

Reconsidering and reclaiming economic development options for northern contexts:

The case for decolonizing economic development approaches for rural reinvestment and sustainable rural development



Anita Vaillancourt, PhD
Assistant Professor
School of Social Work
Lakehead University



Pelham Matthews, MBA
Associate Professor
Chair, Faculty of Business
& Economics
Algoma University



Economic Development Approaches in Northern Contexts

- Economic stabilizing and destabilising factors in northern contexts
- Natural resource-based relations and dissociations



Image: Dax Melmer

Colonial economic development approaches, pathways, and trajectories

- The settler colonial legacy and approaches to economic development
- Enduring conceptualisations of growth
- Measures of success & universalist thinking



Image: City of Sault Ste. Marie

Sustainability and possibilities for economic development re-orienting

- Measures of return - Quality of life versus wealth maximization
- Sustainability metrics
- The Great Value Reset: Aligning sustainability, social, political, cultural, and economic principles



Image: Martin Lortz

Sustainable Economic Planning in Dubreuilville and Sault Ste. Marie

Case 1: Dubreuilville



Image: Creative Commons; License: CC-BY-SA 3.0

Case 2: Sault Ste. Marie Airport



Image: Saultonline.com



Image: Creative Commons; License: CC-BY-SA 3.0



Image: Sootoday.com



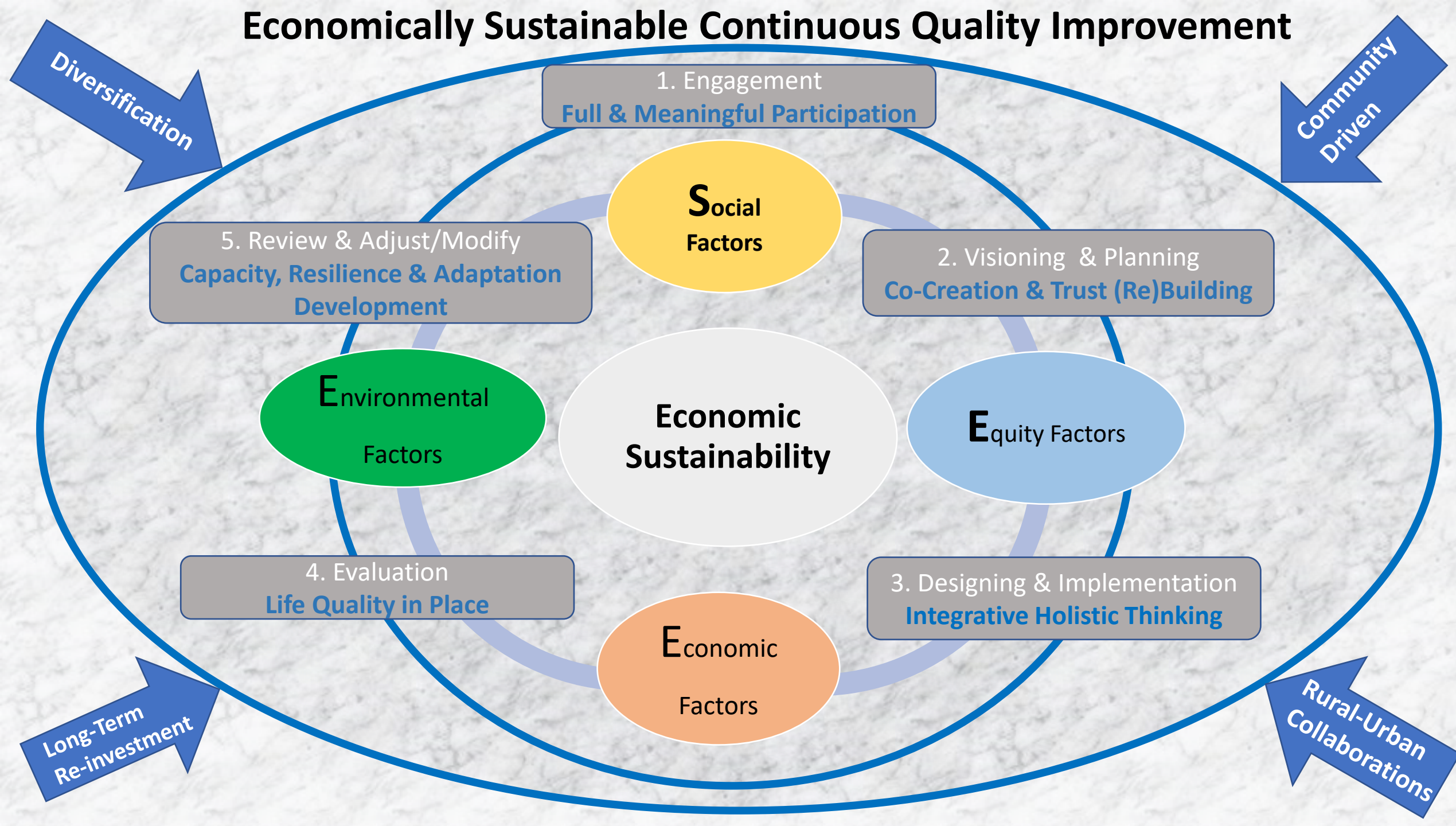
Making Economically Sustainable Options Available and Accessible: Lessons Learned

- Recognizing and navigating power relations/dynamics (local, regional, provincial)
- Disrupting colonial systems, processes and logics
- Replacing colonial metrics



Image: The Canadian Encyclopedia

Economically Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement



Recommendations:

- Privilege relational accountability and centering Indigeneity
- Develop and maintain an 'ecological bottom line' (line in the sand)
- Foster full and meaningful inclusion
- Situate planning, implementation and evaluation within equity-based principles
- Favour diversification and prioritise equitable access and re-distribution (wealth and knowledge)
- Improve local governance capacity - Aim for redressing resource and infrastructure gaps and centering local autonomy as a key condition in all negotiations and collaborations
- Regularly assess and monitor economic development planning alignment with ecological justice



Image: lake superior circle tour

Thank you!



Anita Vaillancourt, PhD

Assistant Professor

School of Social Work

Lakehead University

Email: anita.vaillancourt@lakeheadu.ca



Pelham Matthews, MBA

Associate Professor

Chair, School of Business & Economics

Algoma University

Email: pelham.matthews@algonau.ca

