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Sustainability and sustainable development: Historical and conceptual review

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Abstract

The vagueness of the concept of sustainable development, coupled with its increasing importance in national, international and corporate policies, has led to a large political battle for influence over our future by linking interpretation to the concept. This has resulted in a wide variety of definitions and interpretations that are skewed towards institutional and group prerogatives rather than compounding the essence of the concept, which has been inherent in traditional beliefs and practices. A systematic analysis of representative definitions and interpretations presented in this article reveals that most of the contemporary definitions focus on specific elements while failing to capture the whole spectrum. Such a historical and conceptual analysis focusing on the analysis of the metaphorical and epistemological basis of the different definitions is believed to be the first step towards developing a concrete body of theory on



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