles of sustainability that will by all means deepen social justice, bridge the inequality divide and expand economic

opportunities for the betterment of humanity.

1.7. PREVALENT SOCIAL CONFLICTS IN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENTAL ERA

Sustainable development is only applicable in an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence. Examining the cross-cutting issues of conflicts in terms of the socio-political implications, economic, environmental and strategic costs sustainability is germane for the attainment of the SDGs. As humanity progress, the barrier of conflict to development must be extensively researched to apprehend the impact of conflict (Please see Table 2). Robert Picciotto (2011) submitted that conflict is inherent to the human condition. It arises as a result of divergent interests and values, but not necessarily. Indeed, it may ‘evince dialogue’, culminate to compromise, and as a result, improve mutual understanding and promote social harmony. It is this vein that, developmental theorist should anticipate the dynamism of social conflicts.

Over the last few years, the disturbing trend of conflicts from Syria, Iraq, South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Libya and the Lake Chad basin have featured clashes with heavy tolls of human, social and natural capital. Paul Collier’s World Bank (2007) highlighted key drivers that increases incidence of conflicts as primary commodity exports. The risk of conflict is

heightened by social inequality, poverty, worsening corruption, increasing exposure to economic shocks, high rate of unemployed youth and geopolitical competitions are some of the known elements that fuel conflicts. However, some of the conflicts recorded in recent times involve extremist groups especially in the Middle East and Lake Chad Basin, whose goals and ideologies are difficult to accommodate through negotiated settlement, therefore complicating the path to peace and exacerbate global fragility. The World Bank has reported that of the about 65 million refugees and internally displaced persons around the world, 95% of them live in developing countries and more than half of them have been displaced for over four years. This is in addition to about 2 billion global populations dwelling in vicinity where ‘development outcomes’ will be impacted by instability and violent conflicts (See Table 2). The share of the global poor living amidst instability and social conflicts is projected to climb up to 47% from the existing 17%. Poverty however, is a complex condition that demobilizes the ability of the SDGs to safeguard planetary resources. Also, the lifestyle of the extreme poor encourages population growth that are susceptible to the outbreak of infectious disease and other social ills that can worsen their poverty level with other attendant consequences. It also stretches infrastructures and other institutional resources that hinders the promotion of social wellbeing.

Table 2. Selected Findings on the Relationship Between Armed Violence and Development (2004-2005).

Case	Type of Violence	Effects of Armed Violence
El Salvador	Violent organised crime and social disorder	Legacy of armed combatants and left-over weapons has contributed to a sharp increase in violent crime and concomitant loss of social capital due to distrust among population
Nairobi	Violent organised crime and social disorder	Fear of violence among population, reduced tourism revenues, potential to trigger wider conflicts
Nepal	Armed Conflicts	Loss of lives, reduction in access to school, transformation of societal roles – including in relations to gender
Nigeria	Armed conflicts and organised crime	Extortion gives rise to private security firms and destroys social capital, disruption of economic activity
Northeast India	Armed conflicts	General climate of fear, capital flight and growing estrangement of youth
Northern Kenya	Violent organised crime and social disorder	Decline in pastoral mobility reduces income and armed violence reduces grazing potential to livestock
Rio de Janeiro	Violent organized crime and social disorder	Repression and social exclusion of inhabitants of favelas and reduced access to basic education
Sierra Leone	Armed conflict and post conflict	Destruction and disruption of governmental infrastructure and services and industries
Sri Lanka	Armed conflict and post conflict	Increasing crime rates – particularly homicidal violence – due to availability of small arms and light weapons
Southern Sudan	Armed Conflict	Exceedingly high rates of mortality, inter-communal clashes, improvements of displaced populations, decrease in per capital GDP
Somalia	Armed conflict	Extensive loss of life, clashes between IDPs over resources, militarization of development response

Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development 2010

The reconstruction of the North Eastern Nigeria, Libya, Mosul and Syria is estimated at hundreds of billion American dollars. This is aside the incalculable human, social and environmental cost of restoring war torn regions to their original state and it tolls on the consumption of natural resources and the attendant carbon footprints. On the other hand, the United Nations is expending billion-dollar aid funds on humanitarian activities across global conflict zones. This is despite the successful peacebuilding recorded in many regions globally. Given the multi-dimensionality of conflicts and development, sustained peace cannot be guaranteed if systematic approaches for reinforcing peaceful co-existence are not established. Whilst

humanity cannot attain or should not attempt to pursue unified behaviour in engendering global peace, Picciotto (2011) expressed that conflicts resolved leave behind a beneficial residue of social capital only if the institutional environment is propitious. Hence, the danger of multiplying and exacerbating negative externalities in the wake of conflicts breakout and deleterious effects that concomitantly follows after resolution shows that humanity can barely survive the re-enactment of the colossal devastation of the first and second world wars in the wake of the geopolitical fragile peace.

2. DISCUSSION: AUGMENTATION OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SCOPE

As the human psychology is complex and inexhaustible and so is its behavioural dynamism that will continually evolve beyond the existing discovery of intellectualists. A functionalist abstraction centred around the fundamental concepts that are vital determinant of individual inclinations such as human development; social rights; quality of life; redistribution of wealth; sociocultural diversity; ecological involvement and solidarity; is germane for a continued biotic life on this planet earth.

Amartya's (1999) in his interpretation of wellbeing, stated that it means being healthy, adequately nourished, literate and having the freedom of choice to promote individual responsibility for the development of lives, capabilities and societies. This introduces another perspective that development theorist should focus not only on sustenance, equity and environmentalism but on other aspects of non-quantifiable human activities that discreetly distort the harmonious interface of both biotic-abiotic factors in the planetary system. Thematic areas revolving round the interdependence relationships between scientific findings, economics concepts, socio-political formations, justice, partnerships and other simplest concerns indispensable for the survival of any social class as part of a global system. Understanding well-rounded and realistic view that influences peoples' choices in relations to their cultures, environments, economic orientation, capabilities and technological prowess becomes a yardstick to monitor sustained economics development at any level.

This thesis therefore, demonstrate that the definition of sustainable development cannot and should not be confined to particular discipline because it covers all aspects of human endeavour. More so, the enormity of resource allocation to the entire programme and the widespread expectations from heterogeneous stakeholders should discourage anything that will jeopardise its expected outcome. Sufficiently integrating sustainability into development requires collaborative buy-ins, endurance, cautious compromise and innovative diplomacy, amongst all social classifications, demographics and cultural formations irrespective of how infinitesimal they might seem. This can only be assured through genuinely engendering a transformational process of sustainability that cognizes the combination of ecological responsibility, human intelligence, economic development and technological progress that appreciate socio-political diversity. Will the mostly self-imposed or 'seat-tight' dictatorial leadership laying eternal claim to political leadership speak for the billions of urban and rural poor, mostly preoccupied with daily survival? Global development veracities need conscientious resolutions that will never come until multilateral agencies stops shielding deviating State actors from accountability during international conferences. The glaring contrast of the finesse of the Rio United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the nearby squalor from the proximate Favelas should have been the conscience (Martinez presentation in 2002 Johannesburg) that will trigger an extensive debate, speeches and indestructible seeds for a sustainable world.

As it were, according to World Bank (2015), China, not interested in the MDGs through rapid economic growth singularly responsible of pulling about 680m people out of poverty between 1981 and 2010 thereby reducing its extreme-poverty rate from 84% in 1980 to a low of 10%. In the case of India, it battled poverty through its green revolution, decrease

population growth rate, connect its caste system victims to economic opportunities and creating a large pool of technical and scientific talents. This has enable it to successfully scale down its poor population from 403.7 million in 1993/94 to 269.3 in 2011/12, recording the ascension of a sizable 138 million people above the poverty line. Out of the about 53 countries recording an average of per capital GDP of less than USD\$2 per day (Susan Rice 2016), two countries from Asia alone, China and India collaboratively reduced poverty level by over 800 million people out of the 1.1billion people subsisting on USD\$1.25 per day globally. Brazil (prior its political turmoil), reportedly (Financial Times 2015) moved more than 40million people out of poverty to the middle class through its 'Bolsa Familia programme'. Yet from Africa to the Middle East to Asia, Latin America to the Caribbean, extreme poverty misery is evident such that pushing the multitude of the global poor beyond the poverty line especially in Africa with a population of about 1.22 billion people will be a herculean task by 2030.

3. CONCLUSIONS

Summarily, the Brundtland commission's and other successive conceptualisations of sustainable development were ingenious attempts to reach an acceptable outcome but not necessarily a perfect framework that adequately embody divergent concerns. It is considered an imperfect framework because a structured attempt whose conception does not guarantee an inclusive outcome for a broad socio-political networks. Notably it is arduous to achieve a broad-based definition given global geopolitical sentiments, nonetheless the unexplored threats to sustainable development highlighted earlier in this paper adequately cognize some of the deviations from the widely accepted values. New and ongoing research or remonstrations, review should make updates where and when necessary.

For this reason, debates, divergences and further studies should kindle a blueprint encapsulating the rights, responsibilities and aspiration of all in the pursuit of human development in any ecological space. Rightly, for sustainable development to be an active enduring success, it is necessary for even the toughest proponents to examine thoughtfully its potential deficiencies. Only with the profound debates and arguments such as the objective of this scholarly work that theorists synthesise philosophies for an enduring individuals, humanity and ecological future.

Thus, a comprehensive mechanism that complement programmes of appropriate actors should coalesce developmental theories and practice of the aspects of social phenomenon to clearly define entitlements in the process of attaining and measuring objectives. Furthermore, Talyor's summary (2012) of Ruskin words, there is no wealth but life. Life, in this sense including all its powers of love, fulfilment and delight. "That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings; that man is richest who, having perfected the function of his own life to the utmost, has also the widest helpful influence, both personal, and by means of his possessions, over the lives of others" reinforces that the principles of political sovereignty over natural resources on the basis for pro-poor social transformation also lay the challenge of producing wealth hinged on individual wellbeing that does not strangle other aspect of life.

Global development should therefore socially and economically empower individuals, whether identified by gender, ethnicity, or other social factors. Specific focus55

should be on extreme deprivation in proportions to wellbeing, especially on informal cycles, so as to decrease the gap between the “have” and the “have-nots” across salient social groupings. This can only happen through sustainability that is predicated on technology penetration and economic security that democratise unrestricted access to opportunities for all and sundry. Anything contrary to this is ethically indefensible, undermine social cohesion, and can fuel policy capture which further exacerbates social injustice. Whereas the concept of justice should be limited on the type of permissible inequalities.

In addition, if it is a truism that growing rates of conflicts globally is threatening sustainable development then a theory that design intelligent interventions for conflict resolution and peacebuilding that appreciates socio-political diversity could be integrated into the conceptualisation to reinforce the framework. The multiplicity of sociocultural formations and historical diversity that normally drives distinctive aspirations can engender global peace, if only developmental theorists de-emphasise the inappropriate recommendation of identical policy codes for societies exhibiting similar socioeconomic symptoms. Context-specificity policy approach should be developed and explored. On this premise, it suffices to state that sustainable ecosystem as a foundation of sustainable development, should be driven by understanding socio-political formations because once distinctive culture disintegrates, so will all other human endeavours associated with such civilization. More so, to develop humanity, there is the need to empower people through building a more enduring intellectual architecture. Intelligence inspired innovations in this wise, can be deployed as a nexus to modulate natural deficiency, inequality, poverty and other broad-based social phenomenon that can ignite conflicts.

Given the extensive repertoire of concepts, models and theories on sustainable development, it is the opinion of this researcher that the science and geopolitics of sustainable development should be purely centred on humanity as foremost beneficiary. The UN HD Report (1990) highlights how development can enlarge peoples’ choice beyond GNP growth, income, wealth, producing commodities and accumulating capital. It is most critical to live a long healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent living. This is in addition to political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect because no single individual or group can guarantee human happiness. The process of development should at least sustainably create a conducive environment to propel people to both individually and collectively attain their potential in addition to having a reasonable chance of leading productive, creative and happy lives in accordance with socioeconomic needs and interests. Human freedom is vital to engender choices and decisive voice in shaping their future in an ideal ecosystem. It is in this vein that this paper having deliberately and extensively appraised the underexplored areas of previous definitions, debates or deliberations, therefore defines;

“Sustainable development as the harmonisation of human development to its natural resource structures using an ecological sensitive socioeconomic model, that promotes communal ownership of the natural process whilst guaranteeing the continued sustenance of humanity.”

Conclusively, it is the desire of this paper to engender a democratic bottom-up, frontier-wide and exhaustively deliberated methodologies that give voices to every social formation when conceptualising new interdependent

transformational models and policies for human development. Global development cannot afford to live any society behind in its developmental blueprint in view of the sociological consequences of heightened poverty, social exclusion and dependency. Therefore, considering human dominant influence on nature as integral actors in addressing the widespread ecological issues, mainstream sustainable development should be keenly focused on human development, and emphasis should be on how ecosystems habitants could be cultured on the shared benefits of rational and judicious natural resource management techniques in addressing the environmental menace. The practicability and veracities of the sustainability concept should emphasis primarily, the symbiosis of the psychology of humans and its natural ecosystem as an applicable approach in driving global development. An enlightened and enlightened society on natural resource conservation will always act rationally and seek to protect its communal interest and secure the survival of its descendants. The the opening address by Monkombu Swaminathan at the 1991 IUCN General Assembly in Perth (cited by Holdgate 1999) appropriately close this paper with *“There is no common future for humankind without a better common present. Development which is not equitable is not in the long term”*

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