

Public Participation and the New Forest Economy

**Discussion Paper on Concepts:
Community Economic Development**

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February 10, 1998

This research was supported by
a grant from FRBC

Project Abstract

Project Summary:

This research project investigates community dynamics and factors influencing effective participation and decision-making in British Columbia's resource dependent communities. The research will identify defining elements of "community" which are key to effective participation in both community development decision-making and resource planning, allocation and management. The research findings will be of direct value to managers seeking to maximize returns on community development assistance and those seeking to make effective use of community involvement in the new types of consultation processes now being employed in a variety of situations in British Columbia.

Rationale:

A central priority of the Forest Renewal B.C. initiative is with "strengthening communities that rely on the forests". As the Forest Practices Code changes the way our forest resource is managed, harvested and utilized, so too will change the patterns of employment, and the skills needed to gain this employment, in the new forest economy. These changes will have a direct impact upon many of British Columbia's smaller, resource-based, communities where both local workers and businesses rely upon direct participation in forest industry. At an individual level, workers and residents will be engaged in a 'retooling' of skills to meet new job opportunities. At a broader level, communities will be seeking to participate in resource allocation decisions and to attract investment which keeps the economic benefits of the new forest economy within their community. FRBC recognizes the importance of these changes and the importance of "supporting community development and adjustment".

While achieving successful adjustment to change is a critically important goal, the participation of communities in resource allocation and management, and the positioning of communities to facilitate new economic development, will be hampered without a clear understanding of both the meaning and dynamics of community involvement. This is not simply an isolated academic issue, but rather, how communities function and come together to participate in the new forest economy will have a very real impact upon how successful they are in adjusting to new forest management practices. What defines a community? What aspects of this definition are critical to motivating participation in planning for adjustments to change? What aspects of this definition are important in promoting community economic development? What criteria can local areas employ to help define their geographic territory, especially when they may be in competition with adjacent areas over control of resources? How can the desire for community participation in resource planning be better integrated into models to ensure more effective decision-making? Finally, how can more effective institutions and structures be developed to assist decision-making?

Finding clear answers to these questions will be an important part of helping communities adjust to the new forest economy.

Research Goals:

Four Research Goals guide the research project:

1. Develop an applied definition of “community” and “community development” in British Columbia, and creation of tools for self-definition of community on a local basis,
2. Develop recommendations to enhance community participation in current resource allocation decision-making models (e.g.: LRMP’s),
3. Application of community definition and participation recommendations to resource planning and management objectives and practices, including assessments of their application to community-based management models, and
4. Develop recommendations on appropriate institutional developments to enhance community goal-setting and decision-making in regard to resource management at the local level.

Funding for this research and/or extension was provided by Forest Renewal BC - a partnership of forest companies, workers, environmental groups, First Nations, communities and government. Forest Renewal BC funding - from stumpage fees and royalties that forest companies pay for the right to harvest timber on Crown lands - is reinvested in the forests, forest workers, and forest communities.

Funding assistance by Forest Renewal BC does not imply endorsement of any statements or information contained herein.

Publications

of the “Public Participation in the New Forest Economy” research project

Discussion Papers

Discussion Paper on Concepts: “Community”. Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. December 20, 1997.

Discussion Paper on Concepts: “Community Economic Development”. Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. February 10, 1998.

Reports

“Report on a Questionnaire Survey of Residents in Six British Columbia Communities”. Greg Halseth and Annie Booth. Faculty of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies. University of Northern British Columbia. 21 January 1998.

Annotated Bibliographies

- #1. Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - Citizen Participation in Resource Management - An Annotated Bibliography. April 1997.
- #2. Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - Community and Sustainability - An Annotated Bibliography. April 1997.
- #3. Community Participation and the New Forest Economy - British Columbia Models of Community Participation and Examples of Management - An Annotated Bibliography. April 1997.

As part of our intent to make this information as widely available as possible, copies of all research reports, discussion papers and bibliographies were sent to most public library systems in British Columbia. As well, copies were sent to many of the college, university-college, and university libraries systems in the Province.

Copies of project publications are also available online at the following website address:

<http://quarles.unbc.edu/frbc/index.html>

If you would like further information about the research project, please contact:

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Community Participation in the New Forest Economy

Discussion Paper on Concepts: Community Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

The “Public Participation in the New Forest Economy” research project is interested in the ways in which individuals and groups of people in British Columbia’s rural and small town communities can participate in a meaningful way in the many forms of resource planning and management decision-making processes presently underway. As government policy moves increasingly towards permitting the general public and stakeholder participation in decision-making processes, so too is the public coming to expect to have input into such processes.

This particular discussion paper provides a review of several key terms involved with local resource development debates and associated planning/management decision-making processes. The concepts of “community development”, “community economic development”, and “sustainable community (economic) development” are now common-place in the discussions and debates over natural resource allocation and management. The meaning of such terms as they are used in many of these debates is often not clear. At times, such terms may also be used interchangeably. Yet, these terms do have some very distinct meanings and their confusion in debates can hinder progress and understanding. It is important that all parties in a debate or planning process understand the basic terms and concepts around which an agreement may (hopefully) coalesce. Towards our goal of providing the general public, stakeholder groups, and resource managers with the tools to more effectively participate in consultation and consensus decision-making, this paper contains a background discussion of these terms and attempts to link key issues into an overall framework.

CIVIL SOCIETY

As community groups, interest groups, and non-local stakeholder groups seek to participate in resource planning and management processes, it is important to recognize the critical place of such groups within the structure of our society. To this end we suggest that these groups are part of our “Civil Society”, and as such it is a key term for the research project.

While there is a large body of philosophical literature, and a range of views, on the issue of Civil Society, this research project defines it as the critical space between the individual and the State (Massam, 1995). These groups are collective entities, but they are not affiliated with any of the traditional power bases of the political system. As such, Civil Society creates a geographical landscape for social organization, order, and action. In this sense, Civil Society is also a theoretical cornerstone in local community development; a mechanism through which to re-assert local priorities through local democracy.

Central to the notion of Civil Society are the collective associations of individuals, residents, or other actors. At the local scale, such collective associations are often of grassroots origins. They may emerge, for example, as residents within a neighbourhood or small village come to recognize that they have a collective set of concerns and come together to work out solutions or to assert their concerns to appropriate decision-making bodies by capitalizing on the numerical weight of their membership. At the non-local scale, such groups may exhibit a much more formalized and professionalized structure and organization. For example, issue based coalitions may emerge around particular topics, and in order to work effectively they often must develop more structured lines of communication, involvement, leadership, and action.

For both local and non-local based Civil Society groups, there are some common prerequisite issues. Critical questions emerging from the view of community groups as Civil Society actors concerns the degree to which the (broader) community participates. For example, questions include whether there is an equality of access and whether these collective associations are

representative, that is, when they speak up for local interests are they speaking from democratic foundations. Such questions are fundamental to the legitimacy of Civil Society groups, as without a strong sense of how participation and membership may be structured, both decision-makers and other members of the “public” as well are unable to attach weight or value to the positions and views such groups may present. For managers of public consultation processes, the question of representativeness is often critical to the success of the process. In cases where consultation process managers may give a vocal group Civil Society legitimation, but where the general public does not recognize that group as representative of the constituency they purport to speak for, can cripple or cancel implementation of planning or management recommendations based on the input of that group.

TERMINOLOGY

In evaluating community (economic) development organizations and activities, we find the central terms of “community”, “community development”, and “community economic development”, difficult to define. With respect to the concept of “community”, the research literature suggests that perhaps the most useful understanding comes from one which recognizes that communities are self-defined by people as a reflection of their local interactions and participation (Halseth, 1996). A separate Discussion Paper on the concept of “Community” has been prepared by the “Public Participation in the New Forest Economy” research project.

Certainly, community can be a place - a locale in which one lives, conducts business, and raises a family (“place-based” community). However, one’s “community” also involves sets of relationships and personal ties (“interest-based” community). Following from this, people may belong to and interact with several distinct communities within any single locality. Layers of community ties and linkages bind people in different ways, and to different degrees, to places. This issue has become increasingly important in recent debates about new information technologies, especially the degree to which electronic “on-line” communities may end up displacing people’s interactions with their place-based communities.

Beyond the initial concept of community, Dauncey (1996) suggests that the recent evolution of economic development practices has spawned a variety of concepts and acronyms. He argues that it is important that each concept be clearly understood as contributing something unique to the “spectrum of tools” available to communities. Dauncey describes the range of economic development practices as follows.

Macro-Economic Development

This style of development policy is based upon standard economic supply and demand theories. It allows government intervention through such practices as trade agreements, tariffs, duties, fiscal policy, and adjustment policies. While local places can feel the impacts of these types of policies through plant opening and closures, they rarely are able to exercise any influence or have any meaningful input into such policy processes.

Economic Development (ED)

Most conventional economic development practices involve communities attempting to recruit prospective employers. This was very common during the 1960s and 1970s when many communities undertook creation of “development parks” and other means as a way of attracting businesses. Such proactive efforts can result in positive economic growth as business or industry is attracted into an area or when existing ones expand local operations. Such practices, when undertaken in a piecemeal or uncoordinated fashion can also create significant problems for rural and small town places. Debt costs for “fad” projects such as business parks can cause further harm if few new business tenants move into the community. As well, such practices can lead to a situation where a number of small communities end up competing against one another, often resulting in unwise incentives being granted in order to “win” a new business, when it may in fact be better to adopt a regional development or growth strategy.

Local Economic Development (LED)

Rather than depending upon an external industry coming to the community, LED is based upon direct local action to develop partnerships and enhance local businesses and business opportunities. The goals of this type of approach are generally organized around the idea of “plugging economic leakages”; that is, in keeping more of the money which is generated within the community circulating within the community rather than being “lost” through buying goods or services from external companies. At the local level the municipal government may be able to provide certain incentives or assistance to local entrepreneurs.

Community Economic Development (CED)

The prevalent model in the 1990s, CED attempts to integrate LED with community values and needs. Particular attention is directed to addressing local equality or poverty issues. Partnerships between government, industry, and volunteer sectors are typical. Issues such as participation and representation are especially important in CED approaches. There has been strong participation by Civil Society groups in a wide variety of CED initiatives in both urban and rural places.

Sustainable Development

The idea of incorporating “Sustainable Development” concepts into LED and CED is relatively new. Central to this movement is the linking of local business and community needs with aspects such as the carrying capacity within the local environment. In this case, development is not necessarily equated with growth. While some argue that recent interest in Sustainable Development issues by policy makers and the general public has come about because of the United Nations’ Bruntland Commission report on Our Common Future, ideas reported on in that publication had a rather longer legacy and currency.

The remainder of the discussion paper seeks to draw out some of the issues subsumed within these terms.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPEMENT (CED)

The term “community economic development”, is difficult to define. Drawing upon the ideas of McRobie and Ross (1987, 1) - community economic development is “a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own solutions to their common economic problems and thereby build long-term community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives”. In their view, “development” is not necessarily equated with “growth”; it means consolidating existing resources, and improving qualitative aspects of community life. The idea of building local human capacity (skills, knowledge, training, support structures, etc.) is central to the idea of better “equipping” local places to respond to challenges and opportunities.

Community economic development (CED) strategies include such things as “import substitution”, where local goods are purchased in order to keep revenues within the community, and the plugging of economic “leakages” by developing local capabilities to provide specialized types of goods and services. The goal of CED is to create and enhance opportunities to generate and maintain economic wealth within the community. CED strategies are supposed to be developed with broad public input and to represent general consensus with respect to the direction of future local economic development. Issues and outcomes are not necessarily limited to those considered “economic”, as a collective may decide to allocate resources to other projects which would improve local quality of life.

Brodhead and Lamontagne (1994) argue that community economic development is rooted in local empowerment, autonomy, as well as individual entrepreneurship. CED is seen not as a panacea, but rather as a “complimentary” strategy for disadvantaged places. To be effective, key CED actors must be drawn from a wide range of local sectors (social, cultural, economic, etc.). There is also a critical role for governments at the local and supra-local level.

Fossum (1993) follows up with this idea of empowerment and is interested in finding ways to empower community-based revitalization efforts. With a focus on small, rural, communities he argues that there are 2 clear imperatives to local community economic development. The first is “capacity building”. In this case, the need to enhance the educational, skill, and experience level of local individuals, groups, and leaders, is necessary in order to create a foundation for an innovative and effective community. Without this foundation, initiatives will ultimately fail.

The second imperative identified by Fossum is considered to be the creation of “value-added enterprises”. In this case, the emphasis is upon creating some local economic diversity, even if that diversity exists within a relatively constrained natural resource base. Primary manufacturing industries, such as British Columbia’s forest industry, have experienced a long period of job reductions through automation such that employment has decreased while productivity has increased. Fossum suggests that higher skill value-added employment would be a way of “squeezing jobs back into the natural resource sectors”.

Based upon these 2 imperatives, it is clear that Fossum’s interests are with bridging the gap between community development (capacity building) and community economic development (additional local businesses). He thus argues that community economic development in rural and small town communities needs to focus on a set of key objectives. These key objectives include the following:

- 1) employment,
- 2) local income generation,
- 3) building local capital wealth,
- 4) sustainability (environmental and economic),
- 5) stability in notoriously boom and bust resource sectors,
- 6) vitality to react to rapidly changing markets,
- 7) enhancement of local quality of life (including security and health), and
- 8) wide distribution of benefits across community.

In building a “pathway” to the types of objectives which Fossum is most concerned with, Hosik (1998) identifies a series of stages to successful community economic development activities. He suggests that each of these stages contain within them suites of opportunities and challenges. He clearly sees community economic development as a long-term, forward looking, set of strategies and not a bundle of “quick fixes” or “buzzword” projects. This is a critical and often overlooked point. Sudden economic pressures often create demands from the public and local officials for just such quick fix solutions. CED strategies are not best employed in this kind of quick fix in response to sudden economic collapse scenario. Instead, CED approaches can better equip, broaden, diversify, and strengthen the economy in rural and small town places to the point where catastrophic economic collapse is far less likely to occur because less of the local economy is bound up with one employer or one natural resource product.

Hosik’s key stages for successful CED activities include the following:

Step 1 - Getting Started

- 1) group organization: small, broad-based,
- 2) definition of a problem: a critical stage but one which needs to recognize that problems are not singular elements but are often interrelated to other issues and problems,
- 3) local economic development resources: education is a key issue and local groups must educate themselves on a wide variety of issues, including the range of economic development and assistance organizations or resources which may be available to them, and
- 4) interaction: recognition that the local is integrated into a regional and international frameworks and that collaboration can be both effective and cost efficient.

Step 2 - After Getting Started

- 1) finances : community development and community economic development groups need to have clear business plans in order to finance their existence and operation,
- 2) volunteers: the use of volunteers can be a tremendous cost saving over paid staff, however, workloads may introduce volunteer “burn-out”,
- 3) spending - watch funds wisely: use consultants “warily”,

- 4) consensus: at all stages work to get group consensus and public input and consensus,
- 5) redefine problems: focus upon those which can be managed at the local level, and
- 6) community resources: build upon local expertise, information, and capacities.

Step 3 - “Do It”

- 1) develop an action plan,
- 2) initiate plans,
- 3) limit the scope of initiatives,
- 4) link with other communities, and
- 5) put programs in motion together with a self-generating evaluation process.

As a final point, it is recognized that community (economic) development is an inherently geographic phenomena. Place and scale are critical. While various CED strategies and tools have been applied in urban and rural places; and at global, regional, and intimately local scales, there is no single formula to remedy a community’s ills - the unique social and economic geography of each place precludes this. Local places must work to create solutions that are appropriate to those places. This is where involvement, participation, and Civil Society groups become important. The need is to develop initiatives that will serve the broad community, not simply the interests of one sector.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (CD)

In a general sense, “community development” concerns improvements to local social and cultural infrastructure. When employed as an extension of the “community economic development” definition, community development is most often identified as being concerned with increasing the skills, knowledge, and abilities of residents - and with increasing the ability of the community as a whole - to access information and resources, and to then use these tools to create strategies which can take advantage of changing circumstances. In generic terms, this is referred to as “human capacity building” - something Cofsky and Bryant (1994) consider critical to community empowerment. This is also something which the “Public Participation in the New Forest Economy” research project is identifying as important in both the case study field work and the academic/practitioner literature review work.

McKay (1987) argues that the concept of community development is rooted in a complex set of variables. These variables include the physical, social, organizational, and cultural environment of places. Local communities are not only complex, but across Canada they are also diverse. Building upon case studies looking at First Nations communities in Canada, she argues, that not only is an historical framework necessary to identify the current trajectory of these variables, but that community development must include a “comprehensive” view of the needs, limits, and opportunities available within a place.

Building upon McKay's argument, Williamson and Annamraju (1996) suggest that the concept of community development is generally considered to be “holistic”, involving local economic systems together with local institutions, political leadership, community spirit, social structure, and other factors beyond economics. Arguing that classical economic frameworks were often “pro-development”, the authors suggest that community development initiatives framed within more general concepts such as sustainability, offer a way to integrate the environmental costs of economic activity with local social equity issues. In this case, the critical issue for rural and small town communities is the degree to which local economies are dependent upon single

industries or single resources. The more dependent a local economy, the more difficult (but also more critical) it is to diversify. Using the example of forest resource management, the authors argue that modifying decision-making to incorporate more community input may enhance local understanding of resource management issues and feed-back information to centralized resource managers about the needs of individual places. Unfortunately, where the resource base may be “controlled” by a large multinational corporation, that corporation will be forced by the global market place to satisfy its own needs for profitability and growth very much before considering the social or environmental needs of one small hinterland town or village.

Campfens (1997a) draws upon an international set of case studies to explore the issue of community development from the perspective of both practice and theory. The foundation for his interest come from the impacts of global economic restructuring, a restructuring which has resulted in new pressures and uncertain tensions at the community and group level.

Following arguments already described above, Campfens re-affirms a view that community development is set within the cultural, social, political, and economic realities of particular countries and communities. Like Duancey, he argues that through the 1950s and 1960s, community development was largely a government organized endeavour. The outcome of such top-down policy initiatives was uneven as proposed solutions were often inappropriate for particular places. However, since that time there has been a steady emergence of non-government organizations (NGOs) and voluntary sector agencies in community development activities. As a result, community development initiatives have been transformed somewhat, from top-down government supported movements to bottom-up local initiatives. Transition over time is a theme associated with maturity. In many cases it is also associated with the growth of a viable Civil Society within rural and small town places. In British Columbia, public expectations and level of participation in resource planning and management processes is similarly maturing.

Building upon this foundation, Campfen (1997b) goes on to argue that self-help, bottom-up models of community development emerged from third world rural settings and have, since the

1970s, been increasingly imported into western and urban settings. Key issues for the success of community development activity includes:

- 1) identification of needs,
- 2) local participation,
- 3) inter-organizational and inter-group relations,
- 4) social interaction, and
- 5) ongoing support.

Pressures on the economic, political, and social order of societies and communities means that an increasing reliance upon local decision-making is the only way to insert some certainty against the vagaries of a globalized economy. With this need for local response, the development of local consensus and local actions is of course, critical. Campfens identifies a typology of approaches to community development. It is important to recognize that these are not suggested as “models” of community development. His suggested typology of approaches to community development include:

- 1) continuum: community capacity building to advance human rights,
- 2) group cooperative: developed from the tradition of mutual aid, social support and social action,
- 3) locality: which identifies the local community as a physical, economic, social, and political unit and structures responses based on that unit,
- 4) structural - functional: incorporates recognition that various partners (state agencies, institutions, NGOs, etc.) Are an integral part of local community development,
- 5) categorical: identifies community development efforts aimed at particular social issues (local housing, food banks, etc.),
- 6) self-management: based upon a bottom-up empowerment approach, and
- 7) social learning: incorporation of professional experts (“universal knowledge”) and local residents (“lived-experience”).

This typology illustrates a diversity of approaches to community development beyond the collective concern for creating pro-active change in the local place.

Finally, Campfens identifies a series of common themes in community development as social movements. These common themes include the following:

- 1) pro-active : addressing not just current issues but preparing (visioning) to deal with upcoming issues and concerns,
- 2) limits to self-reliance: a balance needing to be struck between local initiatives and recognition that wider political, economic, and social forces also intercede. This interaction between the local and nonlocal is not limited to only negative forces, but also includes the positive assistance which state and NGO agencies may be able to provide,
- 3) "People": community development is really about the development of local people in a place. In this case issues such as learning, awareness, and empowerment are critical in local human capacity building,
- 4) program integration: recognition that linkages between groups within communities and groups external to local places are critical. Recognition that different mandates and agendas may create conflicts highlights the importance of recognizing this thematic issue,
- 5) participation: without popular support and community participation, policies and programs aimed to address local economic and social issues are likely to meet with little success. Community "buy-in" to such non-collaborative approaches is generally limited. As well, policies developed in isolation run the risk of missing critical components which public consultation and participation exercises may have been able to contribute, and
- 6) social justice: the link here is with issues first raised in the Brundland Commission report about providing a "baseline" for evaluation of community development success as being those in the local place least able to control or contribute to improving their own status.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (SCD)

In their monthly newsletter, The Centre for Rural Affairs (April 1997) posed the question “what is sustainable development?” They acknowledged that there is no single definition for such a complex concept. Most importantly however, they point out that meanings will change as new trends and interpretations develop. In other words, there are already multiple interpretations and it is expected that this diversity will grow.

This means that the use of such a term in public debates or consultation processes is fraught with difficulty. Different groups may not understand how each is using such a complicated term in the debate, or worse, they may come to an agreement but have very different interpretations of what that agreement will do based upon acute differences in their understanding of the words involved. In a simple example drawing upon stereotypical images, a large industrial firm and an environmental group may agree that sustainable development with respect to a particular resource is to be their collective goal. The industrial firm may understand sustainable development to mean an increasing level of resource use in order to perpetuate growth and meet ever higher output forecasts; while the environmental group may understand sustainable development to involve a reduction in the resource consumption down to a level that allows the natural biological system to replenish that resource at the rate it is being used in the industrial process. Their agreement is, therefore, meaningless and the time spent putting it together will have been wasted. Any goodwill generated through a consensus building process will be lost in an acrimonious set of accusations about violations of the hard won agreement.

Drawing upon a discussion in “Economic Development Digest” from January 1997, the commentary in the Centre's newsletter argues that sustainable development is multi-faceted and includes at least 4 central components. These components include:

economic,
political,
social,
and environmental aspects.

In terms of Sustainable Economic Development, the emphasis is upon enhancing existing local assets without degrading their quality. Political sustainability hinges upon the support of the majority of the community and must be effective over the long term. Social sustainability means that a project or initiative must be integrated into, and connected with, a community's particular social structure. Finally, Environmental sustainability links with the impact of a project or proposal on the local environment. Enhancement rather than degradation is identified as being the important outcome.

Drawing upon most of the same concepts, Bauen, Baker, and Johnson (1996) suggest that sustainability refers to “long-term economic, environmental, and community health” (p. 4). They recognize that this concept has both broad scope but also tremendous usefulness for community development. Its usefulness at a community development level involves 2 specific issues. These issues are as follows:

1) It introduces consideration of the long-term consequences from today's actions and decisions. This changing of the temporal framework is very different from standard economic modelling, and

2) It also encourages practitioners to think broadly across issues, disciplines, physical and social boundaries. It suggests searching out new ways to

- a) create economic vitality,
- b) maintaining a healthy environment, and
- c) building healthy communities and meeting local needs.

In its most optimistic, this is viewed as a “win-win” type of solution.

Bauen, Baker, and Johnson go on to suggest 6 principles to sustainable community development. These principles include:

- 1) fostering a commitment to place,
- 2) promoting a community vitality,
- 3) building local capacity to support resilience and adaptability when confronted with change,
- 4) promote a sense of responsibility as “stewardship”,
- 5) reinforce the importance of connections and partnerships at a local and a supra-local level, and
- 6) to promote equity within the social structure of the place.

Maser (1997) tries to integrate the concept of sustainability with the actions of local economic development. The concept of sustainability links very clearly with the carrying capacity of a local eco-system. Maser identifies that there are some very significant challenges to incorporating sustainability. Among these challenges are:

- 1) an uncertain understanding of the complexity and fragility of local eco-systems,
- 2) that a society must “re-invest” in living systems just as it invests and re-invests in businesses, and
- 3) that policies and plans must clearly identify what element of the local eco-system needs to be sustained.

As a final note, Maser argues that once these challenges are met a clear understanding of accountability for decisions and actions must be built into any project or initiative.

In terms of local community development, Maser sees this as a very democratic process, one which incorporates senses of belonging, shared learning, and collective service. In order for local community development to be democratic, it must be accessible to, and implemented by, the majority of the population. Naturally, the more diverse the local population, the more difficulty in generating participation and consensus that will be encountered. However, the net result will be an “empowerment” of local people. It will also mean a legitimacy for the plans or policies which develop out of the planning/management process.

For Maser, one of the underlying problems is that world leaders and governments focus upon “top-down” development. Instead, he argues that a holistic, solid foundation for social and environmental sustainability can only be derived from “bottom-up” community development. Stemming from both Civil Society and democratic community development concepts, Maser sees participation at the local level as a key element. Information exchange and other efforts which work to enhance local participation need to be both the foundation and focal point of early community development efforts.

Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya (1990) extend the arguments posited thus far and argue for 3 critical elements which must be understood if the concept of “sustainable development” is to be incorporated successfully into practice and policy. The first involves development of a general definition of sustainable development. The second involves a minimum set of conditions which must be satisfied for development activities and initiatives to be considered sustainable. The third is that there must be overt recognition about the “natural capital stock” of a locality and that development activity should not degrade this natural capital.

Sustainable development is argued to be a process rather than an entity. This process should include at minimum a set of key elements. As suggested by Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya, these key elements are identified as follows:

- 1) increase real income per capita,
- 2) improve health status,
- 3) improve educational status,
- 4) enhance access to community “resources”,
- 5) develop a “fairer” distribution of income, and
- 6) increase basic freedoms and maintain human rights.

Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya argue that the critical concept of natural capital stock must be more clearly incorporated into community development and community economic development initiatives. Natural capital stock refers to the eco-system components which support local life and habitat diversity. Since the environment not only acts as a source of valuable resources, but

also acts as a “waste-sink”, it is important that the natural capital stock be maintained (or even enhanced) in order that development initiatives be sustainable. Degrading of the natural capital stock will over time render both unsustainable and obsolete local development or economic efforts.

The final item Pearce, Barbier, and Markandya argue for is that in the evaluation of natural capital stock, a time frame recognizing “inter-generational equity” must be central. For example, degradation of soils to the point where high artificial fertilizer inputs will be required in the future, does not meet the test of inter-generational equity as the current generation is passing potentially significant costs off to the next generation. In this sense, inter-generational equity builds upon earlier notions such as Rawls’ “theory of justice” which argues that the next generation should have access to at least the same resource (or natural capital stock) base as the previous generation.

LOCAL PARTICIPATION IN CED/CD/SCD

Participatory approaches to sustainable development have become increasingly popular worldwide. In British Columbia, participatory approaches to natural resources management is coming to be expected by the general public and organized interest groups. This trend is unlikely to reverse over the short term future.

Participatory approaches are often termed “bottom-up” approaches. In this sense they are often contrasted with “top-down” approaches where governments or agencies have sought to impose development policies or plans. However, Martin (1997) highlights that citizen participation has a complex political and social nature. For example, differing definitions of “development”, which are often incorporated into broader political world views, can be the starting point for particular kinds of activism. Some of this activism may not meet the tests of sustainable community development or Civil Society involvement. Instead, some of this type of activism is simply a recasting of the existing political power base working through different media. This recognition of the overt political nature of sustainable development discourse highlights the need to integrate an understanding of conflict and divergence of interests when preparing and implementing public consultation and decision-making processes.

As highlighted by many other authors, public participation is a cornerstone to both community development and community economic development. In order to make this cornerstone functional, a sense of consensus, or at least significant majority support, is very necessary. Recognition of the overt role which political agendas may play will assist managers with making such consultation or participation processes more effective.

As a final note, the concept of consensus has arisen several times in the discussion of community development, community economic development, and sustainable community development. While the objective of this discussion paper is not to review the literature on consensus based decision-making, one of the papers discussed above contained a capsule summary which may be of interest to readers.

Consensus

“In consensus decision making each member’s concerns must be addressed and every member’s support is required to make a decision. This means that participants share decision making power equally and the group is not divided into ‘winners’ and ‘losers’. Working to satisfy everyone’s interests often leads to innovative solutions. Consensus decisions may take longer than voting but, with the full support of the group, implementation will come more easily.” (Bauen, Baker, and Johnson, 1996, p. 2).

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