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What is Missing to Understand Sustainability?

Rosalba Thomas Muñoz
University of Colima, Mexico
Corresponding author: rosthomas@ucol.mx

Abstract. Despite the enormous global problems linked not only to the ecological sphere, but also to the environmental, political, economic, social and cultural dimensions, humanity continues to consider that the discourse of sustainability has a close and unique relationship with nature. It is not like this. This text aims to make a deeper reflection on the historical context, interests and power relations that derive from considering sustainability as an alternative development model. More than a neutral discourse, sustainability must always land in a specific historical and spatial context, which allows it to adapt, and then perhaps become more operational and functional. The hypothesis places the media as simplistic and, at times partial interlocutors; but definitely not neutral, which prevents the individual from understanding the complex dynamics of the planet and the possible solutions to current problems. It is not only the fact that the media define what sustainability is, but also important to reflect on how and why they do it.

Keyword:
Discourse, Media, Sustainability

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, sustainable development is a term heard around the world. It is used by companies that highlight their sustainability indicators, by universities to promote their environmental vision and policy, by governments in their development plans, and also by housewives when shopping. Nevertheless, in the academic-scientific field, this discourse has received innumerable criticisms not only because in practice it has not been able to overcome its contradictions and antagonisms, but also because it has not yet had concrete results. Unfortunately, environmental, social and economic problems continue to present development indicators far apart from the aspirations of this discourse (1).

Considering the above, it is important to investigate the problem that exists in the social relationships of those who live or wish to live sustainability but have not been able to create a balance in their relationship with the natural environment on which they are completely dependent.

This text intends to analyze sustainability as a political discourse product of its historical context, interests and power relations, but, more than a guide or manual for practical use, it seems to me that sustainability should be considered based on a specific context that allows it take shape, mold, adjust, and then perhaps become operative and functional.

The hypothesis that is put forward is that, in this perspective, there is an intermediary who presents a simplistic and reductionist face of sustainability. The media show a partial vision to their audiences, which prevents them from understanding the complex biological dynamics of the planet and locating the causes and consequences of the most serious problems that have impacted human communities.

This text is divided into three sections. In the first, the historical context is analyzed, highlighting aspects that, from the analysis, have generated conjunctures or cultural patterns that have triggered some of the problems that we now face as a society. In the second section some general characteristics of complexity are addressed, which allows us to demonstrate that not only the biological dynamics of the planet, but also those of the individual and society, are difficult to analyze with a simplistic or reductionist vision and that this myopia affects the long-term discourse reception. Finally, in the third part, two perspectives stand out around the mediation of the discourse, these are the media and academic discourse around sustainability. Approaches that help methodologically are guided by hermeneutics and phenomenology, also taken up by cultural studies (CS) and critical discourse analysis (CDA). In this sense, for Turner (2), CS is an interdisciplinary field where different interests and methods converge. "The usefulness of this concurrence allows us to understand phenomena and relationships that, with the other existing disciplines, was not possible" (2, p. 3). The CS approach also allows us to understand a broader, anthropological and, at the same time, restricted and humanistic concept of culture (2). These postures coincide with the science of sustainability, since a multidisciplinary approach is recommended to understand complexity.

For the CDA, a speech has vast ways to be interpreted. There are philosophical, scientific, political, cultural, religious, aesthetic, literary, poetic, cinematographic, every day journalistic discourses, among many others. For Salgado (3), "this concept includes not only words, but everything with which we can construct meaningful images, still or in motion, gestures, looks and, broadly, any action aimed at saying something to someone." (3, p. 15). All daily, every day or conjunctural events invariably take place within a framework of circumstances, actors and actions that determine that an event happens as it does. That is a discourse.

The analysis is carried out from a corpus obtained with two types of materials:

1. Specialized texts on complexity, modernity and discourse to analyze the cultural field, its characteristics and discursive conditions.
2. Specialized texts on communicating sustainability, on the recommendation of cultural studies regarding the reception of the discourse.

The analysis of the corpus is not carried out in a linear way, but rather through various factors that allow integrating the results with a descriptive and comprehensive purpose, instead of an explanation of reality.

It is not intended to describe the environmental catastrophes that, among other things, triggered the emergence of this development model in 1987, but to reflect that, according to international consensus, the crisis of development paradigms refers to the exhaustion of a style of environmentally predatory, socially unjust, politically perverse, culturally homogenized and ethically manipulated life. Hence, rather than describing the

consequences of the lack of social understanding of the biological dynamics of the planet, the analysis will focus on the causes that have triggered that right now our species finds the achievement of its way of life risky. In any case, coincides with Guimarães, when he mentions that "what is at stake is overcoming the paradigms of modernity that have been defining the orientation of the development process" (4, p. 3).

The discussion on sustainability is perceived as a result of communication processes derived from the importance of socio-environmental problems recognized since the 1970s. However, the multiple complaints regarding social commitment in these issues lead to the need to examine more about this problem. In this regard, Niklas Luhmann (5), argued that "fish or men can die, bathing in seas and rivers can cause diseases, there may be no more oil in the gas stations and that the average temperature can go down or up, but if this is not communicated, it has no social effect" (5, p. 63). The discourse of sustainability has, in its most popular aspect, this purpose.

It is necessary to overcome the paradigms of modernity (individualism, rationality and happiness, amongst others), because they have been defining the direction we are orienting ourselves as a civilization and as a species. In accordance with the reality evaluated from the social, cultural, political sciences and, on above all, natural our evolution as a species on this planet will not include the main biological benefits that we have had until today, such as breathing air and drinking enough quality water.

2. Theoretical Approach

2.1. Cultural Studies and Sustainability

When the interest in studying the sustainability discourse arose, an approach from the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA from now on) was enough to understand its meanings and tendencies. However, it was not possible to identify disciplinary positions that would allow us to observe the complexity of this discourse; on the contrary, sometimes the focus fell solely on linguistics and semantics as means to understand it.

This is how this study was linked to Cultural Studies (CS onwards), not only because its analysis emerged at the same time as the sustainability discourse, but also because it was accompanied by the pronouncement of the revolutionary social movements of the 70s. It was not until a decade later that the CS were established as a proposal to understand the role of the media, popular culture and their relationship with the process of identity constitution, the forces of globalization and deterritorialization.

For Durham and Kellner (6), the CS gaze is marked by its origin in Great Britain in the mid-50s of the 20th century. It arose as a product of different rebellions, both social and political, during the 1960s. Two decades later in Latin America, culture was considered purely ideology, this generated a phenomenon of ideological reproduction of the hegemonic culture, transmitted through the mass media as main exponents.

Martín-Barbero (7) argues that, in those times, in Latin America, studying communication processes meant studying reproduction processes, because it was difficult to identify one's own cultural expressions that were not influenced by those that came from abroad through the media. This influence of globalization allows me to understand the role that the media and popular culture had in the construction and homogenization of identities, by promoting the reproduction of the dominant ideology (then and now) in which the market is the center of discussion and decisions.

For Bauman (8), in globalization it is inevitable to consider the included / excluded

binomial. Bauman, a Polish-British sociologist, philosopher and essayist, introduced the idea of globalized rich and localized poor, then adds to this the fragmentation of public space, the disintegration of the urban community, the separation and extraterritoriality of the new elite with respect to the forced territoriality of the rest.

For this philosopher of postmodernity (8, p. 3), globalization promotes a new distribution of privileges together with an absence of rights, possibilities of victory and impotence, lack of expectations, power and of freedom for those who have the least. And, considering that the sustainability discourse maintains from its origins the aspiration to vindicate social justice, the vision of the CS is important to maintain the focus on that reality.

García Canclini (9, p. 7) points out that another of the interests of the CS is the sociocultural crisis of modernity and its various manifestations, one of these is the rate of growth and the economic contradictions that exceed the capacity of large companies to cope with them. This is broadly related to the postulates of sustainability, as it highlights the need to reflect on the impact of this economic model as it is considered predatory and socially, economically and environmentally unjust.

One of the main objectives of the CS is "to understand the specification that should be made of culture (social production of meaning and consciousness) in itself and in relation to the economy (production) and politics (social relations)" (10, p. 121). Relationships that undoubtedly have a strong link with the causes that triggered sustainability, so this approach allows defining the study of culture from a conceptually more complex terrain.

Both CS and sustainability try to clarify inequalities and cultural practices, but the former focus more on social relations and their cultural expressions, while the latter are oriented by the relationship of human beings with their natural environment.

I understand culture as "the set of forms of human activity that are manifested within all social activities and in their reciprocal relationships" (11, p. 95). This will allow us to see society as a network of antagonisms where the media (among other actors), exercise a kind of ideological control. Symbolic products related to sustainability are perceived as a "battlefield" where different social groups dispute hegemony over their meanings.

For Stuart Hall (12, p. 94), CS are "multiple discourses, numerous and different stories, a wide set of options, various types of activities, people who had and have different trajectories, a large number of methodologies and different theoretical positions". Thus, the complexity of the discourse will be analyzed, with the diversity of its origins, causes or consequences, as well as identifying actors that directly or indirectly impact the messages and the reception of the discourse.

Culture is not understood only as a practice or descriptive sum of habits or social customs, but linked to all social practices and in turn, as the sum of their interrelations. Hall defines it as "the study of the relationships between elements in a total way of life" (12, p. 63). For this reason, culture is also a good example of a complex system, since the whole turns out to be more than the sum of its parts.

2.2. Definitions, Discourses, and Models Of Sustainability

Due to the fundamental break with the consumerist and predatory capitalist society model that dominates the western side of the world, the discourse of sustainability is considered a new paradigm. Its meaning has been the subject of intense and protracted controversy and has given rise to deep divergences or great coincidences. However, despite having been formally signed in the Declaration of Cocoyoc, Mexico in 1974, the concept was vetoed by representatives of the United States Government, being excluded from the

Official Declaration because it was a provocative concept (13). Years later, in 1987, the accepted concept became known as Sustainable Development.

In Mexico, when it comes to sustainability, the recurring question is not only what it means or what is the difference between the concept and its discourse. In this regard, there are interesting variants to mention. On the one hand, the Report Our Common Future, promoted by the World Commission on Environment and Development, proposes a conclusive but unfinished definition: "sustainable development is the satisfaction of the needs of present generations, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". But has this concept become just part of a rhetorical discourse or does it really have social roots? What's the point of talking about sustainability today?

A few years ago, this was a concept comparable to others that were also controversial, such as democracy. In the 1970s, the Ecodevelopment concept had a certain advantage over the, not yet nascent concept of sustainable development, which was formulated for the first time by Maurice Strong in June 1973 as part of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP).

Although the concept could be considered as ambiguous, its historical evolution has come to suggest fundamental changes and some interesting questions, for example: What will be the needs of future generations? What are the current needs that we must continue to meet and those that impose a limit on the physical space in which we live? Who is responsible for the criteria to satisfy our needs? When will we commit to future generations?

Riechman (14) responds according to the Brundtland Report, in which sustainability is a concept that must include socio-political and economic aspects in its procedures that allow satisfying human needs and aspirations, distinguishing two types of conditions. The first is ecological, because there are limits on our planet. Secondly, a moral condition, because its aims include not harming future generations. However, its necessary that those who subscribe to this paradigm have the same socioeconomic conditions and an awareness marked by the rational and responsible use of natural resources, aspects that are not discussed in the official concept. We must remember that all discourse and every culture evolves.

The scenario where the word discourse has the greatest movement is in the political sphere. Here, a speech is expressed verbally by a person with power whose actions are related to politics and society. However, the concept of discourse goes beyond politics, it is a polysemic concept. For Eva Salgado, speech represents language put into action. With it "people and groups interact with each other, value, construct, perceive, represent or preserve reality and collective experiences; they build identities or establish power relations" (3, p. 14).

Portelli (15), says that we always ask ourselves about discourses: what has happened, how it has happened or what is discussed, etc., however, these questions are not enough to analyze and understand speech. What is lacking? Teun van Dijk (16, p. 70-72), founder of the CDA, argues that to understand speech it is necessary to have an intermediary that allows us to understand two things:

1. How the person with whom we communicate thinks (their thought structure and values); and,
2. How it represents what you think, what happens.

Beyond what is thought on a personal level, it is important to know how others think

and communicate, what are the social relationships that frame reality and the nature of their discourses. Although for Jäger "it is not the individual who makes the speech. The speech is supra-individual. Although everyone contributes their grain of sand to the production of the discursive 'fabric', no individual, or any specific group determines the discourse or has set out to achieve exactly what ends up becoming the final result" (3, p. 16-17).

Bolívar (17, p. 22) also say that discourse, "it is social interaction, because meanings are created, challenged, transformed, die and are reborn in society and not in isolated compartments out of context […]. Second, discourse is cognition because people construct their knowledge of the world and adapt their representations to the contexts in which they live […]. Third, discourse is history because to interpret the meanings of the present it is necessary to know the dynamics in which they were created [...] Fourth, and above all, discourse is dialogue because for interactions to exist, a self, a you, a us, and one others.".

Egüez (18, p. 155) considers a discourse as "the practice through which an ideology can be transmitted". Through language and communication, ideology is explicitly manifested. Ideology can also be discourse, while language and communication are the means that it takes to be reborn. In this sense, the CI and the CDA coincide.

For Fairclough (19, p. 54-56), discourse is "the use of language as a particular form of social practice." So, sustainability has its own discourses that oscillate between conjunctural events, global / local environmental phenomena and social movements that give shape and keep it alive, although it is still questioned, since "the dominant groups no longer maintain their position by force, not even with threats […] but by complex systems of discourse and ideologies that make (the majority of the members of) the dominated groups believe or accept that domination is justified (as in democratic systems), it is natural (as in the domination of gender and race) or it is inevitable (as in the socioeconomic foundations and the 'logic' of the market" (18, p. 156).

Analyzing sustainability as a discourse also allows us to analyze the structures and variables that make it up, the historical moment that accompanies it and the gaps that come to mind when delving into its discursive actions, as well as the cultural expressions that project it. However, in analyzing a discourse (20, p. 4), it is necessary to meet certain criteria, namely "the notion that a discourse is determined by the world, and the latter, in turn, determines the world; it is determined by the language, and it determines the language; it is determined by the participants, and it also determines the participants; it is determined by the previous discourse, and this in turn determines the possibilities of the future discourse; it is determined by its environment, and the discourse also determines the possibilities of its environment; is determined by purpose, and it determines future purposes."

That is why a discourse directly impacts the context and is in turn influenced by it in an iterative cycle, using an interpretation to reinterpret a given discourse. The world, the language , the participants, the previous discourses, the means and the purpose construct a whole process of discursive analysis. Therefore, the notion of discourse is understood as the practice or use of language (individual or collective), to create ideological structures, that is, to create culture.

It was in 1983 when the United Nations called for the creation of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), and Gro Harlem Brundtland, then Prime Minister of Norway, chaired the Commission. As a result of their studies, the first report was issued in which the need to evaluate the actions or initiatives of all governments from three

perspectives was identified for the first time: economic, social and environmental. The most important product of this Commission was the report known as Our Common Future, which for the first time enunciates the most recognized worldwide official definition of sustainable development (with UN translation). "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs." (21).

Once the concept was founded, the speech discourse started. However, the Brundtland Report, as it came to be known, made no mention whatsoever of the operation of this concept, nor of the elements that made it up, nor of how its progress could be evaluated, so the speech started without a scaffolding to support it.

Today sustainability is still a debatable concept, but it has been able to achieve a global consensus. Until today the official definition has maintained a central idea: to help countries with a developing economy to become developed. Nevertheless, this has further implications.

For Harris (22), this discussion occurs, in most cases, outside of developing countries, and history repeats itself, those of the North versus those of the South; the underdeveloped versus the developed; the sustainable versus the unsustainable. And in the end, the evaluation of progress is generated with only one side of the problem, that of the developed countries.

We are going to delve a little into the meaning that a sustainable process is now given. On the one hand, an accepted definition from biology or ecology is that "a sustainable process has developed the capacity to produce indefinitely at a rate in which it does not deplete the resources it uses and needs to function and does not produce more pollutants than it needs and it can absorb its environment" (23, p. 2).

A key word in this definition is the concept of rhythm, as it represents a key indicator to notice the quantitative increase of its components, that is, what capacity this system can have to produce indefinitely and continue working. This phenomenon is known as exponential growth and it is one of the biggest discussions in the field of sustainability, since, in terms of population, this type of growth is what has generated concern about the limitation that the planet has to produce enough and sustain quality of life for everyone. Calvante (23, p. 2), takes up this argument, saying that when environmental conditions are optimal and ideal (low environmental resistance), population growth will tend to be exponential. "This type of growth has the characteristic of doubling at regular intervals of time, reaching a point where the process cannot grow any further. This moment is due to the fact that it has exhausted all the resources it needs to continue growing, and therefore has a steep decline or collapse."

This phenomenon is considered unsustainable. Our concern is that, despite knowing what the result of the occurrence of unsustainable phenomena will be, it is not possible to predict when they will occur and what their effects will be, nor their direct and indirect consequences.

Another component of the sustainability definition is that which refers to load capacity, considered as "the maximum activity that a system can maintain without degrading in the long term" (23, p. 12). In this regard, Switzerland, the most sustainable country in the world, defines sustainability in a more holistic way as: "A new universal framework that strives to promote human prosperity and sustainable economic development and protect the environment both in the country and worldwide" (24).

Despite the many contradictions that sustainability could have, the search for a balance

between society, the environment and the economy as the basis of the original concept continues to persist. However, it is also necessary to talk about the hows. In other words, sustainability should advance towards a balanced relationship between these dimensions, considering what each society requires for its well-being.

One way to exemplify the above is through sustainability models that show the way in which the establishment of this so-called equilibrium is visualized. Models, says Hacking (25), are graphic or visual representations of certain phenomena, systems or processes to help us describe, explain or simulate the reality that interests us. A model is an imaginary construction of an object or process that starts from a theory, law or hypothesis.

The following model to visualize sustainability and its aspirations comes from the institutional sector, the Brundtland Report (21), and proposes determinants of sustainable development based on certain systems, but does not distinguish a priority in them. This is the only model that gives value to topics such as technology, administration, the productive sector and the international factor.
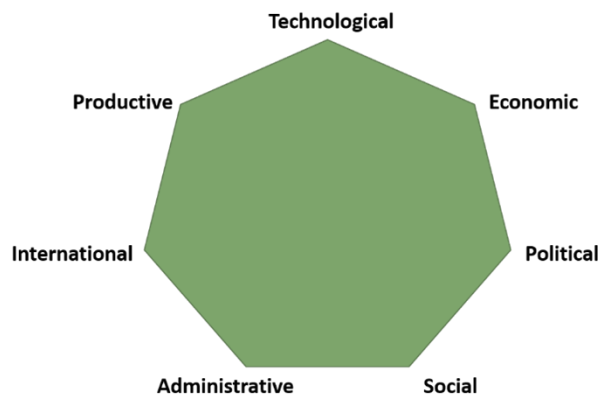

Figure 1. First sustainability model of the Brundtland Report, 1987 (26)

Official international organizations (UNEP, UN), have a much more complex model of sustainability to promote the campaign of the 17 goals of sustainable development, which are represented by the following model.
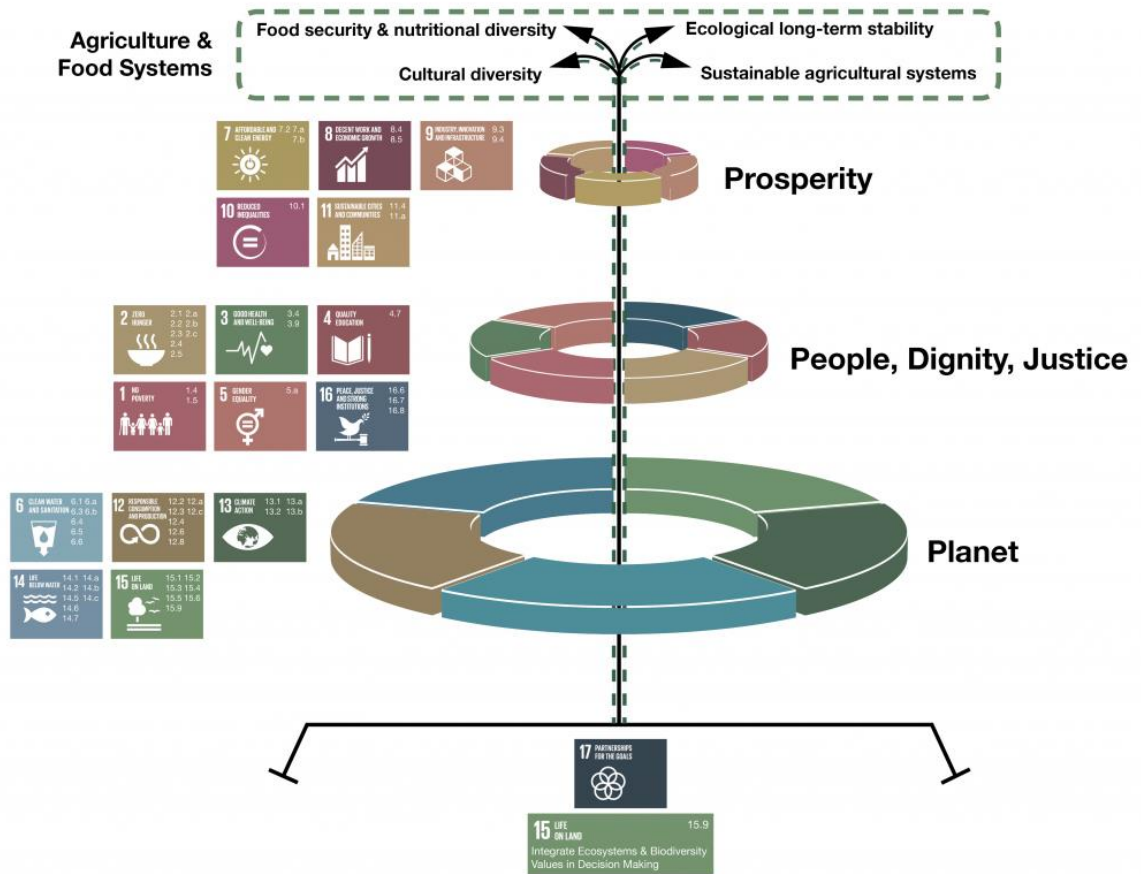
Figure 2. Interaction model between the 17 SDGs (1)

The business sector has also developed its own models. The following is that of CEMEX, a Mexican multinational company dedicated to the construction industry, which offers products and services to clients and communities in more than 50 countries in the world (CEMEX, 2021). This model does not distinguish dimensions of sustainability per se, but rather components that characterize its vision in relation to the future of the company.
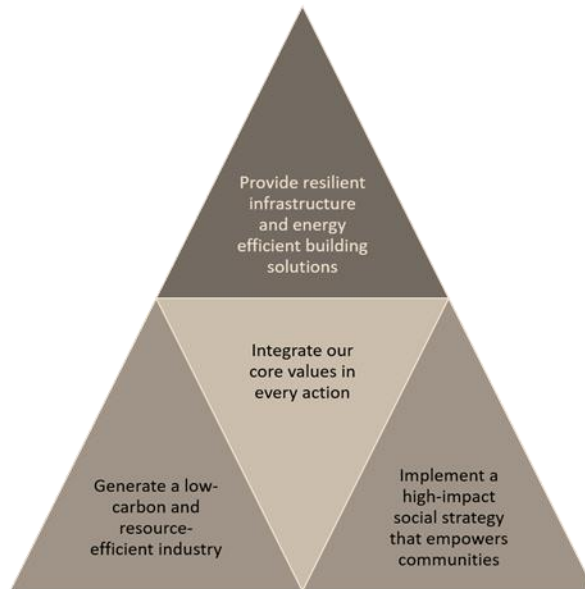
Figure 3. CEMEX's sustainability model. Cemex, 2021

The Mexican government also has its own scheme to understand sustainability. It makes explicit the priorities that Mexico has in relation to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), better known as the 2030 Agenda. This model is expressed as follows.

Figure 4. Model 2030 Agenda of the Government of Mexico 2018-2024.
Government of Mexico

The academic sector has raised the most models to operate or exemplify this discourse. Raskin et al (27, p. 39), proposes an analysis of global scenarios in historical perspective. In this model, the three dimensions are highlighted, but, in addition, each of them also has

attributes that present the concept in more detail and deepen its aspirations.
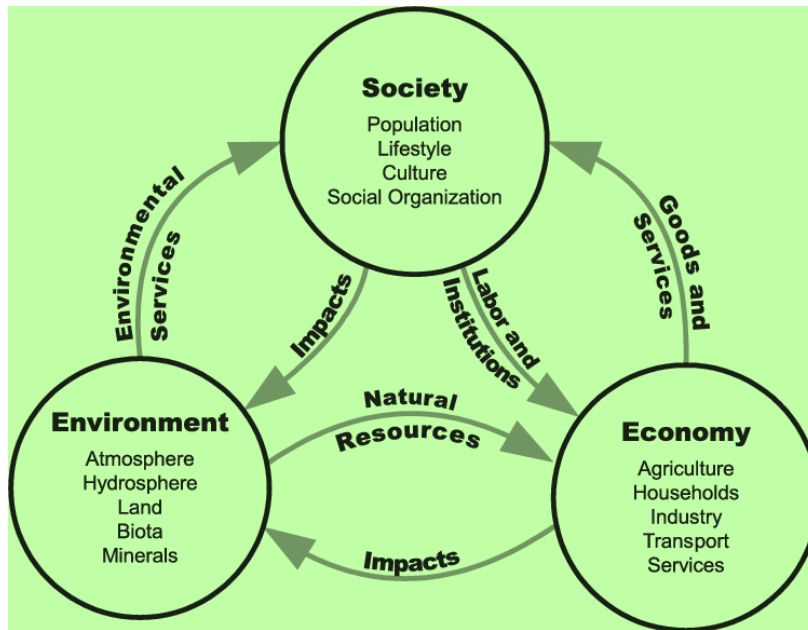

Figure 5. Socio-ecological system and its components (27)

It is important to know how the sustainability model is visualized, but it is even more important to understand that these schemes are not static or inert, they are part of and represent the consequence of other complex systems that interact with each other and affect or are affected by them. What is it that makes the concept of sustainability, its definition, its models or the discourse itself be considered as something complex? The problems they are trying to understand or solve.

Figure 6, prepared by Nieto Caraveo (2007), reflects the complexity and flexibility with which the attributes between each of the dimensions of sustainability transit in the scientific discourse, as well as their overlap, which facilitates a basic understanding of some of their conflicts.
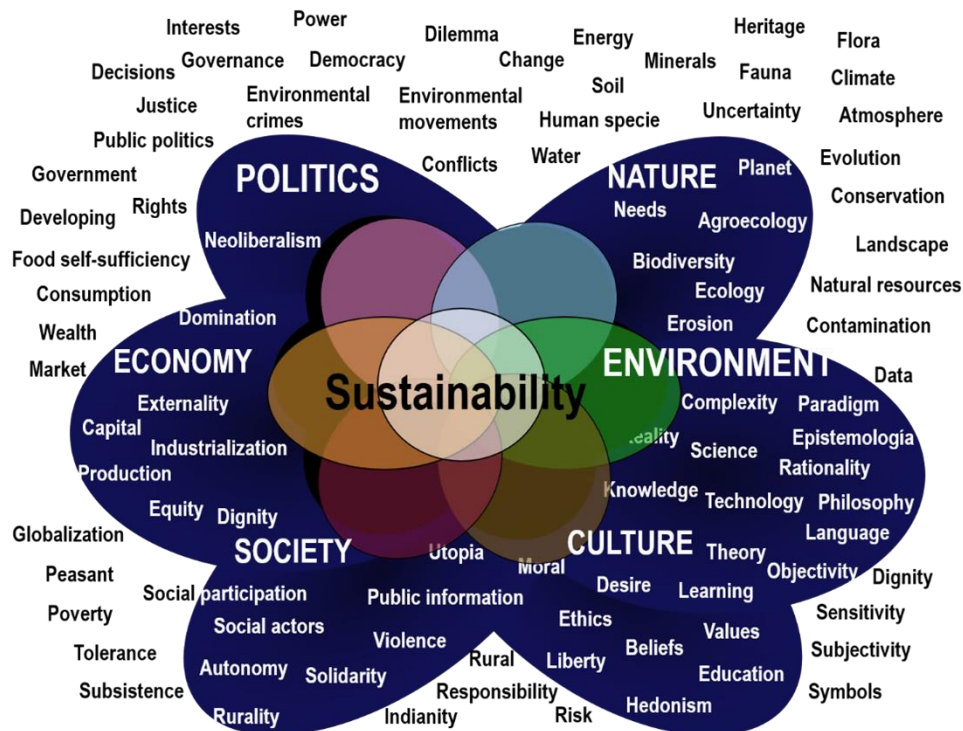
Figure 6. Sustainability model under conditions of complexity (28)

For sustainability theorists and academics, the discourse must reflect not only environmental aspirations, but also social, political, economic and cultural aspirations in the short, medium and long term, with certain conditions, such as:

- A political dimension that reflects on the concepts related to horizontal public policies, democratic governments, citizen participation and governance.
- A social dimension with aspects related to social justice, equity, transparency and access to information.
- An environmental dimension that focuses on the conservation of ecological systems, as well as their management and restoration.
- An economic dimension, which includes concepts such as the valorization or monetization of resources, the solidarity economy, fair trade, a fair distribution of wealth, etc.
- A cultural dimension, which analyzes the impacts of the global / local world on forms of expression and local customs, cultural diversity, different types of knowledge, among other variables.

In Mexico there are more than 500 environmental conflicts caused by the proliferation of megaprojects related to mining, hydrocarbon production, gas, and fracking, which have generated local and regional imbalances (29). Stopping deforestation, promoting community forest management, tackling climate change, changing the energy course, conserving biodiversity in communion with the well-being of the populations, analyzing mining and fracking concessions, and promoting greater environmental awareness, are some of the challenges of this complex discourse.

3. The Perspective of History

It is impossible to fix a point in history where it can be said that Man began his way to become what he is now. From his time through nomadism and the search for control of fire, the recognition of agriculture as a means of subsistence and stability, as well as the notion of the future and, with it, of time.

10,000 years ago, agriculture allowed Homo Sapiens to learn in community, to use their teamwork to demonstrate supremacy against other species with greater physical strength. Agriculture gave Man the notion of time and space. From this relationship with Nature, it was necessary to create group strategies to protect the lands that fed them. The more territory they defended, the more food they would get, and the more population they could maintain to help work the land. This was a vicious circle that ended up freeing Man from walking from one place to another at the cost of his freedom to walk from one place to another.

Agriculture enslaved Man (30), but it also showed him the cyclical dynamics of nature and began to recognize his patterns of survival. Seeing a plant grow, eating its fruits, covering itself with its leaves, building its roofs with branches, dressing with its materials, are among many other uses that humans have created to survive, dependent on nature. Meeting needs has always been the central issue. Economics, a social science that studies how to manage the resources available to satisfy human needs, has since been considered the most important dimension for all human populations in all corners of the planet.

Since the first men began to plan how to feed their groups, it was necessary to start creating rules to organize themselves, and since then several proposals have emerged to achieve this end. The first to propose modern economic theories were the Jesuits, defending the benefits of private property (31). Two established classifications of the nature of private property are mentioned, and another more contemporary.

On the one hand, there is the capitalist economy. It is also known as a free or market economy. In it, "individuals and companies carry out the production and exchange of goods and services through transactions in which prices and markets intervene" (31). There is also the socialist economy, which defends state intervention in the economy. It substitutes private property for collective property in the means of production, exchange and distribution, calls for the equal distribution of wealth and the elimination of social classes (31). Until now, neither of the two has maintained a pure way of deciding its political economy, that is, there are no rules to decide the relationship that exists between the government and the distribution of a country's resources.

In its beginnings, political economy postulated that countries were richer as they accumulated the greatest amount of precious stones (mercantilism). The wealth was in nature and the territory; hence Physiocracy was born at the end of the seventeenth century, which affirmed that the habitat (agriculture) was the true source of wealth.

When Adam Smith first appeared, he focused on human labor as a source of wealth. "Work is the father and active principle of wealth and the earth is the mother," said William Petty (32). From this conception, the State began to let its subjects individually seek their own economic benefit.

At the end of the 18th century, economics began to be considered a science, thanks to the publication of An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, better known as The Wealth of Nations (reference a, see below), by Adam Smith (33). The text indicates that the wealth of a nation derives from its work, "the annual product of the work and the land of the country" (33), that is to say, the Gross Domestic Product. For Smith "the

wealth that counts is that which is distributed among the inhabitants of a country", that is to say, what today is called income or GDP per capita (33).

Smith's contemporaries such as Thomas Malthus, in his piece An Essay on the Principle of Population (b, see reference below) published in 1803, or David Ricardo with his theories on comparative advantage (c, see reference below), the law of diminishing returns (d, see reference below) and theory on the distribution of income (e, see reference below), gradually shaped the discourse of sustainability, since what they indicated was that Nature is the basis of the wealth of every nation (a); that the exponential growth of the population would end up depleting the planet's resources (b); that resource efficiency is the best way to take advantage of what you have (c); that a natural resource that is extracted without any control or efficiency tends to disappear and increase the difficulty of its extraction (d); that the equitable distribution of a country's wealth is the basis for equity and social justice (e).

Undoubtedly, these contributions lay the foundations for sustainability theorists today, as they pose the need to transform the system, modify it or definitively eliminate it, depending on the evidence of deterioration. In addition, they have motivated the establishment of increasingly complex organizational systems.

The birth of political economy accompanies the transition from feudal societies to the birth of capitalism in Western Europe (34). A while before this, in the 15th century more precisely Humanism, the philosophical and literary aspect of the Renaissance (35), gave value to Man in the face of the theological vision. Simultaneously, the anthropocentric vision began to be built; the desire for fame, glory, prestige and power became legitimate aspirations that improved Man. Machiavelli, with his work The Prince (1531) displaces the faith of God to man and human reason acquires supreme value (36). Knowledge began to empower people, giving them happiness and freedom.

Since the second half of the 15th century, the modern capitalist economy has been recognized as a time linked to the European Renaissance, however, this paradigm has been a global and world process whose complexity has taken centuries to reconfigure itself. It comes from a historical stage from which social transformations became more complex, "the economic, the social, the political and the cultural are interrelated, advancing at unequal rates until they configure modern bourgeois society, capitalism and a new form of political organization, the Nation-State" (37, p. 120).

However, these Western characteristics and patterns did not necessarily represent a unique and authentic global modernity (38, p. 34), since "all these developments and trends constitute aspects of a continuous reinterpretation and reconstruction of the cultural program of modernity; of the construction of multiple currencies; of the attempts of various groups and movements to reappropriate modernity and redefine the discourse of modernity on its own terms. More than a clash of civilizations, what we witness [in modernity] is encounters, contacts, cultural diffusions between civilizations".

From Beriain's work (38), the term multiple currencies is identified, which analyzes Western modernity not as a single and comprehensive concept of which copies have been made throughout the world, but as a proposal for a cultural and political program driven from different civilizations and with different characteristics. For this author, these multiple modernities manifest the existence of different ideological and institutional possibilities.

Certainly, human history has had different explanations that have shaped and reconfigured our understanding of the world, so when we speak of a predominant ideology it is because it has managed to impose itself in a major section of societies. This does not necessarily make it invisible, however, nor do the other expressions disappear. On the

contrary, many times syncretisms occur that shape new explanations of the world or paradigm shifts.

For Giddens (39, p. 46), in modernity "social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of new information, which in this way alters their constituent character". This explains why at this stage we find paradigms totally constituted from knowledge and information, however, we also do not know how reliable and durable this knowledge will be.

Modernity and its cast of possibilities emerge "only when what had been seen as an immutable cosmos ceases to be taken for granted" (38, p. 35-37), for example, the belief in a flat planet or in the Earth as the center of the Universe, etc. However, the fact that a change has occurred with certain paradigms does not imply that the previous ones have disappeared, rather, in many cases they are combined and this combination is what gives rise to multiple modernities or multimodernities.

For Giddens (39), four factors have influenced the creation of modernity as a historical stage and discursive preamble to sustainability.

Power makes a difference. In modernity, the appropriation of knowledge is not homogeneous but can be used by those in positions of power who can place it at the service of certain interests.

The role of values. Changes in our values are not independent of interests to create new ways of learning. That is, the securities are also traded.

The impact of unforeseen consequences. No accumulated knowledge could cover all your circumstances.

Modern social life does not reduce unwanted consequences. That is, there is no stable social world to be known, but the knowledge of that world promotes its changing and unstable character.

Product of some of these regulatory mechanisms, modern society claims three Renaissance discourses that are considered important to describe, as they motivate reflection on the principles of sustainability. These are: individualism, rationalism and happiness. Let's examine each one and their relationship with sustainability.

Individualism stands out in all forms of expression of modernity. According to Dumont (40, p. 180), "it is the ideology of modern civilization, it is the common representations, ideas and values of society." For Norbert (40, p. 182), "individualism and rationalism are two central processes in the development of modernity". Hence Berman´s (40, p. 183) postulate, which indicates that "With the social transformations that occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the subject is immersed in the world to an unprecedented degree and individualism is transformed into the cardinal value of modern societies."

The eighteenth century has been called the "Age of Enlightenment" due to the birth of the intellectual movement called the Enlightenment. Many of the political, economic, social, cultural and intellectual events of that time have reached the present, offering patterns of behavior and social organization, though these have not necessarily answered the today's major questions.

The exaltation of reason and the individual allowed Man to position himself against theology, but all discourse evolves. Although the Enlightenment and Humanism have freed Man, allowing him to use his own intelligence without the guidance of others, this does not exclude that the human communities themselves have to remember it, so the following motto: Sapere Aude (41), which means: have the courage to use your own reason or dare to know, should not be understood only at the individual level, but with the ability to

recognize the value of knowledge obtained from communities and Nature itself.

Rationalism is also based on ideas and reason. Revueltas (37, p. 122) analyzes that "In all domains, be it science, beliefs, morals or political and social organization, the principle of reason will replace the principles that governed until then, namely, those of authority and those that are tradition religiously based. The individual wants to use reason in everything, he wants to examine and know through reason."

Only through reason, Revueltas argues, the human being can discover universal truths. This is also an argument of the knowledge and information society and the acquisition of technology falls under this vision. The impetus for this discourse comes from an economic interest in distinguishing knowledge as a commercial source. "To act and obtain profit, commerce and industry need reason and rationality" (37, p. 123).

Faced with these two discourses, Jacques states that the individualistic sociocultural model is oriented towards dependency, referring to a dominant and a dominated part. This means that there is a relationship of submission of a taxable person in front of another asset. In individualistic discourse there are no two independent subjects; one of them imposes itself. Jacques calls this cultural model the You model. A cultural pattern is defined as "the installation of an individualistic culture that privileges the action of one as the only reference of behavior, while the other appears excluded from the decision-making sphere". "The culture of the affirmation of the I does not require the other to build the decision "I am enough myself". "I do not need you", is the poetic phrase of the love encounter installed in the 70s and that today is applied with greater force of " I am in this world to satisfy my needs, I have my way, my expectations and my dreams. You are in this world to satisfy your needs, you have your way, your expectations and your dreams, if we meet it is wonderful, if not, nothing can be done about it" (42, p. 3).

In the model of the culture of independence, the Self is proclaimed (individualism) as the only reference of knowledge. It is a culture that fragments knowledge, that seeks to impose a truth, that of each one of us. Jacques argues clearly: "The simple, social knowledge of the people is not taken into account. It is a knowledge that is outside, it exists, but it does not have visibility, it does not show itself. It is the culture of appropriation. Who has control appropriates. Along with the culture of the I, comes the culture of control. Thus, from this model a culture of vigilance, panopticon, is installed. It is the culture of mistrust and therefore, I have to ensure that the other reproduces my knowledge, I control it, I correct it and I punish it. It is, according to Michel Foucault, the culture of disciplinary society, of social control, of the culture in which he who has power, has knowledge and controls it." (42, p. 4).

From the discourse of sustainability and under a culturalist lens, the author highlights the importance of the local-territorial as the most appropriate level to stimulate the development of the organization and "to execute the planning process and execution of plans and projects according to the social reality and community need." (42, p. 7).

Finally, there is the discourse of happiness, which has also had transformations depending on the paradigm within which it is defined. For ancient and medieval philosophy, "happiness is not a subjective state of satisfaction, but rather a way of life based on the realization of one's own end, of the telos inscribed in the human essence" (43). However, the Renaissance also weakened the belief that the Universe is governed by an order of preconceived ends, and not by a succession of causes and effects, as conceived by modern science. Hence the pursuit of happiness became amenable to rational treatment. Locke (43), expressed it as follows: "The mind has different tastes, in the same way as the palate, and it

would be as futile to try to please all men with wealth or fame (things in which some men put their happiness), as it would be useless to try to satisfy the appetite of all men with cheese or lobster (...)."

For Rousseau (44), the key to the unity of man necessary for happiness was given by his ability to expand self-love, which is equivalent to a virtuous action, although this expansion was intended in the conformation of the general will and, therefore, in freedom. Hence, Rousseau puts the individual and his interests as conditions of public freedom and happiness.

Abandoning this conception of seeking preconceived ends of the human being also led to a change around the notion of happiness and, since then, this has been identified with joy and pleasure (43). Even before this, Kant defined it as "the consciousness that has a rational being who likes life that uninterruptedly accompanies its entire existence" (43). In response, personal preferences prevail to define happiness and the result is that each individual is influenced in a different way by their means to achieve it.

In modern times, happiness fosters in the individual a search for myths that keep him in an unstoppable chase that encourages an emotional search oriented by reason. Eliade (45), provides examples of some myths that are promoted to provoke reactions in society and its ways of life, that is, in its culture. For example, the myth of the modern, frustrated, limited man who dreams of rebelling as an exceptional character, as a hero; the myth of success, which "translates the dark desire to transcend the limits of the human condition" […] (45), in search of the successful, rich and powerful man; there are also the myths of the elite or of status, which crystallize around artistic creation and its cultural and social repercussions. Bourdieu calls it symbolic capital. It is with these myths that "an immaculate happiness is obtained, which denies unhappiness and which, in modernity, supposedly, can and should be achieved through individual and active work" (46, p. 291). How much has this speech impacted today? What forms has it taken and how has it evolved? Is happiness still a social aspiration or is it just the carrot that keeps us walking endlessly?

From industrialization, Man's relationship with nature changed, "upon discovering that he no longer coexists –within- her, but can now exist –above her (47, p. 218). Rosales proposes two manifestations of the relationship between human beings and Nature in multimodernity (47, p. 218-219). "On the one hand, the spread of industrialism has created a more threatening world where there are real and potential harmful ecological changes that affect all the inhabitants of the planet. The desire to know and control nature has been overtaken by the economic rationality that directs the exploitation of resources in search of an increase in capital. On the other hand, the irrational exploitation of natural resources has also decisively conditioned our awareness of living in a single world, a situation that questions the prevailing economic rationality and that seeks different options for interrelation with nature, without returning to essentialist conceptions of the same."

Modernity is a historical stage that accentuates the speed of technological and social transformations. It is mentioned as an objective and untouchable speech for emotions and sensibilities, but at the same time it lacks responsibility for the man-nature relationship. There are coincidences with Beriain in recognizing that "our biggest mistakes have been to identify 'modernization' with the growth of a certain type of uniformity and to associate modernity with prosperity" (38, p. 37). This is the context in which the sustainability discourse arises.

Analyzing the social organization at the same time as its conception of time and space is fundamental, not only to observe the scene of the discourse what is analyzed, but also to

understand its process of cultural construction, its reason for being, as well as the emergence of the problems that it attends, which are ultimately the consequence of human actions in relation to its environment. Two key issues here are concern for space (natural environment) and time (future generations).

We are a couple of years past what can be called the beginning of the 21st century behind, yet we continue to find some glimpses of other ways of life and forms of social organization that differ from modern institutions. Castells (48), argues that the Internet and electronic commerce are beginning to displace other businesses such as raw materials. The virtual exchange reduces transaction costs, opens opportunities to millions of individual investors and influences the movement of capital. Are we facing new forms of economic organization?

According to Zygmunt Bauman (49), the new conceptions of space and time have helped to transcend modernity as a historical stage. The Polish thinker compared the idea of a post-modern society with the characteristics of a fluid: adaptable, soluble, flexible; and, above all, opposed to solid elements that are represented as: heavy, inert and resistant. In modernity, the space-territory is solid, heavy, inert; while power now, in postmodernity, is more fluid and extraterritorial, not bound or surrounded by the resistance imposed by space. An example of this are cell phones that make us independent of a particular space; electronic financial transactions are another example, as they can be done from anywhere on the planet with security devices, etc. The owners of power in liquid modernity, as Bauman calls them, are out of reach at all times, they are invisible, and even the concept of waging war has changed, now it is about attacking without being seen.

In liquid modernity or postmodernity, active engagement with the lives of subordinate populations is no longer necessary and is even avoided as it is costly and ineffective. What gives gains is the speed of circulation, recycling, aging, disposal and replacement, not the durability, nor the reliability of the product, important values in modernity. Today's powerful reject and avoid the durable, celebrate the ephemeral, "while those who occupy the lowest place struggle desperately to make their fragile, vulnerable and ephemeral possessions last longer and provide them with lasting services" (49, p. 19).

The problems facing the sustainability discourse today are due to this notion of postmodern progress, to the belief in the use-throw-it binomial. The disintegration of the social fabric, says Bauman, is justified as a "collateral effect," while this disintegration is also the result of a new technique of power that employs lack of commitment and the art of flight at all times.

All these contexts build a cultural setting where, on the one hand, pre-modern discourses survive; the conditions of production and consumption of raw materials are not homogeneous, nor massive, large corporations have not been able to change the customs and knowledge of some peoples and the media have not managed to impose their reality. On the other hand, we also find modern discourses, where the State and the laws have the only word and where reason prevails above all else. Postmodern discourses also emerge, the acceleration in communications and great demonstrations of global corporate power begin, where technology plays a very important role.

It is necessary to mention the current events around the Covid 19 pandemic that took us all by surprise. No one could foresee the magnitude of the disease and, even less, the economic, political and social consequences it would have. In the educational field, the attempt to convert homes into small schools has generated a huge number of problems that are difficult to solve. In this context, the educational authorities' proposals have implicated

meaningless workloads and evaluations given the novelty, dimension and complexity of the situation generated by the pandemic. The sectors with the greatest economic and cultural deficiencies in Mexico will be the most affected by the contingency, in educational terms.

Confinement has produced unknown situations that consume our psychological reserves, our capacity for tolerance and patience. The perception of time has changed, and sleep and wake patterns have changed for many people. The disease and its wake of death in the face of a health system with enormous deficiencies reinforce fear, uncertainty, anger, pain, anguish, restlessness and indignation among thousands of people who would like to see timely and effective responses from the government.

The pandemic creates an unprecedented opportunity: to exercise a deep critique of the current social, political and economic systems. The central concerns, based on solidarity and sustainability, can become people and their quality of life.

These multimodernities are a condition of complexity that is reflected in the scenario of the sustainability discourse, but how is culture reflected in these historical stages in which the discourse that brings us together emerges?

4. The culture of complexity or complexity in culture

A social analysis from a cultural study has the risk of being partial, not only because of the myopia with which researchers look at the world, a product of our own training and culture, but because the spectrum that this analysis is formed from never manages to cover all of the expected consequences, precisely because culture is a complex system.

A phenomenon can be studied from different points of view, two examples are the holistic and the reductionist approach. The first understands the whole in a complex way, the second focuses on the study of its parts. The planet Earth will be taken as an example, which can be seen as a complex system made up of an infinity of simple systems, including gravity, thermodynamic flows, and humanity; they are called simple because a large part of their interactions and evolutions are still unknown. Other examples of complex systems are ecosystems, social behavior and individual consciousness, these cannot be analyzed in a reductionist way, although, in principle, all complex systems begin by studying with simple or reductionist laws.

For Edgar Morin (50), a complicated problem is addressed part by part, separating them and attending to each one specifically; something that cannot be done in complex systems, because every time a section of a complex problem is isolated, its components or subsystems move or affect others, limiting its solution, and sometimes even its understanding. The contemporary reality, seen from the CS and the CDA, is complex and must be explained taking into account this quality. Therefore, to describe and understand the complex reality of sustainability, it is also necessary to understand that:

- Complexity admits uncertainty. "In all complexity there is the presence of uncertainties, be they empirical or theoretical, and more frequently, at the same time - empirical and theoretical" (50, p. 24).
- Complexity cannot be foreseen. Multiple causes are at stake, elements that interact with each other and that have the ability to change as a function of external events.
- Complexity is not deterministic, linear, or stable. It is characterized by instability, by unforeseen variation, that is why it cannot be governed by universal and immutable laws.
- The complex is self-organized, self-constructed. This is a property by which some

systems internally manage their information, regenerating it, modifying it and generating new patterns. Complex phenomena are open systems, so they depend on the environment and exchange information with it.

- The complex is marked by the unfinished. It is always in evolution, mutation, transformation, with the ability to transform itself, creating new patterns of organization.
- Complexity brings, supposes or manifests emergencies. Like everything that results from new and unforeseeable events, emergence is a crucial notion for understanding complexity.
- In the complex there is no balance.

These characteristics of complexity are identified in each and every one of human societies; they evolve accompanied by science and technology, on the one hand; and by an inevitable exponential population growth, impacting all forms of life on the planet. We live in a society saturated with complex systems and we are unable to define a simple and unfinished reality.

According to this complex reality, the theoretical contributions to understand sustainability will always be incomplete, they are based on complex and even insufficient axioms. However, there is a strategy to assume complex phenomena that Morin recommends, "a radical awareness" (50, p. 27), which implies accepting that we are wrong all the time. We do not have certainties and constant variables beyond ignorance and uncertainty. reason is not the only way to solve complex problems, and the greatest threat humanity faces is its own inordinate knowledge blindness.

Society is complex, but this seems to be increasing since the modern capitalist economy mentioned in the previous section appeared, where the planet is a product and works, to a large extent, by processes associated with the use of technologies and scientific advances. However, multimodernity and complexity have been precursor conditions of the sustainability discourse. They provoke it (attending to its causes), they develop it (determining its beneficiaries), they continue it (despite its consequences) and they perpetuate it (ignoring its injured parties). What elements make up this discourse that arouses so much controversy? What interests does it serve? Who is promoting it?

5. Media culture of sustainability

One of the fields where the complexity of today's life is clearly observed is in and through the Media. All that chaos, ambiguity and uncertainty described by Morin (1990), manifests itself daily in the news, reports, interviews, photographs or videos that appear as truth or, in the best of cases, as relevant information.

For Luhmann (51) communicating something requires intermediaries, signs and / or codes between those who communicate or, otherwise, they will not be able to do so. To support this idea, Luhmann (52) reflects on the role of social systems (schools, governments and public institutions) and their relationship with culture. The German author says that these "social systems are not made up of men, nor by actions, but by communications [...]." And, if communication occurs through an exchange of these symbols or generalized codes, this indicates that they can also be used as key pieces to understand where it came from, how it was formed and how a certain discourse is understood in the future.

But, while Luhmann emphasizes the communicative process per se, Marxist critical theories emphasize the role of the media as a tool for the reproduction of the discursive

status quo. Marx (53, p. 30), said that "the ideas of the ruling class are, in all times, the ruling ideas" and, reflecting on this, the question would then have to be: who are the best payers? Those responsible for the transmission of news?

This tenant of Marxist criticism is a starting point to explain the transcendental role of the media in their desire to go beyond the transmission of information, which could lead us towards "a subordination of the other social sectors to the interests of the ruling class" (53, p. 30). Therefore, information is power.

Regarding the control of the discourse of sustainability, It agrees with Luhmann that communication needs to share codes, and it also coincides with the Marxist position that media power promotes and guides public policies from and towards certain interests, making public or hiding particular problems, focusing attention or disappearing nuances of realities that are or are not convenient for some. In this and in all public speeches, the media show continuity of power.

For Griffin (53, p. 25-26), the media is showing society a simple and reductionist version of reality that only serves to subordinate audiences to power. That is why "it is possible to see in the media messages, an unreal interpretation of the world, in such a way that, acting as an instrument of manipulation, the media help the masses to survive in difficult conditions."

This is the complex current reality, the media, which imposes topics of conversation based on press headlines (print or digital), on videos or digital platforms that turn reality to certain issues and hide and forget others, where priorities are established by those who pay, or those who make use of a great technological deployment.

However, mass communication does not only consist of transmitting codes. Rather, it consists of "discovering the mechanisms for capitalist society to control production, distribution, consumption and ideology, without having to resort to the coercive power of the State" (52). The media help to reproduce the dominant power, although nowadays, it is not necessarily held by the State.

García Canclini (9, p. 40), argues that "it is necessary to create new ways of raising claims between culture and power, between the logic of the market and symbolic production, between modernization and democratization", since the possibility for alternative models to be created and promoted by groups hitherto unconsidered depends on whether the absences of a discourse are made visible.

A study carried out by Thomas (54, p. p. 185), in which the press releases published by four Mexican newspapers with national circulation (Excelsior, Reforma, La Jornada and El Universal) were analyzed regarding sustainability, found that in 1972 (date of the first human development summit in Stockholm) 40 press releases related to sustainability were published (mainly columns, Sunday space, international section and on the front pages, with genres such as interviews, photographs, news and reports). By the 1992 Summit of the Land in Rio de Janeiro, the total of publications amounted to 228, highlighting science sections, editorials, cartoons, press releases, among others. In the third summit in Johannesburg in 2002, considered by many as a gray meeting, the number of notes decreased to 100. The 2012 Conference of the Parties (COP 16), held in Cancun, managed to attract more media attention, publishing 262 press releases. In total, this research found that 630 articles on sustainability were published in forty years of printed media discourse.

The most prominent topic of this analysis was negotiation processes, in addition to pollution and environmental problems in general. Issues around development itself were also discussed, along with sustainable alternatives, electricity reform and PEMEX,

international agreements and economic problems.

Today, a first search on the subject in virtual media shows about 18,900,000 results in just 0.56 seconds. Sustainability is no longer only of interest to print media, now that there are other types of access to information, such as blogs, web pages of social organizations, companies, governments, educational institutions, personal initiatives, products, international organizations, digital magazines. and many other options to get closer to the subject.

In the digital newspapers, we now find complete sections dedicated to the subject, such as La Jornada Ecológica, the News section on Sustainable Development in the newspaper The Economist or the News section on Sustainability in the newspaper Milenio. Among the most popular current issues are vaccination and profits for pharmaceutical companies, sustainable reforms for the financial sector and issues related to the gender gap, management audits with a sustainable approach, investments in green bonds and some citizen events to promote recycling, sustainable water management in government, analysis of the impact of mining on the environment, among many others. The diversity in topics is now indisputable. Moreover, broadcasts from social networks include specialized groups on the subject that number in the thousands.

Despite all the interest, emphasizing the concept of sustainability is not enough to mobilize citizen behavior. Various studies on environmental psychology show that context is also an important element for acquiring knowledge and relevance about doing (55). Knowledge must have a use value, therefore, Michelsen says (56, p. 6). "Objective knowledge alone does not reach, it must be established as a system of knowledge, that is, it must be linked to relationships, functions, processes. But the capacity for action exists only when you know how you can make use of that knowledge."

This means that the ability to make knowledge resonate is important, knowing how to put what we know to work is the real question. Everything that is disseminated about sustainability must be related to the generation of values, ethical orientations of the man-nature relationship, with direct experiences, emotionality and sensuality (56). Being able to link new experiences with previous ones, connect it with our values and current life experiences, will reveal the cultural and historical differences of points of view (56).

It is in this relationship between what we knew and what we learn, that dealing with complexity and openness in the discussion about sustainability stands out. If sustainability aspirations are focused on action, on critiquing reality, we depend on being able to recognize and reflect the perspective of our perception on that of others (56). One will have to ask how one can decipher the complex circumstances that, for each individual, may be relevant, perceiving and analyzing environmental problems and orienting them towards sustainable actions. Let us remember, from the section on discourse, Bolívar's (17, p. 22) perspective that "discourse is dialogue, because for interactions to exist, a self, a you, a we, and an other are needed."

Even though the media are having more and more interest and spaces to talk about sustainability, communication about environmental and sustainability issues will be successful when these issues are also properly institutionalized. The information and knowledge or know-how, ideas or alternatives to act must also have an institutional support structure for dissemination to occur. Well, as several studies have pointed out for a long time, information alone does not generate action (55), because "the idea that information could adapt more or less automatically in knowledge, opinions and behaviors, is refuted through different investigations (56).

As Enrique Leff (57, p. 8) states: "In the society of risk and insecurity in which we live, we can affirm that the imagery of terror is more focused on the reality of war and generalized violence than on the imminent danger of ecological collapse. It seems that the holocaust and genocides throughout human history have not been able to put an ethic of life before the interests of power; let alone a conscience that responds effectively to ecological risk or with a collective imagination that redirects its actions towards the construction of sustainable societies."

The above does not even take into account today's scenario regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, in which journalistic and media reports in general refer to the issue daily or several times a day. It is not only the speed of information that allows it, but the eagerness of society to know the details of medical advances and also government prescriptions, making it necessary to keep informed.

6. The True Indicators of Discourse

After so much information regarding a possible upcoming environmental collapse, in daily practice, the lack of communication is still common. Confrontation remains between different approaches that still doubt the data and the scientific evidence that seeks to link economic-environmental reflection from different disciplines. Naredo (58, p. 9) explains it by arguing that, behind the facade of scientific rationality, "there is an absent conflict between ideologies and preconceived values that use this discourse as a throwing weapon." He goes on to add: "We are so used to magnifying the rationalizing function of the economy that we tend to lose sight of the importance of its ideological function" (58, p. 9). This means that the economic system is rarely confronted with its consequences within a limited planet. The way of operating this system not only has certain rules that make it work, but an entire ideological apparatus that accompanies the creation of values and behaviors according to its maintenance.

This would be the true challenge of the sustainability discourse if it aspires to become a model that considers future forms of life with a minimum of conditions conducive to human survival. Naredo (58, p. 10) puts it bluntly, "what would happen if (this or our) rationalism [of the economic system] were increasingly empty and removed from the main conflicts of the present and served to divert attention from them and to disclose a conservative ideology of the status quo that generates them?".

The reality is that the most common threat to ever-decreasing populations is habitat loss and degradation. The Living Planet Report for the year 2016 indicates that the base of the planetary limits is being exceeded.
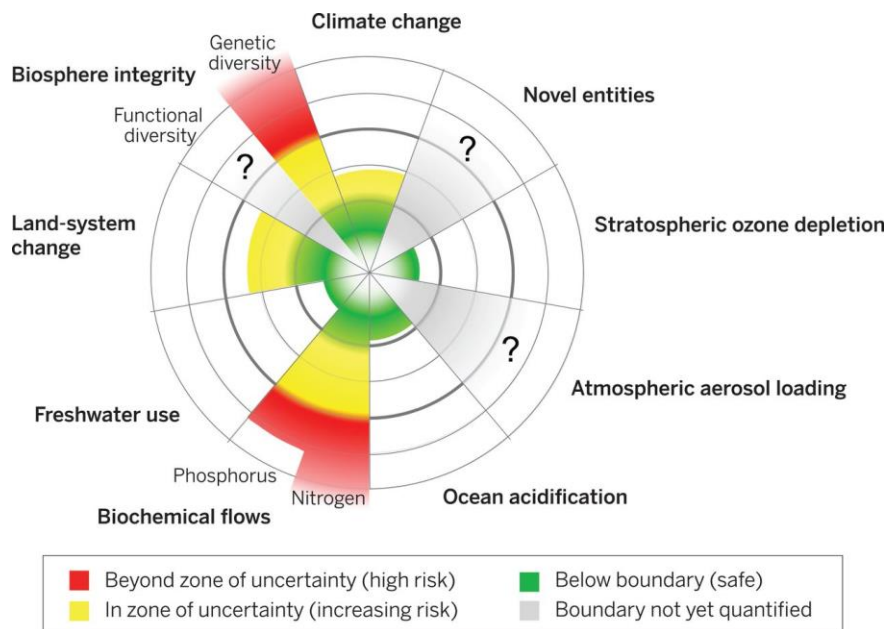
Figure 7. The planetary limits, their current state and the uncertainty ranges. (59)

Figure 7 exemplifies the alteration of biogeochemical cycles, which, regardless of where we are geographically, put at risk the provision of so-called ecosystem services, that is, the resources or services that we rely on nature for in order to satisfy our needs (drinking water, food, climate regulation, regulation of meteorological events, among others). It is true that, compared to the acidification of the loss of biodiversity (integrity of the biosphere) and alteration of biogeochemical cycles, climate change appears almost harmless.

Lovett et al (60), identified examples of the consequences of altered sulfur and nitrogen cycles in aquatic ecosystems; air pollution, which causes or contributes to acidifying water and eutrophication processes. In this regard, acidification is one of the great risks for the continuity of salmon fisheries in Norway (60) or the cultivation of mussels in areas of Spain.

In terrestrial ecosystems, air pollution also affects the proper functioning of the nitrogen, carbon, sulfur, water and oxygen cycle, causing, for example, acid rain in grasslands, alpine areas or wetlands. Additionally, evidence of the impact caused by tropospheric ozone on the photosynthesis function of plants, indicates that this phenomenon is limiting the growth of plants and crops.

The economic impact of such consequences is also significant. France, for example, in 2000 allocated around 2,400 million euros to repair damages described in the University of Karlsruhe study External costs of transport Accident, environmental and congestion costs in Western Europe (2000). According to the Lancet Commission on Pollution and Health (60) which issued its report on the global impact of environmental pollution, estimated economic cost of pollution on the environment exceeds 4.6 trillion dollars a year. Moreover, the same pollution in its various forms (water, air, soil, petrochemicals) kills nine million people per year (60) and is responsible for 16% of the deaths that occur on the planet (61).

The world looks like a failed system because it fails to link economic development, sustainability and social justice. Almost 92% of pollution-related deaths occur in countries with low-income levels, and in all countries of the world, diseases are concentrated in circles of poverty, minority and vulnerable groups (61).

An additional problem is that of social inequality and diversity of lifestyles. The media

have been in charge of spreading the idea that lifestyles are as diverse as there are human beings on the planet. This has been helped by the growing individualization, the differentiation of economic situations, such a differentiated education, the diversification of transport, among others. Therefore, it would be unlikely to find a single way to anchor sustainability within a single concept.

The concept of lifestyles, Huber and Reusswig (60) say, are joined by resources, modes of behavior, value orientations and models of behavior in life. For Beck (56, p. 5), "The conformation of different lifestyles is seen as a response to the individualization of society. Lifestyles are therefore not something like emancipatory life projects, but types of life models, which today differ particularly through the type of orientation in consumption."

Considering these concerns, political ecology is located at the limits of the environment and the space of the economy. The valorization of natural resources and environmental services. Conflict is handled to standardize values and processes of nature (symbolic, ecological, epistemological and political), which are really incommensurable to assign a market value. That is where the real conflict comes in, because society must play a leading role in this game of decisions related to distribution of the economic benefits derived from assigning a price to nature.

Some key questions remain. Is sustainability negotiated? How do all sectors establish their own interests vis-à-vis the global market? How do the interests of governments, companies, citizens, international organizations, environmentalists and the media coincide? Could science, in this case, be the best mediator or does it also have interests at stake? What is the real interest?

7. Conclusions

We are living through the crisis of a model that neither recognizes the finiteness of the planet, nor the absence of its borders, but favors an inexhaustible mode of production and a predatory lifestyle. However, when technology, science, politics, culture or society do not have the appropriate conditions to offer citizens alternatives to freely decide on their lifestyles, the only thing that remains is a change in ethos in the way of doing or acquiring things, customs and habits, building an alternative way of thinking with fairer societies, with greater participation, and less marginalization. Only then, perhaps, can the gap between what is desired and what is possible be closed.

What are the paradigms that are in crisis and which ones are being debated? After journeying through the historical conditions prior to the discourse of sustainability, knowing this concept to be in continuous evolution, analyzing various development models with such dissimilar purposes, it is possible to better understand the circumstances that sustainability originates from, the institutions that promote it, the reasons for its construction, as well as some theories that contribute to its understanding and nurture it. However, the interests to which these discourses obey remain hidden, not because the ruling classes are not recognized, but rather, as a good condition of complexity, even they are temporary.

Undoubtedly, when looking at the evolution of sustainability from a historical perspective, we will witness new models of development that are the same or more paradigmatic, promising to end the most serious problems of humanity. After 50 years of speeches, however, we have been able to verify that the most pressing problems have indeed changed. Some seem to have been completely eradicated and others are far from being discussed as present issues. Even so, Individualism remains the center of attention,

Rationalism the predominant gaze and Happiness a utopian carrot. But something did change. When the Renaissance and the Enlightenment arose in the 16th century, dominant thinking was based on a type of rationality, which is now increasingly questioned by more empathic and solidarity-based views. Happiness continues to be a main need of Man; his longed-for Aristotelian tea, part of his aims, but this requires more company than reason, it requires emotion, spirituality and above all compassion.

However, "a great social project such as sustainability, (...) without the motivating and guiding force of the action of feelings (cannot) be successful" (56, p. 27). Not just any kind of feelings, however. In communicating environmental and sustainability issues, the concepts so recurrent in the media today that rely on mixing danger, guilt and the apocalypse should be avoided, since these provoke fear, helplessness, stubbornness or resignation. Never raise the one-sidedness of feeling and do not lose sight of the interaction of perception, feeling, memory and thought.

Success in communicating sustainability should translate into improving human perception of the possible effects and consequences of their actions, transmitting socio-emotional action concepts that transform abstract environmental information into concrete objects to imagine the world (56). What is really at stake is not solving a health, housing, or pollution problem, but changing our worldview and hence our starting point for action. This is what is called a paradigm perception crisis.

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