

The Environment As A Field Of Sociological Research

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Abstract:

Although interest in the environmental field falls within the field of natural sciences, given the division of knowledge fields between what concerns man and what concerns nature; Due to the difference in its handling of topics, neither in terms of epistemological starting points, nor in terms of the methods used, however, the founders of sociology were aware of the influence of the natural aspect in man and the influence of the first by the action of the second, even if they did not give it sufficient importance in line with the boundaries that were under formation between the various sciences, and in submission to the prevailing epistemological frameworks and in line with what was required by the prevailing social requirements, and this is what we will address in detail in our article.

Keywords: environment, sociological research

1. INTRODUCTION

In the event that the birth of sociology is linked to the industrial revolution in Europe, and the social effects resulting therefrom, are represented by the disintegration of the traditional structures of society, along with the emergence of the individual as a key factor in the societal movement, the environmental issue has then demonstrated the first warnings of the problem of the continuation of the human life on earth, since the beginning of the seventies of the last century,

which have been confirmed at the beginning of the twenty-first century due to the negative impact of the human civilization on the environmental balance. However, this negative impact, which has become structural, will be reflected on the pattern of human interaction anew on nature, as it has been, representing a threat for its existence; in consequence, the environmental problem will enter within the social fields, as the impact thereof on community organization and social action has shown to be confirmed: in the field of health, social mobility, industrial organization, risk production and the agricultural and urban fields, to the extent that it began to restructure the power relations between societies and States.

More to the point, and based on the definition given to sustainable development, it allows to current generations to respond to their own needs, without any compromise with the capabilities of future generations to respond to their desires. In such circumstances, taking into account the social dimension of development calls for the issue of social sustainability, and requires development strategies – on the environmental, economic, social, and other levels – that they shall in no way lead to societal imbalances that would dictate the possibility of improving and developing the standard of living of current and future generations..

2. Theoretical problems of the emergence of the environment issue as a field of social research

As a subject of research within the scientific field, the environment has been associated with the natural sciences; i.e., it is isolated from the field of culture. Nonetheless, with the increasing influence of man in his environmental field and his being affected by the same, this fact has called us to take into account this overlap or interaction between man and the environment, since the environmental problems have become creating social problems. Likewise, the different levels of influence and the affectedness between humans and the environment necessitated the need to give importance to the global dimension, because causing damage to the environment does not only produce a local effect on the perpetrator,

but extends to humanity in its totality. Subsequent to which, when sociology attempted to study the environment as a subject, it found its need in rural sociology as a starting point for studying the human relationship with the nature, and then expanding its field to address afterwards the total dimension symbolized in the global framework.

2.1. Definition of Environment:

There is no specific and comprehensive definition for the environment, which defines its multiple domains as a result of the interrelationships between living organisms and the milieu in which the various factors of influence and affectedness live, and at all levels; as consequence, it is not easy to find a comprehensive definition of the term environment, and given the dissimilarity of these concepts, we will endeavour to clarify these definitions following in that the time domain and area of speciality.

2.1.1. Linguistic meaning of environment:

Environment is a language derived from “Live in”, which has several meanings in the language, including:-

- The house or the place: It is said I “environ” a place, i.e. be a guest; and environ a house for him and he environ a house: it is said that he prepared a place for him and empowered him in it.
- Confession: It is said that he is confesses to it, i.e. he recognizes it.
- Marriage: As said by the Prophet, May the blessings of Allah be upon him: “Whoever who can afford to the expenses of marriage, should marry”.
- Parity and equality: It is said that his blood contains his blood, means equal in quantity, means make it equal; and someone is equal to the other, means one and the same, if he killed him (Mandour, 1999, p. 530).

However, if we observe these meanings, we will discover that the first meanings are those that agree with our topic, which are the most famous of such meanings.

2.1.2. Idiomatic meaning of environment:

In scientific terminology, the environment is defined as “that space in which humans practice the various activities of their lives, which includes within this framework all living organisms, in respect such as animals and plants, with which humans coexist”.

In such concept, the environment comprises everything that surrounds human, inclusive of water, air and land, which affects therein and be affected by the same (Arab Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, 1978, p. 31/41).

Notwithstanding the spread of that term, its use in the beginning was limited to the natural environment, as mentioned in this definition: “The environment stands for a set of external conditions and factors in which living organisms live, and they affect the vital processes that they perform”.

More to the point, it is noticeable on this specific definition that it focuses on the biological natural environment, which is as close as possible to the concept of Ecology. Further, it is important to differentiate here between two concepts that are often confused, mainly:

- Ecology: It means the science concerned with the physical and biological aspects of the environment, in respect such as land, water, animals and plants in their interconnected interactions.

- Environment: It was indicated through a report issued by the United Nations Program that the ecosystem symbolizes the framework in which the living being lives, as it affects it and being affected by the same. Likewise, the environment is embodied in everything that surrounds the living being of physical or biological plant formations; as consequence, it represents an integrated whole, whose components are in continuous interaction, whereat its framework includes the entire planet Earth.

Consequently, it is clearly illustrated that the environment is deeper and more comprehensive than the previous concept of Ecology, and it has shown to be defined as “the framework in which human practices his life, inclusive of conditions, resources, and living beings, as they affect him and he interacts with them”.

In another definition, we find that the term Environment “signifies the field in which excitement and interaction take place for each living unit, which stands for all the nature, human societies, social systems and personal relationships that surround the human being; likewise, it is the influence that drives the living being to movement, activity, endeavouring and interaction, as the interaction is continuous between the environment and the individual, whilst the offering is continuous and successive”. (Al-Qassas, 1980, p. 33)

In the light of the previous definitions, it became clear to us that the environment included everything that surrounds human, as it means the total medium in which human is born and interacts with him; likewise, the multiplicity of definitions that dealt with the concept of environment is related to the multiplicity of angles from which he looked at the environment and the components thereof; whereat some definitions focused on the natural environment, and some others focused on the relationship between human and the environment; thus, giving a balanced importance to both the natural environment and the social environment.

2.2. Definition of Sustainable Development:

During the seventies, the sustainable development remained mysterious and limited to the closed scientific symposia, which have been endeavouring to find an acceptable definition of such concept. Nonetheless, with the beginning of the eighties, some began to raise the sustainable development as an alternative development model; hence, the concept took on new meanings and began to preoccupy with renewed scientific and intellectual interest.

In fact, this new interest in the concept emerged in the report issued by the International Union for the Conservation of Natural Resources, which was entirely devoted to sustainable development.

More to the point, through this report issued in 1981 under the title “The International Strategy for the Conservation of Environment”, there was established, for the first time, a specific definition of sustainable development, whereat the most important components and conditions thereof have alike been clarified. More to the point, as per stated through this report, sustainable development stands for: “the permanent endeavouring to develop the quality of human life, along with taking into consideration the capabilities and abilities of the ecosystem that embraces life”.

Additionally, this definition has shown to be in plain sight of being affected by the extensive use of the concept of sustainability in agriculture, as the report reiterates the necessity of preserving the fertility of agricultural land and endeavouring to maintain this fertility and taking into account the limits and diversity thereof.

Although, despite the importance of the facts contained in the report pertaining to the strategy to conserve natural resources, the concept of sustainable development found its greatest support in the book “Our Common Future”, issued in 1987, as part of the final report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, which provides definition for the sustainable development as “a moral and human issue as much as it stands for a developmental and environmental issue; likewise, it is a fateful and future issue as much as it symbolizes an issue requiring the present attention for individuals, institutions and governments”.

In fact, the book “Our Common Future” has contributed to providing clarification and definition for the meaning of sustainable development, and has alike contributed to holding intensive meetings between development experts and environmental scientists so as to develop the foundations of sustainable development alongside the principles thereof. More to the point, after the publication of the report of the book “Our Common Future”, the deep dimensions of sustainable development has become one of the most widely used and extensively distributed concepts. Additionally, the concept has moved in a short time from the scope of its limited use in the documents of international bodies and organizations, to universities and research

centres, and subsequently to periodicals and even popular and non-specialized magazines, and then became part of the general language and vernacular.

On the other hand, the Earth Summit came to be entirely devoted for the purpose of conveying the concept to the political decision-makers in the worldwide, and to declare that sustainable development stands above all for an invitation to collective thinking in the reality of life, and in the place of global social and consumer activity in both North and South sides.

In addition, the concept of sustainable development came through the work report of the conference “Rio de Janeiro”, known as the “Value of the Land”, in 1992.

“Humans are the subject of sustainable development”; governments should, in cooperation with international organizations, as appropriate, adopt a national sustainable development strategy. Moreover, this strategy should strengthen and bring into line the various sectoral, economic, social and environmental policies and plans put into operation in the concerned country” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1989).

Likewise, the thinker Jean-Pierre Hoy provided his own definition as follows: “sustainable development means meeting the needs of current generations without compromising the possibility of meeting the needs of future generations, which occurs as a result of the interaction of a group of actions made by public and private authorities for the purpose of meeting the basic and health needs of the human being, along with regulating economic development for its own benefit, and endeavouring to achieve social harmony in society, regardless of cultural, linguistic and religious differences of people, and without mortgaging the future of future generations for the purpose of meeting their own needs”.

As for the two thinkers “Sato” and “Hir Yama”, they gave definition for the sustainable development as “that management that provides the needs of current generations without occupying the rights of future generations in terms of prosperity and enjoyment of

resources, along with setting a minimum 100-year minimum for any development project” (Al-Khouli, 2002, p. 51/ 54).

Through this definition, we note that the sustainable development stands for a development that meets the needs of the present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to provide for their needs, in particular the basic needs of the world’s poor people, which must be given absolute priority. As a result, we arrive at the heart of the issue, which represents the regulation of interactions between social considerations and natural, environmental and technological methods, as they are a symbol of the basic requirements for development in any field, hence the environmental base remains in a state of balance in the long run. Further, the continuation of such balance without disturbing the same for limited periods means sustainability.

With regards to the Professor Kamal Rizag, he substantiate that activating good governance has shown to be indispensable for attainment purpose of the sustainable development. Moreover, he defined sustainable development as: “Humans are the point of interest of sustainable development. However, theory-wise, sustainable development stands for the development that takes into account the environmental, human and developmental aspects; which alike stresses the interdependence link between environmental protection and reform thereto, on the one hand; and between development and poverty eradication, on the other hand. Nevertheless, despite the numerous efforts made by some countries to attain sustainable development by promoting good governance, through openness to the opposition forces and popular participation, there still exist significant shortcomings, in terms of the decline in popular participation, flagrant violation of human rights, and tightening restrictions on the media and civil society organizations, as well. For instance, the Arab countries cannot attain sustainable development despite their great wealth unless they achieve good governance.

In the light of such facts mentioned above, we note in this definition that the rightly good governance is indispensable through the supra-mentioned variety of definitions for sustainable development.

More to the point, it can be underlined that we are facing difficulties to be familiar with all of them due to the recent adoption of such term and the virtuousness of conducting researches therein, as this term has yet to be of a precise and agreed procedural definition, to be basically valid for guiding the choice between the proposed development alternatives, in such a manner to ensure its sustainability, as the historical fact symbolizes the fact that caring for the environment has shown to be the heart of sustainable development”.

2.3. From natural problems to societal problems:

Indeed, since they became one of the problems in which the scientific field is concerned, environmental problems have become a field of competence of the natural sciences, for the reason that these sciences were initially concerned with the changes that took place in the environment through various long-term geological and biological eras, trying to comprehend and put in plain words those changes; moreover, it sought later on to conduct studies with regards to the role of human intervention and the impact thereof on environment, all the way through extending beyond the physical dimension (Déleage, 2006, p. 201/202).

In addition, it moved with its concerns, in a more thoughtful step, to measuring the extent of the technological and human factors' influence on various aspects of the environment, in respect such as: Climate changes, deterioration of biological species, decline in the stock of natural resources, and the multiplication of risks to humans and nature.

Nevertheless, despite the integration of interest in the environmental field within the natural sciences ground, considering the division of knowledge fields between what is concerned with humans and those concerned with nature; due to the difference in their addressing the issues, in terms of epistemological standpoints, in addition to the adopted approaches.

However, the founders of sociology realized the influence of the natural aspect in human, seeing that the first was influenced by the action of the second, even they failed to give it sufficient

importance (Boudas, 2008, p. 49), in line with the limits that were under formation between the various sciences and the leadership between the prevailing epistemological frameworks, and in line with what was dictated by social requirements.

In reality, when the environmental problem surfaced on the social level and strongly imposed itself on the human being, some social researchers took upon themselves the task of making the natural parameter (the environment) as a fundamental and variable factor influencing on social phenomena.

2.4. Sociology and social paradigm of the founders:

The concern of the pioneers of sociology was to found a world concerned with society and distinguished from the rest of the sciences that preceded it in establishing the subject and method thereof.

Both Emile Durkheim and Max Weber have paid great attention to the foundation of sociology by the paradigm founders: seeing that the first focused on the necessity to provide explanation for social phenomena through their social component “objectification of the social phenomenon”, whilst the second laid emphasis on the importance of giving priority to the action of the social actor.

This paradigm has been directed at every single one of the sociology fields for a long time, but the problem aggravation in recent decades, and the failure of natural and technical sciences to provide effective solutions thereto, due to the increasing negative impact of human action therein, as well as the negative repercussions of the worsening environmental balance on humans, accordingly, has made the social scientists considering the social paradigm, trough integrating the natural dimension into the social analysis of the environmental phenomenon.

Consequently, the environmental issue has become a problem that cannot be understood or dealing with its societal effects once invoking the natural and social dimensions together. For instance, the increased demand for fossil raw materials to meet the needs of the global industrial economy (the social aspect) resulted in global warming (the natural aspect), which has alike resulted in major

climatic changes (the natural aspect), which in turn affected the nature of the stability of societies, the way of their consumption and their models of dealing with the risks resulting from such changes (the social aspect). (Ahmed Ali Salem et al., 2018, p. 147)

More to the point, some of the pioneers of American Environmental Sociology, among them was “Riley Dunlap” and “William Catton”, took the initiative of criticizing the social paradigm, in other words, the paradigm of human exception based on the four principles listed below:-

A) The cultural dimension, which makes the human being an exceptional being compared with the other living creatures;

B) The culture under constant transformation, whose change has shown to be faster than the change of biological aspects;

C) The differences of the human being have shown to be the product of society more than being natural elements, whose change or abolition is subject to societal dynamism;

D) In closing, the cultural accumulation allows for permanent development, and also provides the human being with the power to solve all social problems.

In view of the fact that this paradigm is inconsistent and the requirements dictated by the analysis of environmental phenomena, these two researchers suggested a new paradigm to make the environmental dimension an essential dimension in sociological analysis, which they called as the New Ecological Paradigm “NEP”, being based on the fundamental elements listed hereunder:-

- The human being has exclusive characteristics (culture, technicality...) but remains involved, in an interconnected way, with the rest of the living beings in the general ecosystem;

- Human phenomena are not only influenced by social and cultural factors, but are alike subject to complex causal relationships, influences or reactions within the system of nature. In other words, human actions have many unexpected results;

- The human being lives in a limited biophysical environment that imposes significant physical and biological constraints on his actions.

Nonetheless, despite the power of innovation possessed by the human being to the point of his belief that it has no limits, but the limitedness of the ecological provider can in no way be overridden or cancelled. (Ahmed Ali Salem et al., 2018, p. 148)

In consequence, the environmental sociology has established its new paradigm foundation by integrating the natural parameter in the social analysis of environmental phenomena.

2-5-The sociological approach to environmental phenomena:

Sociology came within reach of the environmental phenomena based on multiple starting points, due to the different theoretical and epistemological starting points thereof: as some have adopted the eco-cultural approach, and some focused on a dual nature approach, whilst some others used the environmental approach as a cross-cultural discourse. In virtue of which, will provide further explanation thereto hereinafter:-

A- The eco-cultural approach: The American anthropologist Julian Steward formulated an eco-cultural approach whereat he endeavoured to demonstrate the existence of causation between geographical areas and social realities, all the way through isolating the fixed elements in the morphology and social functions of populations belonging to different cultural systems; nonetheless, they have shown to be subject to analogous environmental conditions, together with the attempt to explain the observed social changes in accordance with the organizational adaptation of society under the pressure of the living environment. Nevertheless, his approach was severely criticized as it has shown to be based on ecological determinism alongside unilateral interpretation.

B- The dual-nature approach: The dual-nature approach of Claude Lévi-Strauss is based on the dual division of nature, as he believes, on the one hand, that nature is formed from the material basis that

societies have to adapt to; however, this aspect does not enter the field of the structural anthropology specialization, rather, it belongs to the domain of both the anthology and cultural history and technology. Further, he affirms that the biological nature of man indisputably bets the intellectual processes that proffer cultures their realistic dimension, but he does consider the technical and institutional organization of those material flows as important and attaches great importance to the theory of knowledge. Nevertheless, despite this paradox, Lévi-Strauss rejects every contradiction between matter and thought, substituting the same with a game of the simultaneous, latent, and inevitable influence thereof.

C- The environmental approach as a cross-cultural discourse: In fact, the anthropologist Kay Milton supposed in her approach to “the environment as a cross-cultural discourse” that the environment, or rather the environmental discourse, goes beyond culture as an expression of societal peculiarities; in virtue of which, it relies in the analysis thereof on the concept of discourse in social theory; in other words, considering the same as a process indicating the social components expressed through the communication channels and formulated in an organized form of knowledge. More to the point, discourse carries, in the anthropological context, a cultural dimension, in the sense of the sum of the standards, values, and perceptions through which members belonging to a particular culture form an understanding of the features; nevertheless, the contemporary influences of the communication means and media have liberated some phenomena, mainly the environmental ones, from the cultural specificities and the limitations thereof, thus making them discourses crossing different cultures (Salem, 2018, pages (163-164)).

In the light of the approaches discussed above when addressing the issue of environmental anthropology, even if they are partial, it can be stated that they oscillate between the natural study of man and the

human study of nature in the context of its spread over the earth, as per presupposed by Philippe Descola.

2.6. Epistemology and division of scientific fields:

Amongst the basic features of modern sciences, we highlight their commitment to defining their fields of specialization, i.e. their field of work and an elucidation of the ways in which they deal with their subjects. Thus, we find that the division of scientific work was based on the separation between the natural sciences and the human sciences, and this division had noteworthy repercussions on the independence of the epistemological foundations on which would be based on different scientific fields, along with the nature of its institutional aspects and the contexts of the subsequent developments thereof (Al Hamad and Sabarini, 1989, p. 26). Besides, sociology has limited its interests, in its beginning, to studying, analyzing and interpreting everything that is societal, based on the social dimension; however, the aggravation of the environmental problem due to its association with different cognitive fields, with its requirements in terms of evoking multiple cognitive prospects far from the field of the social researcher's limited thinking in his specialization, the fact of which shall impose on the sociological researcher, at the beginning of 1970, to start formulating the fundamentals of epistemology, along with concepts, theories and paradigms that take into account the interaction of both the cultural and natural dimensions, and go beyond the classical division of sciences, at the same time; whereat the failure of natural sciences was evident in proposing sustainable solutions to the increasing environmental problem in aggravation by limiting to its natural dimension; however, in view of the inability of the scientific fields, and for the purpose of overcoming such defect, the such various specialties resorted to abandoning these divisions by relying on the multi-disciplinary analysis to abandoning these divisions by relying on the multi-specialization analysis alongside the innovation of new approaches based on the epistemological premises that are

appropriate with the nature of the environmental topic (Heinrichs and Matthias Gross, 2009, p. 1).

2.7. From village phenomena to global risks:

Since his existence on the globe, the human being has been part of its field to the extent that he was only considered as a link in the series of its natural development, and his use of the nature has been regarded, for long periods, as in harmony with the requirements of sustainable development, along with ensuring durability and perdurability for everyone, but the modernity by man of tools to exploit natural resources and his use of advanced production technology, has placed the natural balance in a dangerous place, whether at the local or global level (Darwin, 2012, page 147).

3. Development between social sustainability and reproduction for social construction of society:

In light of the transformation that happened in the use of the concepts of development, growth, modernity and modernization, the concept of “development” itself knew important changes that enriched its denotations. However, development was associated in the beginning with its various uses in economic growth, as different intellectual trends agreed to reduce development into a purely economic level, but it was indispensable to refer to clear and intuitive starting points, particularly since several levels of development have been discovered, and several attributes were added to the development term, accordingly.

Speaking of which, the concept of development has been associated, since the mid-fifties of the twentieth century, and so far, with several attributes, whereat the concept of development alone was not sufficient to express the reality of the social situation, along with the possibility of overcoming the same; therefore, there was added thereto sometimes economic, social and cultural aspects, and sometimes humanitarian, local or special... more to the point,

sustainability attribute has been added to this long record, and we are currently addressing the sustainable and environmental development, which can be sustained and would be prolonged (which can be expressed by the word “Eco-development”). Above and beyond, the human being constitutes the main focus in all of these forms of development, or else as the International Development Agency expresses it with the term of: “human development”; as if development can in no way be as such way (Yves Goussaut, 1982, pp. 237-243).

In this regards, it can be said that when the value of a “specific” currency decreases, two or three zeros are deleted from its number, thus time has come to do the same with regards to development, and to make a “semantic revolution” all the way through referring to the “development” term without an added attribute or an adjective, but provided that it shall be defined – i.e. Development – as an interdisciplinary scientific concept, as we are not in need to list the huge number of definitions that have been specifically given to development.

Above and beyond, development is above all a process of liberation for the individual from the shackles of ignorance, poverty and oppression in the true sense of the term; in other words, it stands for the removal of all institutional, political and cultural obstacles for the development and integration of the personality of all members of society. Further, the characteristic of development must alike be recognized as a transformative process, in addition to its recognition as a process of social rehabilitation. Based on this fact, we can address the issue of the possibility of developing a society on the basis of the three main elements listed below:-

A) The ability to think about establishing a development project that includes the whole society;

B) The existence of political and administrative infrastructures able to realize the project alongside ensuring it in all transparency and under the democratic control of society;

C) The existence of a production device that can provide the country with the ability to cope with the pressures of the global economic system. Moreover, development must be dealt with as a process open to history and not a desired and looked-for final “station” (Lombard, 1982, pp. 241-251).

The question of sustainable development along with its various dimensions has shown to be a “societal” issue as a whole, through which we get to know the facts hereinafter:-

- Firstly: The “cognitive” obstacles through which we think and produce our own concepts and perceptions with regards to “sustainable development”; and
- Secondly: We gain knowledge of the economic, social and political obstacles that prevent the development of society alongside its modernization in its entirety; in light of which, society learns about its socio-economic history. Thus, it discusses, through the same, its material potential and its current and future natural resources; likewise, it deals, through the same, with all social patterns either educational, cultural, economic or legal, in addition to being subject to a study pertaining to the major rural and urban societal patterns; which stimulates researchers to develop some pictorial frameworks or specific definitions of development models and development policies.

In reality, understanding the phenomenon of “sustainable development” still needs a new perception in our Arab societies through a type of critical sociological studies; further, we believe that the first step in this path is to elucidate the goals and political justifications behind most of the development “models” demonstrated in the practical and theoretical trading market. However, all this aims to arrive at a sociological approach that lays emphasis on the structural elements of development based on a real understanding of the history of existence of the “advanced”, “manufactured” and “democratic” societies alongside societies characterized, on the one hand, by failure and confusion in most of their development projects,

and characterized, on the other hand, either by tyranny or political instability (Ahmed Ali Salem et al., 2018, p. 133).

Additionally, it should also be noted that there exists no sociological theory of sustainable development, but there are theories pertaining to phenomena and societal interactions; as development has shown to be a process that tries to be partially symbolized through the repeated observation that development requires qualitative transformations in the social structure of society, but not every social change represents necessarily development. Further, interest in development or modernization is no longer an issue that preoccupies industrialists, economy, or political elite of all kinds; to a certain extent, it has become a field whose importance is on the increase in the sociological studies' field, either due to the fact that it stands for the natural extension of studies of social or cultural change, or because it scientifically raises lots of issues pertaining to multiple and different sectoral conventions (health, education, economy, judiciary...).

In the light of the facts set out above, it can be said that the sociology of sustainable development necessitates attaining an in-depth understanding of a number of topics, in respect such as history, social and economic organization, social stratification and the patterns of various activities, along with the roles and positions of people, and controls of behaviour and many issues, that sociology seeks to attain the comprehension and control thereof on scientific basis. As consequence, the sociological approach is not concerned with developmental processes in themselves, but it is rather concerned with human development throughout an appropriate and purposeful change in its various dimensions.

More to the point, the sociological researcher believes also that his perspective can attain the integration of the correct approach to development, and it shows the significant shortcomings of traditional and economic approaches in particular – in respect such as “the stages of growth according to Rostow”, for the reason that if economic development would be a basic requirement or principle to support comprehensive development, it depends on a number of natural and social variables, such as the tendency towards innovation, the

willingness to use and apply the results of the social and natural sciences, along with the crystallization of the well-being values in the society life, while it strives for material progress (Ziderman, 2006, p. 234).

As highlighted before, development aims to incite a set of planned change processes, and thus it is intimately linked to cultural change being based on the values of modernity, rationality and liberation of the individual from the constraints of metaphysical thought “domesticating minds”. More to the point, the change is alike linked to the society’s goals dependent on an ideology that makes the form of the educational, social and economic system, along with the nature of the existing problems, the availability of multi-species capabilities capable of coping with them, and the level of ambition represented by realistic aspiration based on the ability of positive and clear development.

As for the sociology of development, it requires attaining an in-depth understanding of a such number of topics that are related to educational institutions and educational programs, in terms of their close interrelationship with the social and economic organization, and the class and social gradient, the patterns of various activities, the roles and positions of people, and the behavioural controls, in addition to many issues that a sociological researcher must bethink. As consequence, the sociological approach is not concerned with developmental processes in themselves, but it is rather concerned with human development throughout an appropriate and purposeful change in its various dimensions.

4. The social dimension of sustainable development:

The definition of sustainable development must be based on the principles included in sustainability, by which we mean access to a range of goods and services, along with the development and strengthening of all capabilities of all kinds, the equitable distribution of available and inherited resources from one generation to another. Besides, on the basis of such principles, the concept of sustainability requires a regular, accompanying and conservative development in

terms of meeting the needs and developing the capabilities available to individuals.

Indeed, development reflects, by its own nature, structural changes that affect the socio-economic structure of society in its entirety. In this context, addressing the social sustainability requires highlighting and analyzing the levels in which the same sustainability is symbolized.

Thus, what are the dimensions of sustainable development?

Unquestionably, sustainable development includes multiple dimensions that overlap with each other. Moreover, focusing on addressing the same will make significant progress in sustainable (targeted) development. Further, we can refer here to four critical and interacting dimensions, under form of: the economic, human, environmental and technological dimensions.

4.1. Economic sustainability:

Indeed, it is symbolized in the forced growth that occurs on its own, which sustainability derives from the macro-economic principles (balance of the budget, balance in the balance of revenues, control of inflation, etc.), in addition to the control of investments (financial supports, control of the sectoral investments' rates, and control of the level of productivity, rates of consumption and savings), which generally seek to increase the rationalization of growth, and to prevent the costs of debt that burden future generations, and reliance in general on the final report of the Earth Summit on Sustainable Development "Joe Hansberg" September 2002, with regards to the types of sustainable development and the basic objectives of attainment of the same, the economic sustainability shall be attained in the following domains:-

- In the field of water: Ensuring an adequate supply and increasing the efficiency of water use in the agricultural, industrial, urban and rural development.
- In the field of food: Raising the agricultural productivity and production in order to attain food security in the region and for exportation purposes.

- In the field of health: Increasing the productivity through health care, control and improving health and safety in the workplaces.
- In the field of shelter (housing and services): Ensuring the adequate supply and efficient use of the construction resources and transportation systems.
- In the fields of energy: Ensuring the adequate supply and efficient use of energy in the fields of industrial development, transportation and domestic use.
- In the field of education: Ensuring the availability of trainees for the entire basic economic sectors.
- In the field of income: Increasing the economic efficiency, attaining growth and creating jobs in the formal sector (Al-Taher, 2013, p. 80).

In fact, economic sustainability can only be attained by focusing mainly on the economic environment concept, throughout the general economic structure of the State, the pattern of distribution of economic wealth, the economic transformations, the market pattern and the State's market style and general finances, in addition to the employment rates for the population and their standards of living. Besides, thinking about sustainability and well-being between generations requires ensuring that the flow of consumption does not decrease over time and that depends on the change in the balance of assets or wealth over time.

Similarly, there alike exists a distinction between two types of restrictions on growth. As for the first variety, it has shown to have weak constraints on growth, which is called "weak sustainability", which assumes that assets are totally interchangeable; whilst the second type represents strong constraints on growth, which are known with the name of some natural assets or some of the functions performed by such assets, in respect such as global life support, which cannot be replaced by others.

4.2. Environmental sustainability:

It focuses on reducing pollution and preserving the non-renewable natural resources, such as energy economies and preserving natural capital for future generations. On this basis, a set of behavioural controls towards the exploitation of natural resources have been considered (Hartwick's Principles).

In general, the issue here concerns the preservation of physical and biological resources, in respect such as the optimal use of agricultural land and water resources in the world, all the way through the fundamentals on which sustainable development is based in terms of environmental considerations, mainly:

4.2.1. Output base:

It is indispensable here to take into account the formation of wastes that do not exceed the capacity of the land's absorption of such wastes or harm its ability to absorb them in the future.

4.2.2. Input base:

It includes:-

- ✓ Renewable sources, in respect such as soil, water and air.
- ✓ Non-renewable sources, in respect such as fuels.

Such renewable sources must be preserved through methods inclusive of:

A) Natural Resources:

Sustainable development needs to save from harm the natural resources, starting from protecting the soil to protecting the lands intended for trees plantation and protecting fisheries. Further, it is meant here by protection the most efficient use, in respect such as the creation and adoption of improved agricultural practices and technologies that increase harvests, the fact of which needs to avoid the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, so as not to threaten wildlife and food contamination.

Perhaps the biggest mistake a man could commit in his understanding of the land exploitation is his belief that he can replace the complex natural relationships between the environmental factors with

simplified artificial factors, thus opposing the laws of nature, the fact of which has made agricultural systems unwieldy and low in production (Philippe & José, 2003, p. 38).

B) Aquatic field:

The aquatic ecosystems have direct and indirect relationships with human life, starting with water that evaporates and falls in the form of rain essential for life. However, sustainable development here means putting an end to wasteful uses, improving the efficiency and quality of water networks, using surface water at a rate that does not disturb the ecosystems that depend on this water, and rational use of groundwater to allow the renewal thereof.

C) Conservation of the Earth's richness in biological diversity:

We note that the arable land (uncultivated) – which is the land that has not yet entered into human use – is reduced, which decreases the available shelters for animal and plant species, with the exception of the few that are managed by humans in intensive manner, or that can live in a domesticated environment. More to the point, tropical and coastal forests are exposed, along with other wetlands, to continuous destruction, and thus the extinction of many animal and plant species. Besides, sustainable development in this field stands for preserving the Earth's richness in biological diversity, so as to preserve it for future generations, given its great importance in the balance of ecosystems.

D) Protecting the climate from global warming:

Since the mid-twentieth century, a scientific concept has emerged that “an excessive accumulation of mostly invisible pollutants called greenhouse gases” negatively affects the climate. Moreover, the accumulation of these gases has been continuing since the beginning of the industrial revolution, in a place that we cannot see, touch or even smell. Likewise, the greenhouse gases are now targeted, in particular carbon dioxide emitted from human sources in industry, houses and transportation; besides, they were not gathered on roadsides, in rivers, or inside empty bottle cans; but rather above our heads in the Earth's atmosphere; further, if we compare the atmosphere to a blanket that helps controlling the Earth's temperature,

the accumulation of carbon dioxide has increased the thickness of that blanket, which raises the Earth's temperature (Friedman, 2009, p. 53).

- In the field of water: It aims to ensure sufficient protection of aquatic supports, ground waters, freshwater resources and their ecosystems.
- In the field of food: It aims to ensure the sustainable use and conservation of land, forests, water, wildlife, fisheries and water resources.
- In the field of health: It aims to ensure the sufficient protection of biological resources, ecosystems and life-supporting systems.
- In the field of shelter (housing and services): It aims to ensure the sustainable and optimal use of lands, forests, energy and civil resources.
- In the fields of energy: It aims to reduce the environmental impacts of ordinary fossil fuels on a local, regional and global scale, along with expanding the development of using the forests and other renewable alternatives.
- In the field of education: It aims to introduce the environment in general information and educational programs.
- In the field of income: It aims to ensure the sustainable use of natural resources being essential for economic growth in the formal and informal sectors (Al-Taher, 2013, pp. 76-77).

Although, social sustainability remained concealed, and it is only discussed when it pertains to poverty and social exclusion, but without linking it to the sustainable development problem, for sure. However, this absence may be attributed to the difficulty of determining the social sustainability which has been excluded from discussion and analysis; as the concept of social sustainability requires analyzing the interactions existing between the three levels: environment, economy and society; in other words, for the purpose of formulating a procedural concept of social sustainability.

Additionally, attention should be paid not only to the effects of economic choices on the social level, but alike to stand first at the social choices (or decisions) along with the repercussions thereof on

the social construction level of society in its comprehensiveness (Ahmed Ali Salem et al., 2018, p. 136).

Even if based on sustainable economies, economic policies can lead to negative social results in the form of social disparities, in respect such as social exclusion, weakening the local identities and destroying the social cohesion, the fact of which prevents sustainable development; even more, the same fact may apply with regards to the environmental dimension, as some environmental protection policies lead to reducing jobs or inputs, mainly with regards to non-renewable natural resources, whereat sustainability becomes in each individual case a function of the conditions set by other development dimensions.

In closing, it can be said that the sociology of the environment was concerned with the environmental social movements, in terms of dealing with the environment issue as a field within the sociology fields, bearing in mind that these social movements had a significant and prominent role in building the environmental issue as a social issue.

5. CONCLUSION

The acceleration of the history movement due to a change in the nature of human's relationship with the environment has made all societies known major dynamics and transformations, even if they had differences in terms of pace and intensity; namely after the industrial revolution and the foundation for modern societies, as this accelerating process has revealed multiple imbalances in the human relationship with his environment. Besides, the nature of societal organization has produced for us behavioural phenomena affecting the environmental balances, as the consumer society along with accelerating and deepening the globalization have produced the environmental problem at the societal level, because it has become an existential threat to humans, which must be seriously dealt with all the way through reconsidering these trends.

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