

## **Political Awareness and Participation in Development Interventions: A Bedrock for Social Sustainability?**

**Emenike PeterSixtus**

Department of International Development Management  
University of Westminster, London  
United Kingdom.

&

**Anthony Izuchukwu Ezeobele**

Department of Philosophy  
University of Lagos

### **Abstract**

*To achieve the transformative commitment to “Leave no one behind” of the Agenda 2030 of UN’s Sustainable Development implies adopting actions that recognize the importance of politics in development and putting inclusive power play into the development process and interventions. It stresses the importance of politics of self-determination in development. More so, the importance of agency and politics as a method for building development capacity in communities. This is so because, excluding political aspects from development debate would lead to misinterpretation of the real causes of underdevelopment. Using secondary data analyses, the paper has its grounds in the deep connection between development and politics, and in the need for practitioners to value it and reconsider it as an essential method for a successful project aiming at improving people’s lives. This paper argues that if the locals want to advocate for their needs, people need to be aware and informed of the political environment around them. Adopting Li’s concept of rendering technical, experts focus less on the political structures, they devise technical schemes in the form of technical matrixes that identify the problems and translate them and their solutions in the form of program designs and models which remain prescriptive devoid of participation by the people. But achieving social sustainability of projects demands citizen’s greater awareness and participation of what transpires in the intervention. The paper shows the importance of agency and politics as methods for building development capacity in the communities as well as the use of politically engaging methods as relevant practices towards sustainability of development interventions.*

**Keywords:** Political Awareness, Political Participation, Rendering Technical, Social Sustainability, Inclusion.

## **Introduction**

The underlying principle of Sustainable development, to “Leave no one behind” (LNOB), is a pivotal and transformative commitment that lies at the heart of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is an explicit commitment of all UN Member States to eradicate poverty in all its forms, end discrimination and exclusion, and reduce the inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind and undermine the potential of individuals and of humanity as a whole. It is not only significant in terms of geographical base, but it also extends to intersectional and interactional aspects of development processes and interventions. This is so because, many of the barriers people face in accessing services, resources and equal opportunities in participation and ownership of development interventions are not simply lack of availability of resources, but rather the result of power dynamics emanating from ‘expertise complex’, discriminatory laws, policies and social practices that diminish political confidence and leave particular groups of people behind in climbing the development ladder.

This article will examine the meanings and implications of political awareness and participation in formulation and implementation of development projects. With the research questions centering on the relationships between political awareness and participation towards social sustainability, the paper will expose possible gaps in the approach to development as supply-driven from a technocratic and donor-sided definition of interventions. How sustainable is a development intervention that is formulated without local participation and without inputs from the beneficiaries? What are the gaps in implementing such programs that problems were discovered and solutions proffered by experts with minimal contributions from the locals who have ‘lived-experience’ of the location?

In addition, the paper will highlight the relationship between development and politics and underline the importance of politics in development. It will explore the importance of studying and understanding the political context of the recipient civil societies before the enactment of a project or a program. This is so because, it has been shown that excluding the political and social aspects from the development debate is likely to lead to a misinterpretation of the real causes of underdevelopment (Carothers, 2013, Li, 2007).

Sequel to this, using Tania Li’s concept of rendering technical as theoretical framework, the paper will analyze the citizen’s participation in project cycle, to expose the defects and gaps in the system and the paper will suggest inclusive and socially sustainable methods which enhance the people’s understanding of their political and social environment, decision-making capabilities, and skills to implement their own development plan.

## **Review of Relevant Literature**

This section will elucidate political awareness and political participation. It will further link the two concepts together in order to explain the relationship between the two concepts in

understanding the social, political, and cultural occurrences in a given society. With this understanding, we will explain the meaning of Social Sustainability which gives a voice to the locals in development intervention and then establish a frame of reference that explains the implications of active participation of the people in any development intervention or provision of social services to a given society.

### **Political Awareness**

To explain what political awareness is, let us first explain what awareness means as a prelude to understanding what political awareness means. Awareness means the act of realizing and understanding. Awareness is the individual's perception of him/herself and of his/her surrounding environment (Al Faitouri, 2020, p. 133). More so, it is the overall individual's outlook, understanding, knowledge and assessment of events. It grows and develops with the growth and development of the individual's life and therefore results from the various social, political, and cultural factors affecting the individual. By implication, the more improvement in the social and cultural milieu results in the higher political awareness of individual in the society (Abonu, Ogunlade, & Yunusa, 2013).

Politics is about mobilizing support for, and consent to, action in the context of diverse, and sometimes competing interests and may involve either collaboration or competition depending on purpose. This involves building alignment and alliances, strategic direction, and scanning (Hartley et al., 2013, p.18). In this context then, political awareness is primarily a function of acquiring knowledge about politics (Amer 2009, p. 351). It is the responsiveness and knowledge of political strength in the community (Kholisoh, et al., 2019, p.131). It means access to political information, political participation, media exposure, interest in politics and education, with political information being the best indicator overall. It has also been defined as the interlocking set of knowledge, interest, and participation (Fiske et al. 1983).

Political awareness then means the citizen's knowledge of his/her political rights and duties, of the events and incidents happening around him/her in addition to his/her capability of wholly recognizing the state of affairs around him/her as a comprehensive truth whose elements are intertwined rather than separate incidents or distanced events (Kavita, 2017, pp 66-67).

It is the understanding of the members of the society of their rights and responsibilities in the face of occurrences in the society with a view of building a just and better society to the best of their knowledge and capabilities at any given instance. It is one of the main pillars upon which the social, political, and cultural systems of any society is based such that ignoring it throughout the process of construction and reconstruction of the state will inevitably mean a baseless constructure that will collapse whenever the state is faced with any crisis involving within the state or with other states whatever the size of the political or demographic construction (Fairbrother, 2003).

According to Zaller (1992, p. 126), political awareness means “the extent to which an individual pays attention to politics and understands what he or she has encountered”. It reflects “intellectual or cognitive engagement with public affairs” (ibid.), as indicated by factual information about government and politics that has gotten into people’s minds”. Political awareness operates in the political information exchange between the individual and various sources of political messages communicated in the public space. It is commonly understood as an important asset, which determines people’s engagement with politics and how political awareness might be a key asset, which determines participation and active citizenship (Solhaug et al, 2018). So, political awareness is a force for good, and for getting things done in organisations, and it is an essential skill in life.

Also, for Surbakti (2007, p.144), political awareness is the consciousness of the rights and obligations as a citizen. The level of political awareness means a sign that community members pay attention to state and/or development affairs (Budiardjo, 1985, p.22). There are four indicators of awareness (Soekanto, 1982), each of which constitutes a phase for subsequent phase and points to a certain level of awareness, ranging from the lowest to the highest, namely knowledge, understanding, stance, and behaviour (action) pattern. For Wilson (2013) as quoted in Dioso, M. (2019), there are five levels of political awareness, namely: politically illiterate, misinformed person, general awareness people, activists, and political experts. These levels are basically influenced on how and what elements influenced the knowledge of people with regards to politics.

From the foregoing it is evident that, being politically aware and empowered to participate in the political terrain of what happens within an individual’s purview and affecting the decisions thereof implies having access to prepare the individual’s capabilities, to probate his/her will, to consolidate his/her feeling of freedom and to boost the individual’s self -esteem in order to develop the human potentials towards active participation in achieving sustainable change and transformation in the society (Al-Khaza’leh, & Lahiani, 2021, p.205). Political awareness is simply an understanding of these ‘power webs’ and an ability to navigate them, and therefore get things done (SkillsYouNeed, 2021).

Political awareness is built and develops through some stages. These stages signify the transpires within the individual and the society that gives rise to the consciousness of the political, social, and cultural sensitivities in the society and the responsiveness of the individual to recognize and contribute in what happens in the society.

In the first place, political awareness operates on the theoretical level. This involves either conscious or unconscious generation of ideologies imbedded in the social, political, and cultural environment an individual lives such as cultural values, political events, and social norms. This occurs at the theoretical level in three phases, namely; the phase of knowledge, perception, and discovery, during which the individual is disposed to perceiving and understanding truths directly and which shows the readiness to admit the ideas, determine them, analyze, and select them.

Then, the second stage is that of political interest. This is kindled by the ideas the individual has analyzed and selected. Here, the individual shows interest in the community s/he belongs. This comes with the notion of obedience, acceptance, and the sense of belonging to the community becomes deep-rooted in the individual. This might be reflected through the acceptance and conformity to the numerous norms, deeds, rights, responsibilities, and activities the community stipulates for the individual for the harmonious living in the society.

The third phase is that of political adherence. Under this stage, political awareness requires that the individual observes and engages intellectually or religiously to a particular group, institution, or political establishment. The adherence to these institutions may sometimes make the individuals' awareness to some objectives benefiting the authority or institution the individual belongs to. For instance, when these institutions are compulsory, like in a school setting, the official awareness of the authority is reflected on that of the students so that they would defend and justify it. However, the individual's adherence to optional groups makes it difficult for the authority to control the awareness of individuals, and the organized awareness of the individuals often emerges in the case of confrontation with the authority (William, & Anthony, 2017).

In addition, political awareness can arise on a practical level. In this case, it results from the knowledge and experiences an individual has accumulated from the environment around him/her which then translates into practical ways of living. The knowledge and experiences influence the practical ways the individual lives and responds to events within the society. This in turn is manifested through the individual's contribution to the political process which sometimes leads to the authority's approval of the students' requests and desires. (William, & Anthony, 2017).

Sequel to this, if political awareness is a factor that helps with political practice, then its role is contingent on a number of conditions mainly the feeling of political aptitude. Political aptitude is a state of the mind felt by the individual which has the capability to understand the important aspects of the social systems in a society and has the dexterity to support and promote them. This also entails an understanding of the wrong aspects of the system and criticizes then to reveal the shortcomings and negative effects on the individual and the community.

Political awareness leads to readiness for political participation. That is, the individual's awareness necessitates that the effective practice of political freedom requires the individual to work hand in hand with other members of the political community in order to contribute to enlisting policies and decisions and choosing rulers that guides the way of life in the society.

This leads also to mutual intellectual tolerance. The willingness of the individual to contribute to formulation and implementation of policies and decisions in a fair and equitable manner.

In addition, political awareness necessitates individuals to show positive feelings towards occurrences in the state that governs him/her without waiting for the authorities to issue laws and orders or use conceive means to induce the individual to participate in the good of the society.

Also, political awareness makes the individual to respect the principles guiding the society irrespective of the performance of the leadership of the community, the individual will in a civil manner respect the ultimate principle that underlies the philosophy of the community. This makes the individual to be civil always even when s/he wants to protest, it is done in a civil and non-violent manner. This in turn leads to mutual trust among the citizens. Not only trust between the ruler and the ruled, novice and expert, but among other members of the society so far, they share the same guiding principles and philosophy of life (Fiske & Donald, 2000).

From the foregoing, we can deduce that political awareness is one of the main necessities of life because, it opens up avenues for initiation, understanding, analyses of the way of life in a given society. It also creates political freedom, mutual tolerance, obedience, appreciation of the guiding principles and philosophy of life of the people, it builds mutual trusts and facilitates political participation towards a just, fair, and sustainable society.

### **Political Participation**

Political participation can be loosely defined as citizens' activities affecting politics (van Deth, 2001, p.1). Political participation simply means that a person is participating in the political process by making his or her opinions and beliefs known. It is an action taken by a citizen to influence the outcome of a political issue. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs (UN, 2001)

Political participation includes a broad range of activities through which people develop and express their opinions on the world and how it is governed and try to take part in and shape the decisions that affect their lives (NCBI, 2010). This can include voting, protest, public consultation, signing a petition, writing a letter to a public official, blogging about a political issue, donating money to a cause, volunteering for a campaign, joining an activist or interest group, or holding a public official position. Barnes et al (1979) would opine that dissent, disapproval, rejection, and provocation are evidently expressions of citizens' interests and opinions and therefore should be included in the repertoire of democratic political participation. Thus, the newer forms of participation also included many protest actions organized by upcoming "New Social Movements" initiated by pacifist, ecological, squatters', and women's groups.

Political participation has some characteristics that are worth mentioning. It is an activity (or action), it is voluntary and not ordered by a ruling class or obliged under some law. It is the activities of people in their roles as nonprofessionals or amateurs and not, say, as politicians, civil servants, or lobbyists. It concerns government, politics, or the state in broad senses of these words and is not restricted to specific phases (such as parliamentary decision-making processes or executing laws) or to specific levels or areas (such as national elections or contacts with party officials). Thus, any voluntary, nonprofessional activity concerning government, politics, or the state is a specimen of political participation (van Deth, 2001, p.3). So, nonprofessional, voluntary activities that are not located in or targeted at the sphere of

government/state/politics can be considered as modes of political participation if they are aimed at solving collective or community problems. (Van Deth, 2001, p.10).

Thus, the recent expansions of the repertoire of political participation in democratic societies seem to be based on a shift in the nature of involvement. As such, refusals to buy a specific brand of a product, volunteering in a movement, being a member of a sports club, or posting a blog on a topic that affects the lives of the society are not specimens of political participation, but nonpolitical activities that can be used for political purposes. Though social engagement are specimens of political participation, these activities need not require some organization or coordinated action. Surely, to be effective a large number of people should behave in a similar way, but they can all act individually, separately, and with distinct aims and motivations.

Going further to explain political participation and its varied influence on public policy, Ramlan Surbakti, as quoted by Cholisin (2012, p. 150), suggests that political participation as a form of ordinary citizen's participation in making any decision related to or having an impact on his/her life. Miriam Budiarjo, (in Cholisin 2007, p. 150) further elucidates that political participation can be defined as the activity of an individual or a group of individuals to take an active part in political life by choosing a state leader that will directly or indirectly affect public policy. The typology of political participation as an activity is distinguished into active participation, passive participation and abstain (Rahman, 2007, p. 288).

Political participation is relevant for any political system, but it is an indispensable feature of democracy: "Where few take part in decisions there is little democracy; the more participation there is in decisions, the more democracy there is" (Verba & Nie, 1972, p. 1). Political participation is one of the essential aspects of democracy. Political participation is a typical characteristic of political modernization. (Kholisoh, et al, 2019, p.131).

In order to be engaged in influencing the outcome of the functioning of the society and taking part in decision making and implementation, three key components are involved which facilitate political participation. They are resources; engagement; and recruitment. Resources such as time, money, and civic skills are considered essential to a person or group's capacity to engage in political activities. The concept of engagement in this model involves several key psychological conditions. To be involved, people must want to participate, have a strong sense of self-efficacy, and feel personally fulfilled and connected to others. Additional indicators of engagement here include identification with a political party and family background of political activity; having politically active parents is considered a predictor for greater engagement than having politically inactive parents. Finally, recruitment entails asking and encouraging people to participate in political activity. Typically, recruitment occurs within the context of faith-based communities, workplaces, or voluntary associations. (Ostrander et al, 2018, p.45).

After explaining what political awareness and participation, how they grow and develop towards the active engagement with the political, social, and cultural aspects of the life of a community, the question remains, is there a relationship between the two concepts.

The next subsection will try to outline the correlation between political awareness and political participation and how these can be harnessed towards a sustainable society that encourages community-based development.

### **Relationship between Political awareness and Political Participation**

Politics is defined as the mobilization of support for a position, decision, or action whereby people act together through institutionalized procedures to resolve differences, deliberate together, analyze occurrences, to conciliate different interests and values, and to make public policies in the pursuit of common purposes (Leftwich, 2004, p.14). In this regard, politics is a pursuit of common interests wherein collective effort from the public, private sector, and the government is needed to achieve common purposes. This involves being conscious of what is happening around in the society, being empowered to engage with the occurrences and being able to take part in the decision, formulation of policies and implementation thereof.

According to Althubetat & Jarrar (2013), the degree of awareness of individuals in any community affects the development of the state. They further added that man is both the means and purpose for development; the more the individual in the community is aware of his abilities and potentials, the more contribution is manifested in the field of development. Thus, awareness in politics and governance is an essential factor for social progress and prosperity (Dioso, 2019, p.1) which necessitates participation to influence the outcome of what happens around the society.

Political participation can be understood as voluntary rather than coerced activities of persons in political affairs such as voting, membership and activities connected with political groups, political parties, and political bodies. Therefore, it stands to reason that people who are unfamiliar with politics and related issues would be less interested to participate (Kuotsu, 2016).

Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. In connection with this, those who engage in political discussions with others usually show an interest in politics and some level of knowledge (Kuotsu, 2016). Public forums are conducted so that people will be familiar with the candidates.

Such critical consciousness may foster empowerment, which can increase political participation (Ostrander et al, 2015) fulfilling their obligation to the society. The consciousness develops and grows into active involvement in the occurrences in the polity to influence and be influenced by the decisions thereof for the growth and development of the society.

Political participation is generally considered to be symbolic of the extensiveness to which democratic ideals are applied (Rani, 2001). This extensiveness begins with political awareness which raises questions about what is happening in the society and these questions make an

individual to be engaged in the political as well as social and cultural aspects of the development of the society.

### **Social Sustainability**

Social Sustainability is an inclusive approach to development where the citizens have a voice in the social, political, and cultural development and the government listens to their contributions to these aspects of their life. It is aimed at addressing the long-lasting barriers to development, strengthening the focus on people who have been excluded from economic and social opportunities, and increasing investment in inclusive growth (World Bank, 2021).

The key words are inclusive and resilient society. It expands the horizons of opportunities to accommodate socio-economic and environmental sustainability and it is critical for poverty-reduction and shared prosperity. Thus, creating opportunities for all people and addressing deep rooted systemic inequalities.

According to the World Bank (2021) the core tenet of social sustainability and inclusion's work is to help people, regardless of their gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability, overcome obstacles that prevent them from fully participating in society and supporting their efforts to shape their own future. It does so by working with governments, communities, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders to create more inclusive societies, empower citizens, and foster more resilient and peaceful communities.

This is so because, inequality, persistent discrimination and exclusion of the poor comes at a high cost to both the people and the communities. So, to offset this cost, social sustainability and inclusion creates opportunities for the people to have a voice and participate fully in markets, services, technologies, and society. This means empowering people to be the focus and drivers of their development.

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **The Concept of 'Rendering Technical'**

In the sections that follow, we draw on Tania Li's (2007) concept of the 'rendering technical' of development, a concept in which she combines the insights of Foucault and Gramsci in order to study development projects as outcomes of both diffuse forms of power relations and wider political-ideological struggles (Doucette, & Müller, 2016, p. 32). Drawing heavily on Foucault's concept of governmentality, Li argues that experts encapsulated in trustees (experts, planners, authorities) more often than not seek to render the process of development into a technical or apolitical process by simplifying complex political-economic relations into intelligible fields for intervention (Li, 2007, p.7).

Rendering technical is the "extracting from the messiness of the social world" (Li, 2007b, p.3) in a framework with interventions that would supposedly yield results and bring about positive impacts in people's lives. It means reducing complex social and political situations to a matter

of bureaucratic, technological, and organizational interventions (Ferguson, 1994, p. 256). They are those practices through which experts define a problem and circumscribe its boundaries in such a way that social forces can be managed, and technical solutions applied. Through this, experts exclude from their diagrams the processes that impoverish people and focus on the conduct of the poor. They highlight symptoms and correlations, rather than exploring the social relations that cause these conditions. At the long run, the result is to confirm that poor people are responsible for their own fate and should pull themselves up by their own bootstraps and/or take the initiative to move to areas of high growth and new opportunities.

Through rendering technical, development experts focus less on the political structures and alienate the local populace in the process of making decisions that affect the development of the people. They fail to bring the people into focus as they tend to foster their selfish interests instead of helping the locals towards economic independence.

Development issues like poverty, inequality, discrimination, and gender are framed as technical problems of growth and participation (Doucette, & Müller, 2016, p. 32), these are then the problems that can be resolved by those same experts who possess the desired technical know-how and solutions and who can diagnose and select the ‘correct’ institutional or material inputs to bring about the desired change.

In the same vein, though development is rendered technical or anti-political, its practice remains inherently prescriptive in the sense that it is considered to create socio-economic ‘improvements’ to a social and physical landscape that has been found lacking by experts, planners, authorities encapsulated in trustees who are in charge of identifying the “problem” and devising the desired “solutions”. Thus, they diagnose deficiencies in landscapes and populations, and devise technical schemes in the form of technical matrixes that identifies the problem, translates the problem in the form of program designs and models that is curated for the purpose of development intervention. So, in the long run, development projects thus remain political because their interventions encourage the power of elite and expert actors over the development process by strategically employing particular kinds of expert knowledge and policy narratives to exclude other social forces and secure hegemony.

It is important to point out that, Li argues that two key practices are involved in devising improvement or development projects. The first is the practice of problematization, or identification and bounding of the deficiencies to be rectified by the expert. This identification of a problem is intimately linked to the availability of a solution (Li, 2007, p. 7). The second aspect is devising development interventions which is the practice of “rendering technical.”

So, the effect of this encounter between technical development interventions and local conditions is that development projects rarely proceed as intended, and most never reach their stated objective(s). Instead, such projects generate side effects such as the development of new social conflicts, the expansion of bureaucratic state power (Ferguson, 1994, pp. 254–255), and the proliferation of the (trans)national development apparatus (Li, 2007, p.15). This apparatus is sometimes planned and executed to as an offshoot of the intervention by the experts.

Though rendering technical seeks to resolve development gaps in communities by making invisible problems visible and framed within a matrix with solutions, in the long run it leads to social conflict and internal agitation within the local populace because the formulations of the problems and solutions fail to recognize the political awareness and participation of the local population. So, satisfying the will to improve and a common sense of justice means combining technocratic expertise with an understanding of the legitimate claims of local parties. It implies taking on board the political participation in development intervention.

### **The Effects of Political Awareness and Participation on Social Sustainability vis-à-vis 'Rendering Technical'**

Expert formulation of problems and identification of solution devoid of participation from the locals may lead to identification of the wrong problem which leads to using a set of wrong solutions to the problem. When some experts use the one-size-fits-all framework to diagnose problems that may be peculiar to a given geographical region and impose the solutions thereof on another location, the outcome will be a compounding of problems that will alienate the people and demean the development intervention.

By rendering technical, the experts focus on the symptoms and correlations, rather than exploring the social relations that cause these conditions, they dwell on the periphery rather than the root causes of the problem. But by getting the people involved in the diagnoses of the problem, they will understand the different ramifications of what gave rise to the problem and how they can be addressed systematically. Any development intervention that does not deal with the root causes of the problem in any particular geographical location will be chasing symptoms instead of the root causes of the problem.

Most times, the locals have more knowledge of the solutions of the problems in their locality, depending on the circumstance, they may need fine tuning of their 'lived experience' to tackle the problem, or analysis of the problem with them in a systematic manner, or they may need a 'push' to get the problem solves. In either of the cases, excluding them from analysis of the problem and solution may be disastrous to the nature and outcome of the intervention.

The foregoing implies that there is politics in development intervention, and this should be respected and utilized to the benefit of the development processes at any given time and location. Any community that a project is to be cited has their own existing political structures, they have their power play whether and this has to be studied and brought on board in the formulation and implementation of any successful development intervention. Failure to do this, may result in compounding of a simple mechanism of development intervention. So, any intervention that fails to bring the people into focus is disastrous in its nature in the same way, any intervention that tend to foster the vested interests of the those in position of trusteeship (experts, planners, and authorities) instead of helping the locals towards economic independence, will make complex a simple process of development intervention. It will reverse

the outcome of what is supposed to alleviate the predicament of the people. Such an intervention will achieve a different objective from its intended objectives.

But when the encounter between technical development interventions and local conditions sprouts and grows mutually and is aligned well devoid of vested interests, the development project thereof will be owned by the people, the level of participation and understanding of the project will be high from both ends and the goals and objectives of the project will be effectively delivered. When this is the case, the will to improve is satisfied because, a healthy balance is reached combining technocratic expertise with an understanding of the legitimate claims of local parties. It implies taking on board the political participation in the development intervention (Li, 2007).

It follows that, political awareness, and consequently citizen participation, are important as factors contributing to community capacity, which is the aptitude of a community to actively develop proposals and to plan strategically on the long term while relying on specific mechanisms and infrastructures that facilitate this type of input (McGuire et al., 1994). Community capacity's aim is to expand and improve every aspect of its citizens' lives; Flint's (2013) succinctly puts it thus, "without capacity, communities are merely collections of individuals", because their existence isn't fruitful in any meaningful sense for their own development. Not only civic capacity is important on its own, but it is also the bedrock of economic development and of a community's stewardship of its traditions and assets (Flint, 2013).

Moreover, we can consider capacity as made of these three different components: commitment, resources, and skills. In this case political awareness is helpful in enhancing the commitment of the community to promoting actions that benefit its well-being on the long term. In the same vein, given that community-based projects are oftentimes focused on a short-term goal, as, for example, the building of a new schools or health facility, political sophistication of the citizens can help in maintaining the leadership active and healthy for the achievement of goals on the long term (Flint, 2013). The aim of development is in fact to provoke a cycle of long-lasting social radical transformation, building up social sustainability, not only to fix the tangible and most noticeable problems in the present.

Some scholars argue that this type of projects are very often controlled not by the community as a whole but by a few leaders belonging to the elite (Mansuri & Rao, 2004). If people had the chance to be acquainted with the policy-making process and with the political environment, they would be able to raise their own issues and requests instead of being spoken for by a few representatives, losing part of their agency. Under this situation, the project is socially sustainable.

Social sustainability gives voice to the people, it gives opportunities to the people to participate actively to decisions that affects their lives. When projects are formulated and implemented the people participate in different ways not necessarily through their representatives, but they have avenues to put in their suggestions which are taken on board and addressed during the

implementation of the project. In this case, rendering technical becomes facilitating technical, an expert becomes a facilitator, an enabler in the field to coordinate people and accompany them to identify problems and needs of the people and guide them to proffering solutions to the problems. So, the expert/planner works with the governments, communities, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders to create more inclusive societies, empower citizens, and foster more resilient and peaceful communities.

## **Conclusion**

Social inclusion in development process and intervention improves the capabilities of the people, ownership of the project and hands the agency of the development process to the people. This implies that any development intervention that is deprived of inclusive participation by the local populace is rendering technical. It forecloses opportunities for bottom-top inputs into the project, it alienates the people from being part of the system that affects their future, it creates a barrier to the ownership of the project by the people, it breeds social conflict in the community, and it builds barricades to socially sustainable development because the development process lacks the voice of the people which is the essential pillars that the foundation of any development intervention is built on. This implies that, for a project to be sustainable, it has to focus on the people's conscious participation. The power play should not exclude the inputs from the local population. If it does exclude the people, then, it may render the wrong diagnosis of the problems as well as the solutions to the problems.

So, regardless of their gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, or disability, full participation of the people in the decisions that affects their life in the society should be paramount in formulation and implementation of any effort to shape their future. Thus, creating opportunities for all people and addressing deep rooted systemic inequalities.

The legitimate claims of 'lived experience' from the side of the locals when confronted with rendering technical from experts begs for a synthesis that would have a strong backing by both efforts and inputs. The outcome would be a formidable collections of long-lasting development that would ensure ownership of interventions as well as focus political interests in the right direction.

On the other hand, a one-sided formulation and delivery of a development intervention, would give rise to a social conflict that would derail the objectives of the project. It will deny the people their voices in the project and would alienate them from owning the project which in the long run will affect the objectives of the intervention.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the use of politically engaging methods is one of the most relevant practices that can support a horizontal and inclusive participation as well as ownership and achievement of set objectives of any development intervention.

## References

- Abonu, D., Ogunlade, F., & Yunusa, B. (2013). "Assessment of Political Awareness among students of Social Studies in Nigerian Secondary Schools for citizenship". *International Journal of Education and Research*, 1(12)
- Al Faituri, S. (2020). "The level of political awareness among the students of the college of education at Sirt University", *Magazine of political sciences and law*, Vol (1) 20, pp. 130-153
- Alkire, S. (No date). *The Capability Approach and Human Development*. University of Oxford. <https://www.ophi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/OPHI-HDCA-SS11-Intro-to-the-Capability-Approach-SA.pdf>
- Al-Khaza'leh, M. & Lahiani, H. (2021). University and Political Awareness among Students: A Study in the Role of University in Promoting Political Awareness. *Journal of Educational and Social Research Vol 11 No 2*. Retrieved on November 20, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2021-0041>
- Althubetat, Q. & Jarrar, A. (2013). *The Impact of Teaching Political Science on Political Awareness of Petra University Students: a Jordanian Case*. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The-Impact-of-Teaching-Political-Science-on-of-a-Althubetat-Jarrar/9c219267fea88ad2bfcf57bb1a37d98d2f3fea03>
- Amer, M. (2009). Political Awareness and its Implications on Participatory Behaviour: A Study of Naga Women Voters in Nagaland. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 16:3 (2009): 359–374 SAGE Publications Los Angeles/London/New Delhi/Singapore/Washington DC DOI: 10.1177/097152150901600303
- Barnes, S., Kaase, M., Allerbeck, K., Farah, B., Heunks, F., Inglehart, R., Kent Jennings, M., Klingemann, H., Marsh, A., & Rosenmayr, L. (1979). *Political action: Mass participation in five Western democracies*. SAGE.
- Budiarjo, M. (1985). *Dasar Ilmu Politik*. Jakarta: Gramedia
- Carothers, T. & Gramont, D. (2013) *Development aid confronts politics: the almost revolution*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <http://ludwig.lub.lu.se/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=cab07147a&AN=lub.3107031&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Cholisin, Nasiwan. (2012). *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Politik*. Yogyakarta: Ombak.
- Dioso, M. (2019). *Political Awareness and Participation of Public Administration Student of OMSC*. Retrieved November 15, 2021, from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3702100>
- Doucette, J. & Müller, A. (2016). Exporting the Saemaul spirit: South Korea's Knowledge Sharing Program and the 'rendering technical' of Korean development. *Geoforum* (75)29–39.

- Fairbrother, G. 2003. "The Effect of Political Education and Critical Thinking on Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese university student National Attitudes". *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 24(5), 153-178
- Ferguson, J. (1994). *The Anti-Politics Machine: 'Development,' Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fiske, S., Donald R., Kinder, W & Larter, M. (1983). 'The Novice and the Expert: Knowledge Based Strategies in Political Cognition', *The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 19(4): 381–400.
- Fiske, S. T., & Donald R. (2000) "The Novice and the Expert: Knowledge Based Strategies in Political Cognition" *The Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 19(4): 381–400
- Flint, R.W. (2013) 'Building Capacity for Community Change', in Flint, R.W. (ed.) *Practice of Sustainable Community Development: A Participatory Framework for Change*. New York, NY: Springer, pp. 197–212. doi: 10.1007/978-1-4614-5100-6\_8.
- Hartley, J., Alford, J., Hughes, O. and Yates, S. (2013). *Leading with Political Astuteness: A White Paper*. London: Chartered Management Institute. Retrieved from: [tinyurl.com/hartley-whitepaper](http://tinyurl.com/hartley-whitepaper).
- Kavita, P. (2017). "A study of political awareness among senior secondary school students in Fatehabad district". *International Journal of Information Movement*, 1(12).
- Kholisoh, N., Yuliawati, E., Suci, N., & Suharman, T. (2019). The Influence of Political Messages in New Media to Political Awareness and Its Impact on the Political Participation of Millennial Generation. *Journal Komunikasi Ikatan Sarjana Komunikasi Indonesia, Vol.4 (2)*, 128-139 Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.25008/jkiski.v4i2.333>
- Kuotsu, K. (2016). Political Awareness and Its Impact in Political Participation: A Gender Study in Nagaland, India. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development*. Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <http://www.ijird.com/index.php/ijird/article/download/99378/71923>
- Leftwich, A. (2004). *What is Politics*. Cambridge. Polity Press Ltd.
- Li, T. M. (2007) Practices of assemblage and community forest management. *Economy and society*, 36(2): 263-293. Retrieved November 22, 2021, from <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/03085140701254308>.
- Li, T. M. (2007). *The will to improve: Governmentality, development, and the practice of politics*. Duke University Press.

- Mansuri, G. and Rao, V. (2004) 'Community-Based and -Driven Development: A Critical Review', *The World Bank Research Observer*, 19(1), pp. 1–39. doi:10.1093/wbro/lkh012.
- McGuire, M., Rubin, B., Agranoff, R., & Richards, C. (1994) 'Building Development Capacity in Nonmetropolitan Communities', *Public Administration Review*, 54(5), pp. 426–433. doi: 10.2307/976427.
- National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) (2010). Community-Based Rehabilitation: CBR Guidelines. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK310967/>
- Ostrander, J., Bryan, J., Westfield, S., & Nieman, P. (2018). The political participation of first-year social work students: Does practice specialization matter? *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323216194>
- Ostrander, J., Sandler, A. & Nieman, P. (2015). "The Influence of Professional Identity and level of empowerment on political participation of MSW students", a paper presented at the *Society for Social Work and Research 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference*, (1)14-18.
- Rahman, H.I. (2007). *Sistem Politik Indonesia*. Graha Ilmu: Yogyakarta.
- Rani, J.J. (2001). *Political Awareness and Political Participation of Women (1986-1999) in Guntur District*. Retrieved November 12, 2020, from <http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/handle/10603/71367> on February 16, 2019
- SkillsYouNeed (2021). *Political Awareness*. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/political-awareness.html>
- Soekanto, Soerjono. (1982). *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo
- Solhaug, T., Denk, T., Olson, M., & Kristensen, N. N. (2018). Political Awareness, Concept and Measurement. Paper presented at *ECPR General Conference*, Hamborg, Germany.
- Surbakti, Ramlan. (2010). *Memahami Ilmu Politik*. Jakarta: Grasindo
- United Nations (2001) *Chapter 3. Political Participation*. Retrieved November 17, 2021 from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/publication/Chapter3.htm>
- van Deth, J. (2001). *What Is Political Participation?* Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.68>
- Verba, S., & Nie, N. (1972). *Participation in America: Political democracy and social equality*. Harper & Row.
- William, B. & Anthony, P. (2007). "High School Students and their Political views" *National Social Science Association*. Retrieved November 16, 2021, from <https://www.nssaus/journals/2007-28-1/2007-28-13.htm>

World Bank (2021). *Social Sustainability*. Retrieved November 17, 2021, from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/socialsustainability/overview>

Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Zaller, J. (1990). Political awareness, elite opinion leadership, and the Mass survey response. *Social Cognition*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 1990, pp 125-153