

## APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ATTAINMENT

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In the second part of 20<sup>th</sup> century, international community agreed upon the concept of sustainable development as a leading development model. Many researches were undertaken and articles were written so far. Nevertheless, there is no unity in the definition of the very term “sustainable development”, nor in the ways of reaching the latter.

The concept of sustainable development is interpreted accordingly to one’s interests, overwhelmingly favouring one dimension over others, which leads to many different mechanisms and tools for moving towards sustainability invented.

All viewpoints on sustainable development attainment can be referred to one of two different approaches, namely reforming and transformational. Though one may consider more approaches to achieving sustainable development, we categorise only two groups with the aim of understanding conceptual difference between them.

First of all, every approach implies certain degree of sustainability – from weak to strong sustainability. Weak sustainability supposes that different kinds of capital are perfect substitutes, in other words, it is possible to replace natural capital with human-made one. Whereas strong sustainability requires maintaining each type of capital above its critical levels.

Furthermore, approaches differ by its nature, which is primarily ecocentric or anthropocentric, although both strives for human well-being. Thus, considering the degree of sustainability and the nature of approaches following matrix of approaches was built (Figure 1).

Reform approach suppose changes for sustainable development within current socio-economic system, which requires some reformation. While transformation approach implies that problems are rooted in fundamental features of present society. Therefore, the latter assumes changes in socio-economic system through political action and governance. The former sees changes through new technologies and economic tools, which is secured by business.

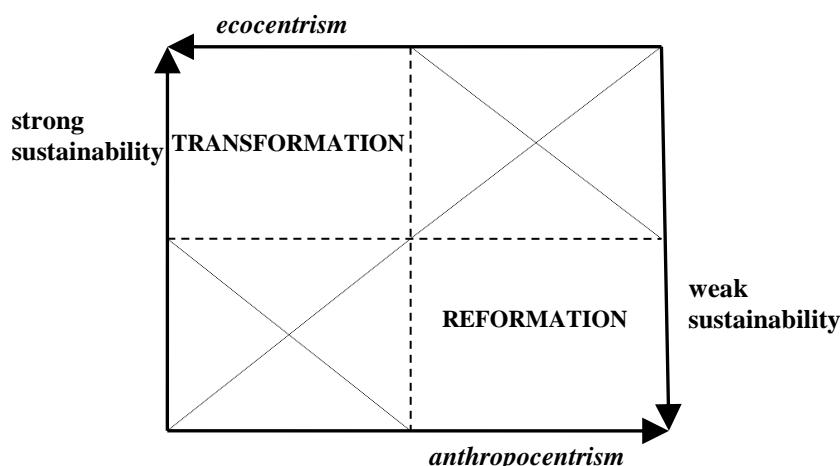


Figure 1. Matrix of conceptual approaches to sustainable development attainment

Reformists consider economic growth as the way of overcoming problems to do with reaching sustainable development. Consumer power concerned with sustainability issues increases GDP for all humanity. On the other hand, transformists suppose increased consumption needs of the poor, but achieved through redistribution rather than more growth. Consumption should be based on sufficiency criteria.

As well as that, approaches differ in its model of sustainability and therefore in the importance of one aspect of sustainability (economic, environmental, social, institutional) over another.

All considered differences are summarized in the Figure 2.

<b>Reformist group</b>	<b>Transformational group</b>
Reforming present socio-economic system, changes towards SD within it	Changes for SD in radically transformed socio-economic system
Root of the problem is in imbalances and lack of knowledge and information	Problem is in society based on the exploitation of most people and the environment by a small minority of people
Weak sustainability	Strong sustainability
Anthropocentric	Ecocentric
More economic growth – consumption approach	More (re)distribution – sufficiency approach
<div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> consumerism	<div style="text-align: center;">↓</div> non-material life experiences
Main element: technological change	Main element: assumption of control

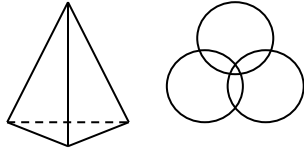
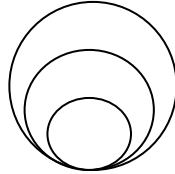
Business – driver towards sustainability Reduced role of government	Governance and public control – key role
Management techniques and economic tools	Political and social action
Three (four) pillar sustainability model (interlocking circles)	Nested sustainability model (concentric circles)
	
Non-human life managed by humans	Least interference in non-human life

Figure 2. Characteristics of conceptual approaches to sustainable development attainment