

# Sustainability, the Social Economy, and the Eco-Social Crisis: Traveling Concepts and Bridging Fields



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BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance  
(BALTA)

# Outline

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- Sustainability
- Social Economy
- Traveling Concepts
- Bridging and Building
- Obstacles and Contradictions
- BALTA Research Directions

# Sustainability

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- sustainable development:

*“meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”*

(Brundtland Commission, 1987)

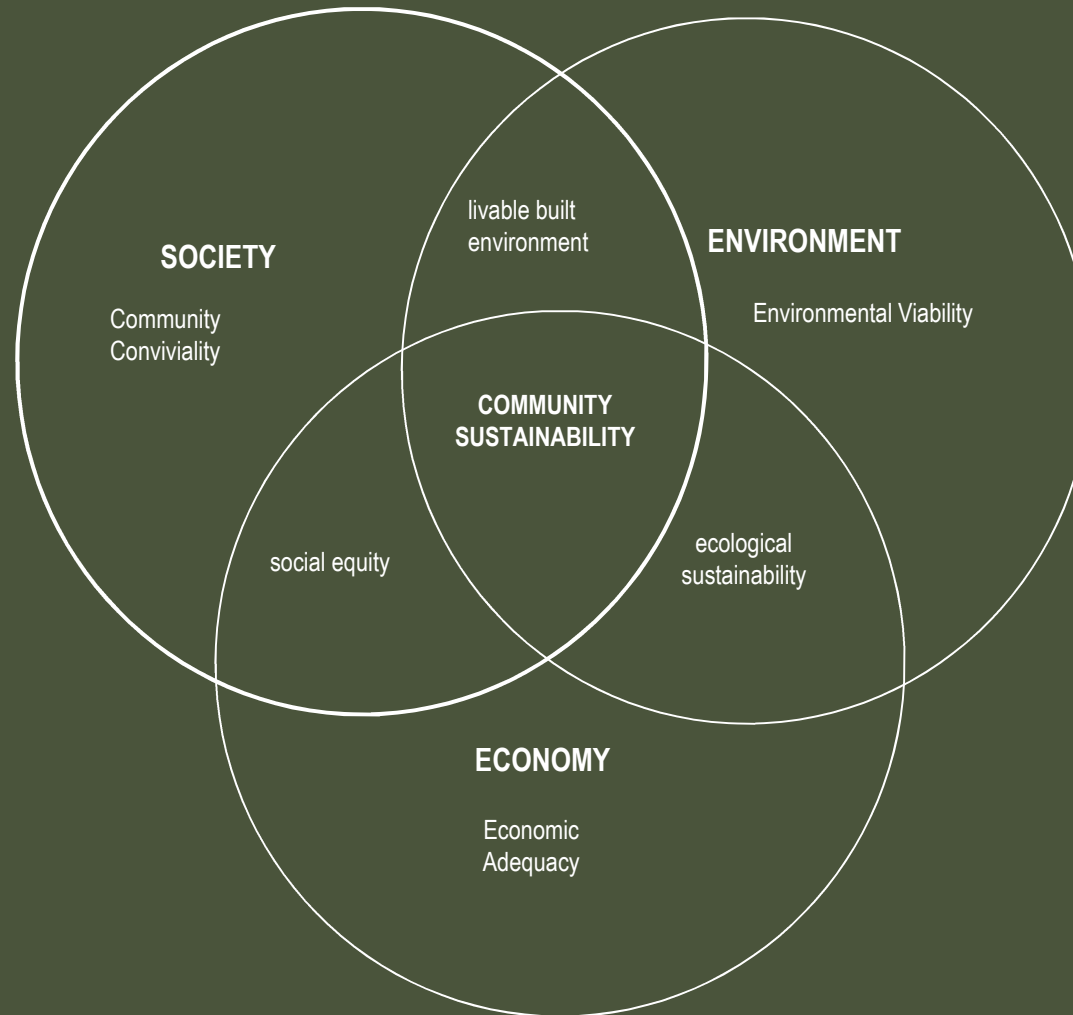
- 3 Imperatives:

- Social
- Economic
- Ecological

# Sustainable Community Development

## Hancock (1997)

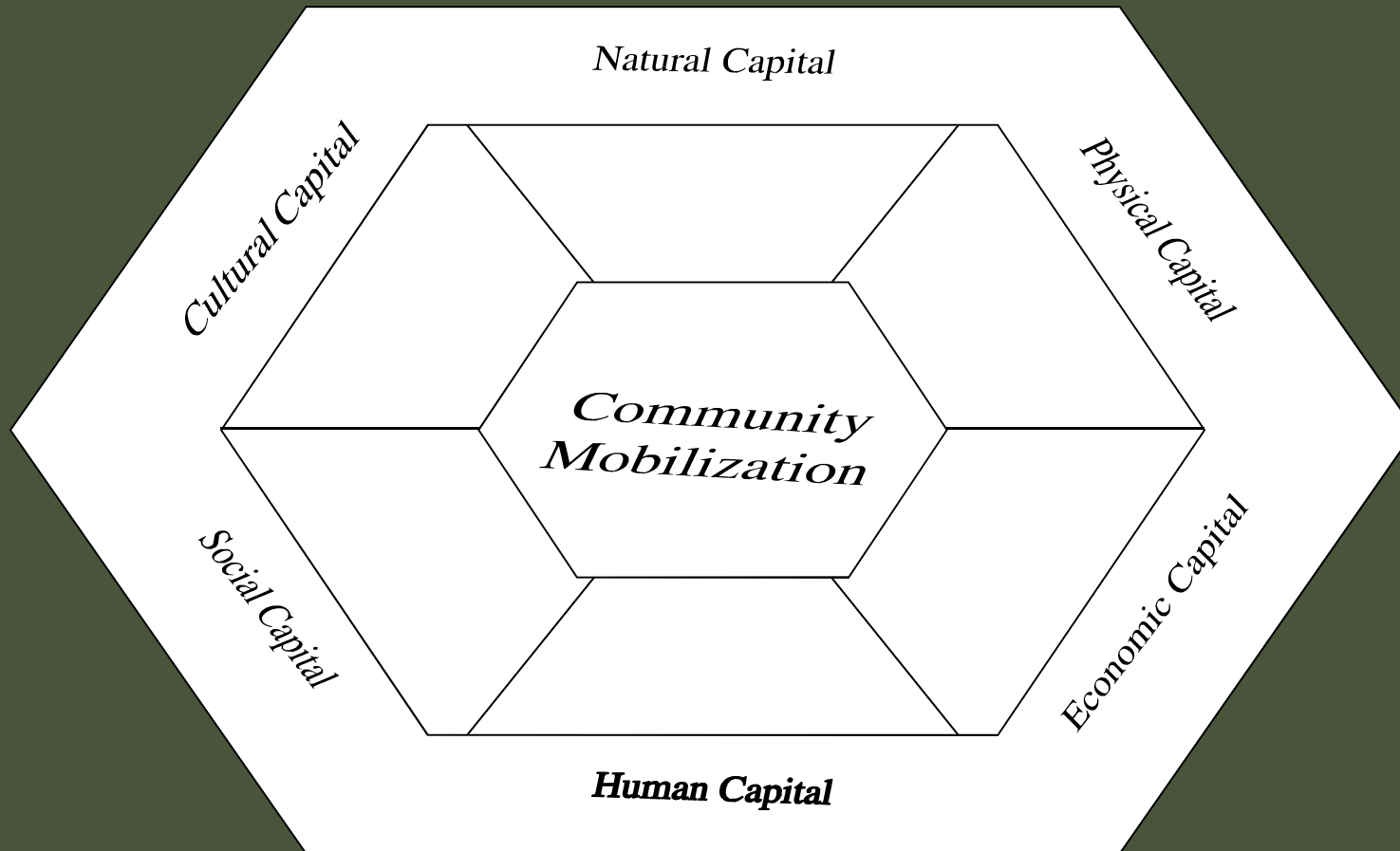
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# Sustainable Community Development

## Roseland (2005)

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# Social Economy

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- “third sector” or “third system”
- “grassroots, entrepreneurial, not-for-profit sector, based on democratic values, that seeks to enhance the social, economic, and environmental conditions of communities, often with a focus on their disadvantaged members”

(Social Development Canada)

- Principles:

- Primary goal of service to members of the community rather than the accumulation of profit;
- Autonomous management;
- Democratic decision-making processes;
- Primacy of persons and work over capital;
- Redistribution of profits;

(Chantier de l'économie sociale)

# Theoretical Linkages and Conceptual Comparisons

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- Green Political Thought
- Social Ecology
- Eco-socialism

## Traveling Concepts

- Democracy
- Co-operation
- Mutualism
- Decentralization
- Progressive sense of place

# Bridging and Building

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- Beyond ecological modernization
- Models of organization and ownership
- Sustainability as a process – not a fixed outcome



Pearce (2003)

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“It should be axiomatic that an enterprise which has a social purpose will have a clear environmental policy, for to be environmentally irresponsible is to be socially irresponsible.”

# Obstacles to Bridging

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- Sense of immediacy
- Class issues
- Idealism vs. realism
- Contradiction of consumerism

# BALTA Research Directions

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- Mapping
- Controlling Land
- Farmers Markets as Social Economy Enterprises
- Heritage Buildings and Sheltering the Social Economy