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Culture as a Key Dimension of Sustainability:

Exploring Concepts, Themes, and Models

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Abstract: The paper begins with an overview of how sustainability and community development inform emerging views of sustainable community development. The cultural threads running through literature on sustainability and community development are highlighted, intertwined with discussions on social sustainability and community capital, and informed by community cultural development and eco-arts. Part two outlines ten prevailing themes in the emerging cultural sustainability literature. Part three presents three models of sustainability that include culture as a significant component: the four-pillar model of sustainability, the four well-beings of community sustainability, and the medicine wheel approach to sustainability. A brief chronology of key points in the co-evolution of thinking about sustainability, development, and culture is presented in Appendix A.

Résumé : Le mémoire se divise en trois parties et débute par un aperçu des diverses perspectives émergentes concernant l'incidence de la viabilité et du développement communautaire sur le développement communautaire viable. Pour illustrer le propos, divers ouvrages portant sur la viabilité et le développement communautaire sont mis de l'avant, en filigrane d'analyses sur la viabilité sociale, le capital social et l'épanouissement culturel d'une communauté, ainsi que sur l'art écologique. La deuxième partie identifie dix thèmes prédominants dans la littérature actuelle sur la viabilité culturelle. La troisième partie propose trois modèles de viabilité privilégiant la composante culturelle : le modèle des quatre piliers de la viabilité; les quatre éléments de bien-être d'une collectivité viable; et la roue médicinale de la viabilité. Une chronologie sommaire de l'évolution de la nouvelle pensée en matière de viabilité, de développement et de culture est présentée à l'annexe A.

Sustainable development:

> ... improving the quality of life whilst living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.
> —World Conservation Union et al. (1991)

> ... meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
> —World Commission on Environment and Development (1987)

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> Ultimately, the pursuit of sustainability is a local undertaking not only because each community is ecologically and culturally unique but also because its citizens have specific place-based needs and requirements.
>
> —Robert E. Rhoades (2006, p. 1)

Traditionally, sustainability has largely been defined at the global and national level. Only recently has it begun to be applied to cities and communities (Mitlan & Satterthwaite, 1994). This shift in focus is reinforced, in part, through the adoption of sustainability frameworks and concerns by the community development field. Parallel to this "local turn" has been a greater appreciation for culture as a significant component of sustainability: this idea is thinly distributed but pervasive in the literature. Within the community development field, cultural considerations often emerge through discussions about social sustainability or community capital; in both contexts, culture is just now emerging as a topic of inquiry. The pattern is similar: community sustainability continues to be most commonly seen as a way to improve a community's "well-being" in social, economic, and environmental terms, with culture gradually forming a part of this vision.

This paper consists of three parts. First, it presents a brief overview of how sustainability and community development inform emerging views of sustainable community development. The cultural threads running through literature on sustainability and community development are highlighted, intertwined with discussions on social sustainability and community capital, and informed by community cultural development and eco-arts. Second, it outlines prevailing themes in the emerging cultural sustainability literature. Third, it presents three models of sustainability that include culture as a significant component. A brief chronology of key points in the co-evolution of thinking about sustainability, development, and culture is presented in Appendix A.

I. Background/Key Informing Contexts

This section provides a brief overview of key contexts and concepts influencing emerging views of sustainable community development that incorporate culture as a significant component. It is difficult to organize these evolving concepts as they overlap and inform one another in organic and co-evolutionary ways. For instance, discussions of sustainability incorporate both social and cultural ideas. Community development practices include sustainable community development and community cultural development. Cultural and social capital are incorporated in both sustainability and community development. Eco-arts practices influence thinking about relationships between culture and the environment. As well, the different areas are often linked in practice through a number of common values and approaches; these linkages are also highlighted.

Sustainability

> Sustainability is a vision and a process, not an end product.
>
> —Newman & Kenworthy (1999, p. 5)

Sustainability is fundamentally about adapting to a new ethic of living on the planet and creating a more equitable and just society through the fair distribution of social goods and resources in the world (see, for example, Darlow, 1996). Sustainable development questions consumption-based lifestyles and decision-making processes that are based solely upon economic efficiency, but its ethical underpinnings go beyond obligation to the environment and the economy—it is a holistic and creative process that we must

constantly strive towards (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999). This is complicated by the fact that sustainable development is based on society's always changing worldviews and values (Williams, 2003).

Environmental, social, and economic models of sustainability view culture as an important dimension, yet there is still a general lack of understanding of what culture relates to and contributes. In *Aesthetics of Sustainability*, Hildegard Kurt notes the "lack of cultural considerations in sustainability discourse" in the sustainable development field (i.e., in the 1992 *Rio Declaration* and *Agenda 21* documents) and observes that "questions about the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of sustainability have lagged behind the debates on the topic that originated in the natural and social sciences during the mid 1980s" (2004, p. 6).

To date, culture has traditionally been viewed as a component of the social dimensions of sustainability or as part of discussions on social capital, and has largely been unexamined. As Matthew Pike (2003) observes, "while there has been much written in recent years about social capital, there has been comparatively little said about cultural capital. Yet the art, the food, the music and the values that lie beneath these are of profound importance in bringing people together" (p. 18; cited in Borrup, 2003, p. 4). In part, the issue is a lack of recognition of cultural considerations as such. For instance, the intertwined origin of cultural and social sustainability considerations is well illustrated by the use of the term social sustainability "to describe the conditions needed for the survival of identifiable ethno-cultural groups, that is, the optimum population required, combined with the density of that population and processes of cultural reproduction" (Bourne, 1999, cited in Williams, 2003, p. 14).

Social sustainability / Social capital

Mark Roseland et al. (2005) states that a socially sustainable community "must have the ability to maintain and build on its own resources and have the resiliency to prevent and/or address problems in the future" (p. 154). Similarly, Maureen Williams (2003) writes: "Socially sustainable communities have the capacity to deal with change and to adapt to new situations, attributes that are now becoming increasingly essential in a globalized world" (p. 18). This capacity requires individuals to have "the freedom to choose how to improve their quality of life in the context of their own communities and social networks" (p. 14).

According to the British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and Economy, socially sustainable communities are able to:

- achieve and maintain personal health: physical, mental and physiological;
- feed themselves adequately;
- provide adequate and appropriate shelter for themselves;
- have opportunities for gainful and meaningful employment;
- improve their knowledge and understanding of the world around them;
- find opportunities to express creativity and enjoy recreation in ways that satisfy spiritual and psychological needs;
- express a sense of identity through heritage, art and culture;
- enjoy a sense of belonging;
- be assured of mutual social support from their community;
- enjoy freedom from discrimination and, for those who are physically challenged, move about a barrier-free community;
- enjoy freedom from fear, and security of person; and
- participate actively in civic affairs.

(BCRTEE, 1993, cited in Roseland et al., 2005, p. 155)

Closely related to social sustainability is the concept of social capital, defined as "the relationships, networks and norms that facilitate collective action" (OECD, 2001) or "the shared knowledge, understandings, and patterns of interaction that a group of people bring to any productive activity" (Roseland et al., 2005, p. 9, drawing from Coleman, 1988; Putnam, Leonardi, & Nanetti, 1993). Social capital includes: "community cohesion, connectedness, reciprocity, tolerance, compassion, patience, forbearance, fellowship, love, commonly accepted standards of honesty, discipline and ethics, and commonly shared rules, laws and information" (Roseland et al., 2005, p. 9).

Some common linkages between social sustainability and cultural development are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Both social sustainability and cultural development ...

- Teach about all aspects of sustainability in schools, universities, and communities
- Build community capital
- See art and culture as an educational tool
- Encourage organizations to work together on poverty, job development, housing, health, redevelopment, and youth concerns in communities
- Support local development initiatives
- Increase social inclusion and build stronger communities
- Improve quality of life, sense of place, and well-being in communities
- Relate to rural and urban revitalization
- Improve physical environment such as parks, and revitalize buildings
- Support affordable housing (for example, artist cooperatives)
- Improve street life, which improves social relations in neighbourhoods
- Provide healthy and supportive communities for youth
- Improve cultural facilities in order to improve community cohesion

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Cultural sustainability / Cultural capital

Culture is gradually emerging out of the realm of social sustainability and being recognized as having a separate, distinct, and integral role in sustainable development. Within the community development field, culture is defined broadly as being "the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs" (UNESCO, 1995, p. 22).

Cultural sustainability can be defined as "the ability to retain cultural identity, and to allow change to be guided in ways that are consistent with the cultural values of a people" (Sustainable Development Research Institute, 1998, p. 1). Discussions of sustainability, as Doubleday, Mackenzie, & Dalby (2004) observe, now incorporate "both dynamic understandings of culture and the recognition that place matters because the practice that is in need of sustaining, as well as those that pose threats, happen in particular communities and in specific geographic contexts" (p. 389). They note that serious discussions of sustainability require "considerations of the dynamics of complex cultural arrangements in particular places, rather than assumptions of either peoples or their ecological contexts" and that fundamental

debates on sustainability must contrast "environmental and cultural preservation with active practices of living in culturally constituted places" (pp. 389-390).[1]

Within the sustainability field, culture is discussed in terms of *cultural capital,* defined as "traditions and values, heritage and place, the arts, diversity and social history" (Roseland et al., 2005, p. 12). The stock of cultural capital, both tangible and intangible, is what we inherit from past generations and what we will pass onto future generations.

From a philosophical perspective, Pilotti & Rinaldin (2004) discuss how the "sustainability of cultural resources means an increase over time of a better quality of life [defined] as [a] better knowledge of ourselves" (p. 1). From a more tangible perspective, in *Ecology of Place,* Beatley & Manning note that sustainable communities must foster a sense of place that stimulates and reinforces social attachment:

> [C]ommunities must nurture built environment and settlement patterns that are uplifting, inspirational, and memorable, and that engender a special feeling of attachment and belonging.... A sustainable community respects the history and character of those existing features that nurture a sense of attachment to, and familiarity with, place. Such "community landmarks" may be natural—a meadow or an ancient tree, an urban creek—or built—a civic monument, a local diner, an historic courthouse or clock tower. Finally, in a sustainable place, special effort is made to create and preserve places, rituals, and events that foster greater attachment to the social fabric of the community. (1997, p. 32)

From a policy perspective, the Government of Canada, *Agenda 21 for Culture*, and UNESCO's Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) encompass cultural development as related to social policy and goals such as fostering social inclusion, cultural diversity, rural diversity, rural revitalization, public housing, health, ecological preservation, and sustainable development.

Community development

Community development aims to strengthen the economy and the social ties within a community through locally based initiatives. The community development process is often characterized as a "triple bottom line" of amalgamating environmental, social, and economic well-being into a common audit. The bottom line is now expanding to include cultural well-being and good governance.

The central goals of community development rely on residents having the ability to express their values, be self-reliant, satisfy basic human needs, and have greater participation and accountability in their community. This is accomplished by education, citizen participation, consensus building, and access to information. Creating a sense of place in the community is central as it empowers residents to become decision-makers over their own environment, resources, and future.

Community development empowers communities to position local issues within a larger political context. An important aspect of community development is that it is not handed down from experts or governments. As Margaret Ledwith (2005) observes, "community development begins at the everyday lives of local people. This is the initial context of sustainable change" (p. xviii).

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[1] Related to this is particularly interesting research that links markers of cultural continuity in First Nations communities with rates of teenage suicide in these communities (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). The authors conclude: "Communities that have taken active steps to preserve and rehabilitate their own cultures are shown to be those in which youth suicide rates are dramatically lower" (p. 191).

Although community development strategies differ in their focus and approach from community to community, the underlying goal is to improve the quality of life of residents. According to the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University, approaches to community development include: identifying community challenges, locating local resources, analyzing local power structures and human needs, and acting on residents' concerns in the community.

Common types of community development include:

- Community economic development
- Community capacity building
- Political participatory development
- Sustainable community development (discussed below)
- Community cultural development (discussed below)

Sustainable community development

> ... sustainability is reflected in the capacity of the community to cope with change and adapt to new situations.
> —Williams (2003, p. 15)

Community sustainability goes beyond environmental practices and economic growth: it is about creating a more just and equitable community through encouraging social and cultural diversity (Beatley & Manning, 1997; Roseland et al., 2005). It also requires the community to define sustainability from its own values and perspective. This involves community participation and a collective decision-making process that meets the social, cultural, environmental, and economic needs of the community.

Sustainable community development is a process of developing a local and self-reliant economy that does not damage the world's ecosystem or the social well-being of communities. Community residents in sustainable communities "employ strategies and solutions that are integrative and holistic. They seek ways of combining polices, programs, and design solutions to bring about multiple objectives" (Beatley & Manning, 1997, p. 33).

Community capital

During the 1990s, as sustainability became a central force in community development, the field increasingly focused on building the local capacity of an area in order to create more environmentally friendly and socially equitable places to live. In the course of this work, and informed by Robert Putnam and others interested in community capital and participation, scholars and policymakers increasingly embraced the idea that this process depends on increasing a community's available stock of social capital, and became more concerned with social capital formation (Bridger & Luloff, 2001).

Today, professionals and academics in the field consider sustainable community development to be an appreciation of many types of community capital and/or assets within a community, as "all forms of capital are created by spending time and effort in transformation and transaction activities" (Roseland et al., 2005, p. 4). For example, the Centre for Sustainable Community Development at Simon Fraser University considers community capital as including natural, physical, economic, human, social, and cultural forms of capital. By strengthening each, communities are empowered to build the necessary foundation for sustainable community development (Roseland et al., 2005; see Figure 2).

Within this context in recent years, community development practitioners in North America believe that culture must have its own form of capital. They argue that after years of working with Aboriginal

communities and communities abroad, they now view culture as separate from social capital and argue that cultural capital needs to be better understood in the sustainable development process (Beatley & Manning, 1997; Pike, 2003; Putnam, 2000; Roseland et al., 2005).

Figure 2. Community capital: Building sustainable communities

Strengthening six forms of community capital is the foundation for sustainable community development:

Minimizing the consumption of essential natural capital means living within ecological limits, conserving and enhancing natural resources, sustainable resource management (soil, air, water, energy, agriculture, etc.), cleaner production, and minimizing waste (solid, liquid, air pollution, etc).

Improving physical capital includes focusing on community assets such as public facilities (e.g., hospitals and schools), water and sanitation, efficient transportation, safe, quality housing, adequate infrastructure, and telecommunications.

Strengthening economic capital means focusing on: making more with less—maximizing use of existing resources (e.g., using waste as a resource); making the money-go-around—circulating dollars within a community; making things ourselves—replacing imports, making something new—creating new products, trading fairly with others, and developing community financial institutions.

Increasing human capital requires a focus on areas such as health, education, nutrition, literacy, and family and community cohesion. Basic determinants of health such as peace and safety, food, shelter, education, income, and employment are necessary prerequisites.

Multiplying social capital requires attention to effective and representative local governance, strong organizations, capacity-building, participatory planning, access to information, and collaboration and partnerships.

Enhancing cultural capital implies attention to traditions and values, heritage and place, the arts, diversity and social history.

(Roseland et al., 2005, p. 12)

Community cultural development

> Community cultural development has come to be understood as a collective process,
> often involving creativity interpreted in the broadest sense. This contributes to changes
> in people's lives and long-term developmental benefits for a community.
> —Mills & Brown (2004, p. 6)

Community cultural development (CCD), considered as part of an emerging sustainability framework, encompasses "a huge range of activities that give communities the opportunity to tell their stories, build their creative skills, and be active participants in the development of their culture" (O'Hara, 2002, p. 4). Key aspects of community cultural development are listed in Figure 3. Using arts and culture as a tool, community cultural development can help the community develop appropriate models of sustainability. As with other sustainable development models, there is no one model for CCD, but it is important in all cases that the relationship between artists and their community becomes "a partnership rather than the 'expert' sharing with the 'amateur'" (Mills & Brown, 2004, p. 6). It is through collaborative, creative exploration of ideas and issues that social and development changes take place (O'Hara, 2002).

CCD, largely seen as a grassroots strategy, is slowly being incorporated into current development models. It engages artists and cultural organizations in development and revitalization processes in cities and communities. It lends itself to sustainability planning through supporting a community culture, empowering residents, and strengthening cultural infrastructure and participation in a community. CCD has also been linked to other sustainable community development initiatives, such as health, affordable housing, education, youth, poverty, education, policy, and planning. Having a cultural lens in all these areas is an emerging component of sustainable development.

An important aspect of community cultural development is the concept of shared culture, which entails having a mutual respect for every culture in a community. Through this collective experience, communities gain respect for their own and others' histories, resources, hopes, and dreams.

Figure 3. Key aspects of community cultural development

- Focusing on arts-based solutions, rather than on identifying problems
- Involving policymakers in CCD planning
- Forming and maintaining new social networks with organizations, groups, artists, and government
- Creating and maintaining public spaces that draw people together
- Supporting multiculturalism
- Integrating local customs, crafts, and practices into education
- Using arts and culture as a tool for regeneration and sustainability
- Enhancing residents' ability to work and communicate with others
- Building community identity and pride
- Supporting positive community norms, such as cultural understanding and free expression
- Improving human capital, skills, and creative abilities in communities
- Increasing opportunities for individuals to become more involved in the arts
- Contributing to the resiliency and sustainability of a community or people
- Reducing delinquency in high-risk youth
- Integrating the community into community art projects
- Fostering trust between community residents

In short, CCD is a community-building tool that promotes a sense of place, empowerment, and public participation—all key components in the sustainable community development field. CCD and sustainable community development share common values, principals, key elements, and dynamics, and can help inform emerging cultural sustainability models. Figure 4 presents a list of common linkages between community cultural development and sustainable community development.

Figure 4. Both community cultural development and sustainable community development ...

- View residents as experts in their community
- Foster common experiences that express a sense of place
- Create and support local policies, development, and economic strategies
- Build self-reliant communities
- Increase community participation and dialogue
- Support and build community infrastructure
- Advise, mentor, and build networks and trust in communities
- Build partnerships with community members and with local government, businesses, and organizations active in the community
- Collaborate with a broad range of partners (for example, housing)
- Encourage residents to take ownership over their own community resources and identity
- Provide experiences for participants to learn technical and interpersonal skills, which are important for collective organizing
- Create public spaces that draw people together who would otherwise not be engaged in constructive social activities
- Support activities and events that create a source of pride for residents and increase their sense of connection with their community
- Foster trust between community residents
- Increase quality of life in communities
- Engage fellow allies in the community decision-making process
- Provide an experience of getting large groups of people together to spur further collective action in communities

Eco-arts practice

Finally, we must acknowledge influences on thinking about the role of culture in sustainability from the developing field of eco-arts.

Some artists find inspiration from the environment, while others use art to tackle critical environmental issues. In recent years, relationships between some artists and environmentalists have grown stronger, based on their similar values and worldviews toward the preservation and protection of the environment. For instance, there is an increase of creative projects and educational programs that use arts and culture activities to:

- Inform people about environmental issues
- Blend creativity with environmental projects and planning in communities
- Promote a living relationship with the land and living in harmony with nature, inspired by a growing interest in indigenous practices

Eco-art practices can be traced back to the 1960s, "a time when artist were looking to break free of the traditional white box of the gallery. Land Art, or Earthworks, emerged during this period and it is important to note that these works frequently objectified the land as a medium or as a site" (Carruthers, 2006, p. 6; see also Fowkes & Fowkes, 2005).

Eco-art projects are often collaborations initiated by artists, environmental groups, local musicians, or communities and "tend to be connected to a sense of place and spring from local concerns with polluted waters, social erosion, habitat loss, reclamation of post-industrial sites and the remnants of resource

extraction" (p. 8). Artists who are engaged in cultural sustainability often see their creative projects as an environmental practice (Carruthers, 2006). Figure 5 lists some linkages between cultural and environmental sustainability.

Figure 5. Both cultural sustainability and environmental sustainability ...

- Retain and preserve heritage buildings
- Support ecologically sustainable art products and services
- Promote environment-friendly craft products
- Use under-utilized space for arts activity
- Disseminate information on environmental sustainability through arts activities
- Protect Canadian green space and parks
- Inform community residents about environmental issues and problems facing the globe through art
- Increase the development of eco-art practices

II. Emerging Literature on Cultural Sustainability

A review of the emerging literature on cultural sustainability reveals ten key themes:

1. The culture of sustainability
This relates to the need for a cultural shift in the way that individuals and society address economic, social, and environmental issues. In this context, the culture of sustainability refers to people changing their behaviour and consumption patterns, and adapting to a more sustainability-conscious lifestyle.

2. Globalization
Culture needs to be protected from globalization and market forces, as many fear that individual communities will lose their cultural identity, traditions, and languages to dominant ideals and culture. In response to these concerns, sustainability discussions focus on education, community development, and locally based policy that is open to change and consistent with the cultural values of the community. The creation of opportunities to expand and deepen diversity may act as a balance to this.

3. Heritage conservation
This is a common stream in cultural sustainability research, and primarily focuses on three key areas:

i. Preserving cultural heritage sites, practices, and infrastructure from outside influences
Preserving cultural heritage sites is seen to link the past with the present and the future. Sustainability discussions on cultural heritage focus on the need to preserve cultural heritage for future generations, and to recognize the history of a place and the tangible and intangible attributes of its landscapes and communities (Matthews & Herbert, 2004).

ii. Cultural tourism
Preserving intangible and tangible cultural heritage ensures that tourism and regional economic development are sustainable over the long term, so that future generations may also benefit from them.

iii. Revitalizing and re-using heritage buildings for cultural facilities
Retaining already existing spaces encourages sustainable development and sense of place in communities.

4. Sense of place
Sustainability discussions focus on how culture contributes to a sense of place in communities and cities. For example, the Western Australia State Sustainability Strategy recognizes "the critical importance of a 'sense of place', heritage and symbolism for the success of this strategy, with 'civil society' being seen as the repository of the long-term values and visions necessary for a sustainable future" (Mills & Brown, 2004, p. 35). The strategy acknowledges the role of the arts in raising community awareness and interest in sustainability, and further recognizes the role that the arts and intellectual life can play in resolving conflict between social, environmental, and economic development by providing "the creative edge needed to face the new and potentially difficult problems of sustainability, to find the ethics which underlies every element and every issue in sustainability. Multiculturalism provides the opportunity for different answers to be found and to build a whole community approach to sustainability" (Western Australian Government, 2002, p. 165).

5. Indigenous knowledge and traditional practices
Cultural sustainability is linked to the recovery and protection of cultural health, history, and the culture of indigenous knowledge in society. It is linked to previous traditional practices through celebrating local and regional histories and passing down cultural values to future generations. Storytelling is often discussed as a tool to preserve indigenous knowledge and traditional practices; it is seen "to keep memory alive; to celebrate our history or identity; to derive lessons about how to act effectively; to inspire action; and, as tools of persuasion in policy debates" (Matthews & Herbert, 2004, p. 383).

6. Community cultural development
Supporting community engagement through arts and culture activities helps to discover new understanding of the relationship between culture and sustainability.

Community cultural development is a form of sustainable development that promotes a self-reliant economy and locally based cultural policy. Arts and culture are development tools that contribute to building networks and trust in the community, and help create a sense of place and occasions for sociability that draw people together who might not otherwise be engaged in constructive social activities.

CCD encourages grassroots cultural activists, local organizations, and residents to take an active role in community decision-making, as well as to take ownership over their own community resources and identity. Culture as a development tool increases the level of civic discourse between artists, cultural groups, and community residents by providing opportunities and experiences that inspire, provoke, and facilitate discourse. This creates a collaborative atmosphere in which the arts sector can engage and forge stronger partnerships with others, including government, business, and the broader community.

7. Arts, education, and youth
The arts are seen as both development and communicative tools in communities and schools, as they increase the effectiveness of teaching, research, policy, and actions toward cultural sustainability and development. The arts offer an opportunity to engage in collective, collaborative activities, and enable youth and the community to become more publicly involved and active in political processes. Universities and other educational institutions are involved in cultural sustainability through integrating customs, crafts, and arts and culture activities into the educational arena.

Engaging youth is key to sustainability discussions, as there is concern that youth are disenchanted with the direction of the world. Involving youth in educational programs on cultural, social, environmental, and economic forms of sustainability can help provide them with a more optimistic and sustainable outlook on the future.

8. Sustainable design
Environmentally friendly design that uses recycled materials is a growing influence in sustainable urban, community, and rural planning.

Sustainable design, "which utilizes essential aspects of cultural identity, can serve to synthesize the past with the present for the benefit of the future" (Matthews & Herbert, 2004, p. 2), and is also seen as a component of cultural sustainability. Including residents in the design process can contribute to improving their quality of life.

Sherry Blankenship (2005) identifies five frameworks for design that becomes "an active force in extending its role in the sustainability of culture by reflecting and representing the respective peoples and places in which it is working" (p. 24):

1. Awareness of the local/personal culture
2. Valuing visual traditions and folklore along with an understanding of their impact/influence on contemporary design
3. Exhibiting confidence that leads to less dependence upon an imitation of large, dominant cultures, and which allows the emergence and integration of local aesthetics
4. An increase in publications that promote local design and recognize individuals who serve as role models for young designers
5. A vision for the future. (p. 25)

9. Planning
The application of sustainability in the field of urban and regional planning is still a relatively new phenomenon. Only in the last decade has there been a rise in holistic efforts to translate the "broad concepts expressed in the Brundtland Commission's report and elsewhere into local and regional planning and development policy" (Beatley & Manning, 1997, p. 17).

Planning for sustainable communities recognizes the necessity of cultural capital, but it lacks ideas on how to integrate cultural sustainability. There is a need to show how culture can be integrated into existing community building and development plans. This integration must emerge out of understanding the linkages among the cultural, environmental, economic, and social dimensions of sustainability.

In the context of a community's cultural sustainability, there is a need for a cultural lens in city planning and design. This requires community culture-based planning strategies that address civic identity, pride, youth, multiculturalism, poverty, and other aspects of communities today.

10. Cultural policy and local government
Cultural and sustainable development policies share the same core aim of improving quality of life for community residents. The multidisciplinary nature of sustainable development requires that policies for sustainability will "inevitably transcend boundaries" and thus "marrying sustainable development with other policy areas such as cultural policy seems to be a logical progression" of the policy field (Darlow, 1996, p. 10).

III. Models of Sustainability Incorporating Culture

A review of the literature around sustainable development reveals three models significantly incorporating a cultural component:

1. Four-pillar model of sustainability (originating with Jon Hawkes, Australia)
2. Four well-beings of community sustainability (from New Zealand's Ministry for Culture and Heritage)
3. The medicine wheel approach to sustainability (developed by the Centre for Native Policy Research in Vancouver, BC)

1. The four-pillar model of sustainability

In 2001, Jon Hawkes, a cultural analyst and one of Australia's leading commentators on cultural policy, wrote *The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability: Culture's Essential Role in Public Planning*. Since the book's publication, there has been a growing interest in cultural sustainability and how it can be applied to emerging community and city planning models (Hawkes, 2006).

The Fourth Pillar of Sustainability incorporates four interlinked dimensions: environmental responsibility, economic health, social equity, and cultural vitality. Hawkes addresses the need for a cultural perspective in public planning and policy by proposing practical measures for integration. In order for public planning to be more effective, Hawkes argues that government must develop a framework that evaluates the cultural impacts of environmental, economic, and social decisions and plans currently being implemented in cities and communities.

The four-pillar model of sustainability recognizes that a community's vitality and quality of life is closely related to the vitality and quality of its cultural engagement, expression, dialogue, and celebration. This model further demonstrates that the contribution of culture to building lively cities and communities where people want to live, work, and visit plays a major role in supporting social and economic health.

The key to cultural sustainability is fostering partnerships, exchange, and respect between different streams of government, business, and arts organizations. Culture as the fourth pillar promotes these partnerships and is quickly gaining currency in policy and planning initiatives in Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Europe.

Figure 6. Four-pillars/dimensions model of sustainability

CULTURAL DIMENSION
QUALITY OF LIFE
values, aspirations, relationships, diversity,
creativity, innovation, vitality

SOCIAL
DIMENSION   equity   ENVIRONMENTAL
DIMENSION

viability   responsibility

ECONOMIC
DIMENSION
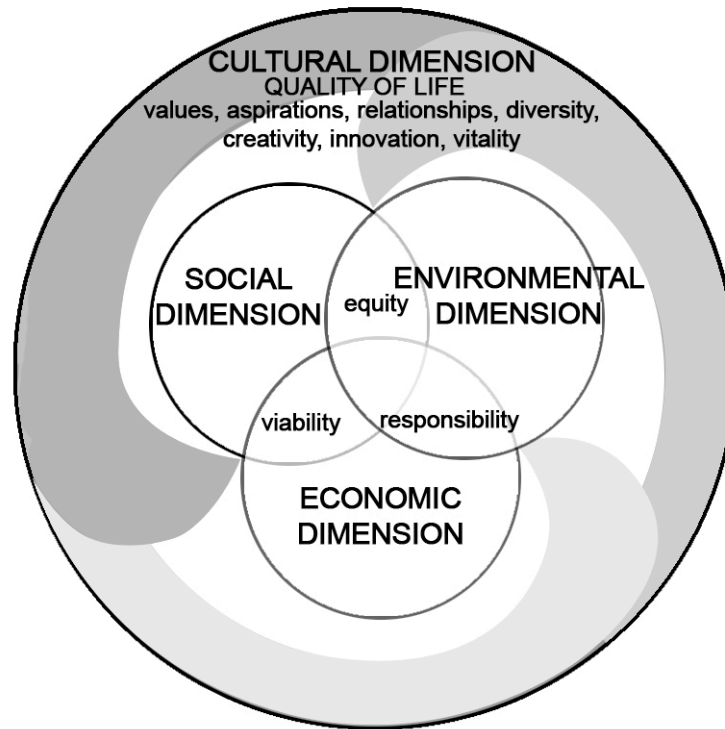
Source: Runnalls, 2006

2. Four well-beings of community sustainability

New Zealand's Ministry for Culture and Heritage created a well-being model that includes cultural, environmental, social, and economic dimensions. The model was created in response to Local Government Act 2002 (Section 10) which states that local government is responsible for promoting "the social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being of communities, in the present and for the future" (New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2006, p. 1). The Ministry notes "the need for strategic planning, democratic decision-making, and a sustainable development approach that meets all four types of well-being" and emphasizes that sustainable development "will be achieved *only* if a council deals with all four types of well-being" (p. 4).

Similar to the other models, this one sees cultural, social, environmental, and economic well-being as interconnected. The Ministry for Culture and Heritage has depicted the relationship between the four well-beings in diagrammatic form (see Figure 7). The mains points of the diagram are:

- well-being is at the centre;
- well-being is enhanced when the four equidistant types of well-beings—social, cultural, economic, and environmental—move efficiently around the centre; and
- all of the four well-beings are interdependent and equal in 'weight'. (pp. 4-5)

The New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage has defined cultural well-being as:

> the vitality that communities and individuals enjoy through:
> - participation in recreation, creative and cultural activities; and
> - the freedom to retain, interpret and express their arts, history, heritage and traditions. (p. 1)

Figure 7. Four well-beings of community sustainability

Source: New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2006, p. 5

3. The medicine wheel approach to sustainability

Nathan Cardinal and Emilie Adin's *An Urban Aboriginal Life: The 2005 Indicators Report on the Quality of Life of Aboriginal People in the Greater Vancouver Region* uses the medicine wheel as a framework to determine categories and indicators for exploring and documenting the state of Aboriginal life in and around Vancouver (see Figure 8).

The medicine wheel depicts four traditional directions: north (environmental), south (social), west (economic), and east (cultural).

> The four elements are crosscut by various segments of Aboriginal society which influence, and are in turn influenced by each of the elements. These four segments represent different groups and viewpoints in Aboriginal society: male, female, children & youth, adults & elders. Each of these four segments is critical to forming the context for measuring the overall well-being of the Aboriginal community.
>
> Surrounding the medicine wheel is a development planning process, designed to guide the development and maintenance of the framework and its subsequent categories and indicators. (Cardinal & Adin, 2005, p. 21)

Why the east to represent culture and family? In Aboriginal tradition, this is to represent how beginnings start in the east, which is where the sun rises and a new dawn begins.

The key indicators used in the eastern quadrant are:

- Percentage of Aboriginal people in the GVRD [Greater Vancouver Regional District] speaking traditional languages
- Percentages of Aboriginal people in the GVRD participating in traditional activities
- Percentage of Aboriginal children in care in the GVRD
- Percentage of Aboriginal lone parents in the GVRD
- Childcare access for Aboriginal families in the GVRD
  (Cardinal & Adin, 2005, p. 6)

These indicators are embedded within a holistic and flexible planning process:

> The planning process is cyclical, and each stage of the process influences and informs the next, allowing for the framework to be continually evaluated and updated over time. The subsequent categories and their representative indicators create layers within each element which complete the framework. As the world changes, the framework can expand and adapt, adding, changing, or deleting new categories and/or indicators as the perspectives of the Aboriginal community shift over time. (Cardinal & Adin, 2005, p. 22)

Figure 8. Medicine wheel approach to sustainability
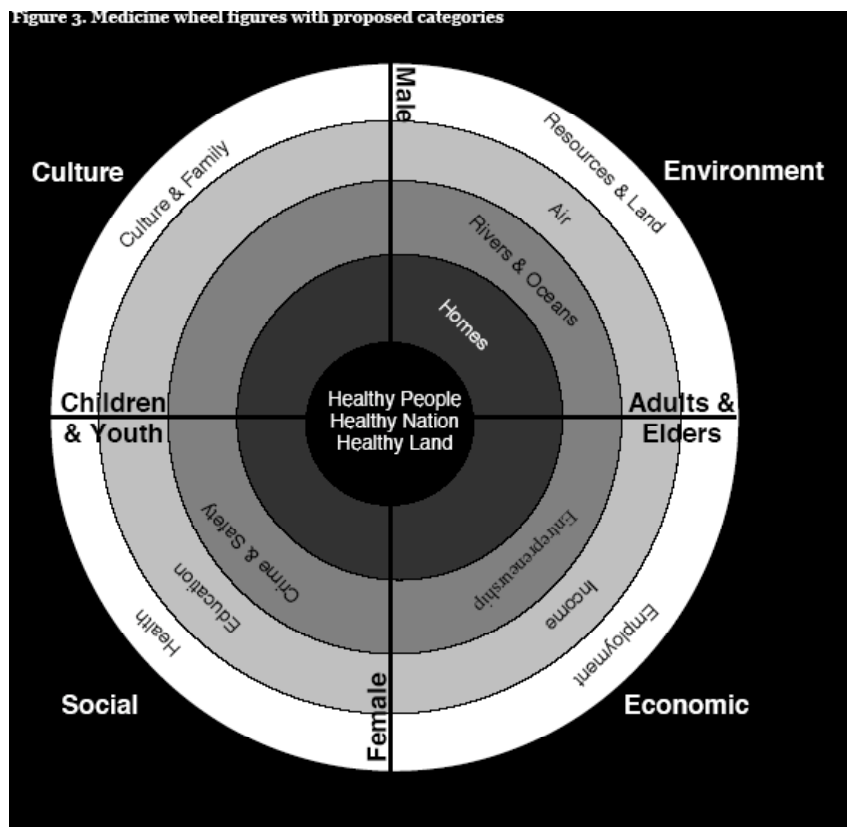
Source: Cardinal & Adin, 2005, p. 22

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Appendix A

Sustainability, development, and culture: A brief chronology of key points

1960s – In Canada, community development stems out of the work of cooperatives, credit unions, and *caisses populaires*. Also, eco-art practices can be traced back to this decade.

1970s – Prevailing models and notions of development and environmentalism came under sustained criticism:

- Discussions on environmental globalism were criticized for not addressing the linkages between environmental degradation and inequalities experienced by the developing world, such as abject poverty and unfair access to world resources.
- Development models were critiqued by the international community as narrowly defining development "too exclusively in terms of tangibles, such as dams, factories, houses, food and water" (UNESCO, 2006). Although these are undeniably vital goods, economic growth alone did not recognize how "intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual existence" in communities and cities creates a "set of capacities that allows groups, communities and nations to define their futures in an integrated manner" (UNESCO, 2006).
- As international organizations and governments were heavily criticized for their top–down development approaches (for example, in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and E. F. Schumacher's *Small is Beautiful*), community development agencies and practitioners in Canada, the United States, and elsewhere took on a more active role in development, promoting locally based initiatives that focused on building self-reliant communities through civic participation and engagement.
- Cultural factors later began to take a more active role in development policy, seen to be synonymous with emerging socio-economic and political development models (Al-Hindawi, 2003):

> ... the definition of culture must broaden to encompass complex, spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that are not only limited to the field of social science, but encompass ideas relating to modes of life, fundamental human rights, political value

systems, traditions and beliefs. Moreover, a further proof of the need to expand the definition of culture to include socio-economic developments is the realization in the 1970s that development policies solely based on economic indicators and models without taking into account factors such as intellectual, spiritual and cultural existence failed to live up to their expectations. This paved the way during the 1980s for cultural factors to occupy an important place in development planning. Therefore, culture has become synonymous with socio-economic development and political development. (Al-Hindawi, 2003, p. 2)

1972 – UN Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm): The "first elements of sustainability" emerged at this event, where governments, professionals, and practitioners came together to discuss environmental issues on a global scale (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999, p. 1).

1983 – The UN created the World Commission on Environment and Development.

1987 – The World Commission published *Our Common Future*, in which former Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland defined sustainable development as a type of "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 8).

Four broad principles on sustainability, derived from the Brundtland Report, are seen as the essential approach to global sustainability:

1. The elimination of poverty, especially in the Third World, is necessary not just on human grounds but as an environmental issue.
2. The First World must reduce its consumption of resources and production of wastes.
3. Global cooperation on environmental issues is no longer a soft option.
4. *Change toward sustainability can occur only with community-based approaches that take local cultures seriously.*
     (Newman & Kenworthy, 1999, adapted from pp. 2-3, emphasis added)

1990s – The popularity of Robert Putnam and others discussing community capital and participation led the field of community development to become more concerned with social capital formation.

1992 – The Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro produced *Agenda 21*, a "comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which human[s] impact…on the environment" (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2006).

1995 – The challenges of culture being addressed within the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development was discussed in *Our Creative Diversity*, a report which summarizes the deliberations of UNESCO's World Commission on Culture and Development (World Commission on Culture and Development, 1995; Smith, 2005). The recognition of culture as a development tool led many practitioners in the cultural development field to document and share their practices and impacts with others working in communities.

2004 – In response to the lack of cultural considerations in *Agenda 21*, an *Agenda 21 for Culture* was created and approved at the IV Forum of Local Authorities of Porto Alegre in Barcelona. *Agenda 21 for Culture* promotes the "adoption of a series of principles, commitments and recommendations to strengthen the development of culture on an international scale from the local arena, considering it as a collective right to participation in the life of societies" (*Interacció '04,* 2004).

2005-2014 – UNESCO's Decade for Education for Sustainable Development promotes cultural development as a tool for social policy to foster social inclusion, cultural diversity, rural diversity, rural revitalization, public housing, health, ecological preservation, and sustainable development (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. UNESCO's Decade for Education for Sustainable Development

- Underlines the importance of cultural aspects for sustainable development
- Recognizes diversity, i.e. the rich tapestry of human experience in the many physical and socio-cultural contexts of the world
- Encourages respect and tolerance of difference, and sees contact with otherness as enriching, challenging, and stimulating
- Acknowledges values in open debate and with a commitment to keep the dialogue going
- Models values of respect and dignity, which underpin sustainable development, in personal and institutional life
- Builds human capacity in all aspects of sustainable development
- Uses local indigenous knowledge of flora and fauna and sustainable agricultural practices, water use, etc.
- Fosters support of practices and traditions which build sustainability—including aspects such as preventing excessive rural exodus
- Recognizes and works with culturally specific views of nature, society, and the world rather than ignoring or destroying them, consciously or inadvertently, in the name of development
- Employs local patterns of communication, including the use and development of local languages, as vectors of interaction and cultural identity

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Creative City Network of Canada

Transforming communities through culture

The Creative City Network of Canada is a national non-profit organization that operates as a knowledge-sharing, research, public education, and professional development resource in the field of local cultural policy, planning and practice.

Through its work, the Creative City Network helps build the capacity of local cultural planning professionals— and by extension their local governments—to nurture and support cultural development in their communities. By doing so, the Creative City Network aims to improve the operating climate and conditions for artists and arts and cultural organizations across the country, and the quality of life in Canadian communities of all sizes.

The members of the Creative City Network are local governments across Canada.

More information is available at www.creativecity.ca

Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities

Located at Simon Fraser University's Vancouver campus, the Centre of Expertise on Culture and Communities is a three-year project of the Creative City Network of Canada in collaboration with Simon Fraser University's School of Communication. It is supported by Infrastructure Canada, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the City of Ottawa, and the Centre for Policy Research on Science and Technology (CPROST) at SFU. It is advised by a national multidisciplinary team of project collaborators consisting of leading individuals in the cultural, government, and academic fields.

The Centre's work includes three interlinked components: knowledge generation (research), outreach and networking, and awareness/knowledge exchange. It conducts research and brings together academia and practice in four areas:

1. The state of cultural infrastructure in Canadian cities and communities
2. Culture as the fourth pillar of community sustainability
3. Culture in communities: Cultural systems and local planning
4. The impacts of cultural infrastructure and activity in cities and communities

For more information, visit: www.creativecity.ca/cecc