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ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

by

ABEL SENTLE MOKORI

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MAGISTER SCIENTIAE *M.Sc.* (Real Estate)
Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology
Department of Construction Economics
University of Pretoria,
South Africa

Promoter: Prof. Dr. Chris Cloete

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby confirmed that the attached treatise is my own work and that any I accept the rules of the University of Pretoria and the consequences of transgressing them.

This treatise is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of MSc (Real Estate) at the University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other University.

Signature of acceptance and confirmation

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Date

Abstract

Three perspectives that can be found in ethical decision-making are explored to suggest guidelines for ethical property development: the instrumental, the intrinsic and the pluralist perspective. Given the limitations of the instrumental and the intrinsic perspectives, it is suggested that the appropriate perspective to be adopted by ethical property developers is that of pragmatism, as being a system of moral pluralism. This perspective can be utilized as a flexible toolbox which unites both traditional ethical values and the diversity of environmental ethics, as well as allowing new values to emerge without adhering to relativism.

Dedication

To Prof. Dr. Johan Buitendag

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Chapter 1 – Introductory chapter

1.1. Introduction

This study deliberates on different ethical perspectives that can be established in ethical decision-making to propose a certain course of action with regard to the environmental impact of property development.

This chapter therefore provides the background as rationale for the study. It further presents the problem statement, hypothesis and delimitations, method and chapter layout of the study.

1.2. Background to the study

Different schools of thought have influenced human perceptions with regard to the origin of the existing environmental destructions throughout the ages. However, it has become an established position in philosophy (and environmental ethics in particular) that anthropocentrism (i.e. a human-centred approach) is one of the root factors of environmental concerns. This is the common hypothesis amongst environmental ethicists, of which White (1967) is one example.

Uncritical acceptance of anthropocentrism has contributed enormously towards environmental degradation (see e.g. Leopold 1949 [1970]). The meaning of anthropocentrism can be explored in terms of the traditional idea which states that *only* harm or benefit to humans can be justified morally. The reason is that, in anthropocentrism, human beings are elevated to be the centre of existence. Everything else is, therefore, seen as a means or instrument for the benefit of

humans. Put differently, all other members of the biotic community (i.e. nonhuman organisms) have no value apart from being instruments, resources or requirements for human survival.

Overall, anthropocentrism makes a distinction between what is 'not consumable' and what is 'consumable.' The concept 'not consumable' refers to human beings, who are considered valuable and have a moral standing. The consumables are all non-human entities such as animals and plants, which are often deprived from having the moral standing of humans. VanDerVeer and Pierce (2003:11) note that '[t]he assumption that all, and only humans "count" or are valuable in themselves (not just as a means to an end of some other creatures) is called *anthropocentrism*.'

In light of the assumption that a being has a moral standing for its own sake, independent from others, and in this regard, only humans are attributed such standing, anthropocentrism can thus be described as a human perception that Homo Sapiens are the most important component of the community of life and that the rest of the community can only be interpreted in so far as they are useful to humans. In a nutshell, nature and nonhuman entities have no moral standing for their own sake. They can only be measured as instruments for human usage. Kidner (2014) admonishes against the use of anthropocentrism:

> [Anthropocentricism]...serves the ideological purpose of deflecting awareness away from the invasive character of industrialism, hindering understanding of the predicament of both human and nonhuman nature… the term obfuscates our understanding of environmental issues, since it imputes 'human-

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centeredness' to a destructive ideological system which actually sweeps aside the welfare of both humans and non-human species. [It] … thus embed[s]… human being[s] and action within a system that rapaciously colonizes and assimilates nature, including human nature, the conceptual clarity necessary to restore our natural context becomes even more elusive. (p. 465-466)

It is on the basis of this statement that some Judeo-Christian thoughts, three interpretations of the Genesis account and some impacts on Western thoughts shall be unpacked as examples of an anthropocentric perspective regarding the origin of environmental concerns.

White (1967) (alongside other researchers such as Callicott 1994) states that Judeo-Christian thoughts (with the exception of St. Francis's views) are responsible for the destruction of the natural environment. This blame is grounded on the notion that Christianity endorses the idea that human beings are created in the *Imago Dei* i.e. the image of God, making human beings superior to nonhuman entities. White's (1967:1207) hypothesis is primarily based on scriptures, which are the fundamental source of Christian theology. The book of Genesis (1:27-28) for instance states:

> So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.

This scripture passage states that human beings are formed in the image of God, a supreme being that is essentially and undoubtedly isolated from the rest of creation or nature. The logical deduction from this train of thought is that human beings, made in the likeness and image of such a being, are also elevated above nature.

When the book of is not interpreted critically, an understanding of human dominion can be used to justify the exploitation of nature. Above all, nature can be perceived as a resource that is created to serve the necessities of human beings. Such an idea can also be traced to great philosophers such as Aristotle and Immanuel Kant who maintained that nature is made for the use of human beings (see White 1967:1207).

Three dominant interpretations of the Genesis account can be distinguished, namely the despotic/mastery, the stewardship and the citizenship interpretation (see Genesis 1:27-28).

The *despotic/mastery* interpretation maintains that human beings are created in the image of God and that they have dominion over everything on earth. Humans have power to exploit and destroy natural environments without moral obligations, except where such exploitation affects other humans. The idea of being made in the image of God, according to the despotic interpretation, makes humans unique living beings. This gives them moral rights and privileges superior to those of both living and non-living things. As Callicott (1994:15) puts it, '…God seems to have intended man to be His viceroy on earth. Man is to the rest of creation as God is to man.' In the Old Testament tradition, God was perceived as being a jealous, wrathful lord and master of man. In the same way, human beings are perceived as in charge of the natural

environment. This background sums up the despotic interpretation of Genesis which is closely related to the ethical position of a ruthless developer, or extreme anthropocentrism (the position which will be elaborated upon later). As White (1967) maintains, the despotic interpretation can be seen as one of the major causes of environmental concerns.

Next, the *stewardship* interpretation can be seen as a direct response to the despotic interpretation of the Genesis account above. A number of Christian theologians and apologists (e.g., Barr 1972; Schaeffer 1970) emerged as a direct response to White (1967). Many of these theologians argue that the human possession of the image of God does not grant humans unique rights and privileges to exploit nature. The image of God also comes with certain obligations and accountabilities (Callicott 1994:16). This means that God has entrusted humans with the responsibility to govern nature. By implication, stewardship suggests that nature, the entire creation, is a gift from God, and should thus be managed honestly on God's behalf (Resane 2009:328). If so, the exploitation of nature for selfish reasons by humans violates this gift of God. Callicott (1994) states that:

> Far from being warranted by God's injunction to have dominion over the earth and subdue it, environmental degradation and destruction in pursuit of human interest is a direct violation, or more precisely a perversion, of that unnumbered "first commandment" – a perversion stemming from the subsequent fall of man. (p. 16)

This is what the stewardship interpretation is all about; human commitment to administering nature on God's behalf. Put differently, people are not the owners, they are the stewards. Resane (2009:328) states that '[t]hey know that the earth does not belong to them but to God, and therefore, they are obligated to manage it in the most God-honouring manner possible.' As humans are in charge of managing nature as resources on behalf of God, stewardship can also be seen as anthropocentrism, since nature is not only well-managed for God's sake, but also for human survival.

The *citizenship* interpretation (unlike the despotic and stewardship interpretations) is a radical biblical interpretation. This is so because the citizenship interpretation takes other aspects of an older manuscript into consideration. Callicott (1994) states:

> …the Hebrew name Adam derives from *adamah*, meaning "earth." The first man's very name thus associates him with the most material element…with the soil, with nature, and not, as the later *imago dei* suggests, with the heavens, the ethereal, and the divine… Notice next that the animals… which, to be sure, the man names…are created by God from the same stuff. And they are created as potential companions for Adam. (p. 17)

This thinking is based on Genesis (2:18-19) that states that it was not good for a man to live alone. Therefore, God created living creatures (such as animals and plants) out of the soil. However, nonhuman animals could not satisfy man. In view of that '…God created women to fill that niche' (Callicott 1994:18). In contrast to the despotic and the stewardship interpretations according to which it is maintained that man possesses the image of God, it is implied in the citizenship interpretation that

humans are not different from other beings or disconnected from other living creatures. Put differently, it is postulated in this interpretation that there is a deep-seated connection between human beings and the rest of the natural environment. What then disturbed such a connection? The interpretation of the idea of the tree of knowledge of good and evil (in Genesis 2:9), destroyed the inter-connectedness between humans and nature (see Callicott 1994:19). After eating of the fruit of the tree, humans could distinguish between what is good from what is not. 'For the right to decide… and to declare what is good and what is evil is properly God's alone' writes Callicott (1994:19). As such, the destruction of man was the destruction of nature.

The name Adam originates from *adamah,* which means earth or nature. God was concerned about the whole creation (both man and nature) being the same or an equal community of life. This means that it was not God's intention for man to dominate the rest of creation or nature (as implied in the despotic interpretation). He intended for both to live in harmony, and this interpretation constitutes the citizenship interpretation. The problem with the citizenship interpretation is the notion of 'the tree of the knowledge of good and evil' as the basis of the idea of the original sin (human self-awareness) which downgrades citizenship towards despotic and stewardship interpretations. When it is carefully read within *adamah* 'earth' as God's community of life, the citizenship interpretation gives the impression of eco-centrism, since both man and nature are created by God (for him alone). The citizenship interpretation collapses when humans with their self-awareness start to look upon nature as a pool of resources (Callicott 1994:20). For example, animals

have long been killed for both food and clothing. In modern times, nature has been used as an instrument for industrial as well as agricultural development.

To close, the citizenship, despotic and stewardship interpretations of Genesis are anthropocentric in nature, because human beings are elevated above nature in all the interpretations. The anthropocentric stance of the Genesis account can be perceived to be dominant in the Western thoughts and thus scholarship.

Whether the wider Biblical view of man's position in nature is actually anthropocentric, is, however, debatable. Simkins (2014) provides convincing arguments to the contrary, i.e. that the Bible and its worldview is simply not anthropocentric but, rather, theocentric:

> Although the Bible gives a great deal of attention to humans—it is indeed a text for and about humans—they are everywhere in the Bible embedded in the larger context of the creation and especially in their relationship with God. If humans have intrinsic value in the biblical tradition, then so does the rest of the natural world because humans and the rest of the natural world are valuable as part of God's creation—an ecocentric worldview, if you will. But the creation itself has value only in as much as it is the creation of God, who remains in relationship with it. God imputes the creation—humans, animals, the land—with value, and God the creator is the measure of all that is good and right in the world. The biblical worldview is first and foremost theocentric. (Simkins 2014:400).

However, the following question remains: In what way did three scriptural interpretations influence Western thought? Western thought has also elevated human beings above nature, in the same manner as the three interpretations of Genesis discussed above. White (1967:1207) argued that Western scholarship, specifically in the fields of philosophy, science and technology, has been influenced by the orthodox Christian thoughts. He also pointed out that if it were not for the development of technology and science on the premise that humans have dominion on earth, the existing and most devastating environmental destructions would perhaps not have arisen.

To be brief, according to White, existing environmental destructions are as a result of the uncritical interpretation of both the Western interpretation of Christian scriptural sources as well as the development of modern science and technology. Consider, for example, that almost three centuries of industrial development has seen a massive growth in global population, economic activity and employment prospects, as well as an increase in social welfare. The period of Enlightenment was a significant turning point towards the inception of this expansion and can be viewed as the most critical paradigm shift in the history of human civilization. In spite of some disputes amongst historians, this historical paradigm shift can be traced back to England (which was dominated by Christian theology) in the 1700s. As Steffen *et al.* (2007:616) observed, '[w]hatever its origins, the transition took off quickly and by 1850 had transformed England and was beginning to transform much of the rest of the world.'

Slavery and colonialism theories, which were both scripturally justified (see Loader 2009), were used as fundamental tools for such developments. After the British Slavery Abolition Act 1834, there was a huge growth in the use of fossil fuels such as coal, oil and gas. This can be seen as a vital expansion 'upon which a great deal of our modern wealth depends' (Steffen *et al.* 2007:616). There was increase in all spheres of human activity. For example, the population growth rate doubled (mainly in the urban areas), the global economy improved, and fuel/oil consumption has extensively accelerated. Growth in human population has also caused an explosion of technological communication development which gave raise to global tourism and the international market economy (see Van Beilen & Hearn 2013).

In summary, this anthropocentric development has resulted inter alia in a widespread of environmental exploitation which is today threatening the very community of life on which all living beings depend for survival and it is still a real threat in the world we live in. The cost of this development has been a severe damage to the natural environment, such as extensive and freshwater degradation, loss of species biodiversity and climate change (see Hardoy et al. 2013).

As a response to this anthropocentric development, the distinction between two approaches of anthropocentrism regenerates light on philosophical/ethical search for anthropocentric foundation of environment ethics and policy conversation.

These approaches are strong/extreme anthropocentrism and moderate/weak anthropocentrism (see Norton's (1984, 1995; Hatting 1999; Katz1999; Kronlid & Öhman 2013).

Strong/extreme anthropocentrism overlaps with some perspectives on anthropocentrism as the foundation of environmental destructions. This approach, for example, is parallel to despotic/mastery interpretation. It can be observed as the ethical position of the ruthless developer. From an extreme anthropocentrism point of view, as noted, nature can only be measured in terms of its instrumental value. Human activities that can harm the natural environment should only be valued on the basis of how they affect the humankind on earth (Stenmark 2002:137). It is precisely on the basis of this argument that anthropocentric ethicists justify the total exploitation and development of environmental resources for human use while no attention is paid to the intrinsic value of the natural environments. This position can be seen as the root of every environmental concern around the world. Furthermore, it is difficult for extreme anthropocentrism to be regarded as an ethical position which is worth maintaining. Classical economists (such as Friedman 1962) serve as examples of those who endorse extreme anthropocentrism and are not concerned with the concerns of coming generations and the intrinsic value of the entire biotic community.

In contrast to extreme anthropocentrism, moderate/weak anthropocentrism overlaps with both stewardship and citizenship interpretations. Norton (1984:134) attempts to defend environmental ethics and calls it '…a theory of sustainable development that captures the key role of human values in the search for better policies to protect nature and the humans of the future.' With this, Norton criticizes the attempt to extend intrinsic, inherent values towards nature and those ideas which are harmful towards the natural environment. To qualify his sustainable development theory,

Norton calls this position weak or moderate anthropocentrism. This position is divided into two central approaches i.e., resource conservation and wilderness preservation. Like the ethical position of the ruthless developer, resource conservation is also an anthropocentric approach. This is because the goal of resource conservation and development is based on the value that human beings can accumulate wealth from the physical transformation of natural resources. Again, similar to anthropocentrism, this position embraces science and utilitarian cost-benefit analyses to assist in finding workable solutions to resource distribution. The advantages of resource conservation are summarized as follows (see Fox 1995:153): Firstly, resource conservation and development recognizes that there is a limit to growth. Secondly, it has long term plans. In other words, it restricts unnecessary exploitation of natural resources and development. Therefore the destruction of natural resources is reflected as bad. Thirdly, this position is closely related to the goals of sustainable development since it takes the need of future generations into consideration. So-called 'weak' anthropocentrism has been developed further by De and Nanda (2015), who also call it 'eco-friendly anthropocentrism.'

In South Africa, for example, the primary focus of the Bill of Rights is the protection of the rights and the lives of the present and future citizens. The notion of ecological sustainable development is promoted as the cornerstone of this legislation. This notion has also become the cornerstone of the National Environmental Management Act 107 of 1998 which became operative from 29 January 1999 (Republic of South Africa 1998).

Wilderness preservation can be evaluated based on the etymological difference between conservation and preservation. This is because both terms originate from the Latin word *servus*, which translates 'slave'. Hattingh (1999) says:

> *Pre* carries the meaning of 'before' in Latin, while *con* means 'together or with'. Conservation therefore has the implication of 'together with a slave', while preserve has the meaning of 'before slavery', which in turn carries the suggestion of preventing something from becoming a slave. (p. 72)

Regardless of the idea of preserving certain components of the natural environment from being exploited, this position emphasises the instrumental values of the 'untouched' resources for human enjoyment. In light of this, wilderness preservation can also be viewed as anthropocentrism but in a weaker sense, since it offers only a small amount of intrinsic value to non-human entities. This background presented the rationale for this study.

1.3.   Statement of the problem

Even though the later viewpoint (i.e. extreme anthropocentrism, moderate/weak anthropocentrism) can be referred to as a more embracing understanding of anthropocentrism, the problem with anthropocentrism in general is that it does not extent the notion of intrinsic value towards the entire community of life. The idea of extending intrinsic value (i.e. human moral consideration) towards non-human organisms has come to be very important in the present-day environmental thinking (see Callicott 1984; Hargrove 1989; McShane 2007; Le Grange 2012).

This study, therefore, takes up this challenge and offers an understanding of ethical perspectives on the environmental impact of property development. Feasibility studies in property development have mainly focused on economic aspects, and more recently on environmental and socio-economic aspects (see Cloete 2006, 2016a, 2016b). However, the investigation of the ethical perspectives on the environmental impact of property development remains a gap to be filled in property studies. It is therefore the purpose of this study to fill this gap by investigating the following research questions.

1.4.   Research questions

The research questions of the study are:

- What perspectives on environmental destructions exist in philosophical literature?
- Do these perspectives have implications for ethical property development?
- What are these implications?

These questions have become very relevant for property developers concerned with the broader impact of their actions on the physical and socio-economic environment.

1.5.   Research hypotheses

Three perspectives can be distinguished in philosophical literature regarding environmental concerns. These are:

- The instrumental perspective – this is represented by traditional ethical theories (see VanDeVeer & Pierce 2003);

- The intrinsic perspective – this is dominated by a diversity of environmental ethics (see Callicott 1984; Hargrove 1989), and;

- The pluralist perspective – for which environmental pragmatism (which has been proposed as a new line of attack in environmental ethics literature) serves as an example (see Hattingh 1999; Weston 1996; Norton 2003; Light & Katz 1996).

These perspectives probably do have implications for ethical property development. The implications for ethical property development that adopts instrumental and intrinsic perspectives as a guiding principle are perhaps problematic. The adoption of a pragmatic approach probably suggests better implications for ethical property development since this perspective function as a flexible toolkit which can incorporates both instrumental and intrinsic perspectives.

1.6. Research objectives

This study aims to undertake two central objectives:

- To explore the ethical perspectives that can be found in ethical decision-making to suggest a particular course of action in relation to environmental destructions in property development.

- To determine the implications for ethical property development that is guided by these perspectives.

1.7. Research method

The above aims can be reached through a theoretical (scholarly) and philosophical engagement without being conclusive about the topic in discussion.

- This study is a scholarly engagement (instead of an empirical exploration) in the sense that a diversity of literatures arranging from the discipline of moral philosophy and property development are critically reviewed.

- The study is philosophical because it is about understanding (rather than explanation) of different ethical perspectives on the environmental impact of property development.

1.8. Delimitations of the study

The delimitations of the study are:

- The study attempts to provide an introduction to those who do not have much knowledge concerning ethical perspectives on the environmental impact of property development.

- Some views that maintain that the existing environmental destructions are simply a natural phenomenon wherein human activities play no role were not taken into account, because the chapter '…rather take[s] [a] point of departure in the well-established observation that human action since the dawn of the industrial era in Europe around 1750 has substantively contributed to what we now refer to as climate change' (Hattingh 2011:91).

- In light of the aims above, the study has left out the empirical exploration of the theme under discussion, but rather takes a theoretical and philosophical engagement as a point of departure.

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1.9. Chapter layout

This study is, therefore, structured as follows:

Chapter 1

This is an introductory chapter stating the rationale, problem statement, research questions, hypothesis and the method of the study.

Chapter 2

This chapter assesses the instrumental perspective on environmental destructions by examining traditional ethical theories.

Chapter 3

This chapter evaluates the intrinsic perspective by focussing on a diversity of values in environmental ethics.

Chapter 4

This chapter examines the pluralist perspective with special reference to environmental pragmatism.

Chapter 5

This chapter provides an overview of property development.

Chapter 6

In this chapter, some implications for (ethical) property development guided by these perspectives will be explored. The chapter also summarises the study and draw some conclusions in light of the findings in chapter 1 to 5.

Chapter 2 - An instrumental perspective

2.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a critical overview of instrumental perspective on environmental destructions by examining traditional ethical theories.

The notion of an instrumental perspective can be described as a view on the worth or usefulness of a particular asset or service in terms of its exchange value for something else (see e.g. EPA 2014:7-9). An example would be that if one has a thousand rand to spend, the thousand rand can be valued as instrumental when it is exchanged for another value (like buying a product). Three dominant ethical theories to ethical decision-making, namely the rights approach, the consequentialist approach and the virtue approach serve as examples of this perspective.

2.2. The rights approach

This approach regulates the difference between having a right and having a duty.

To illustrate this point, consider the Gautrain project in South Africa. Every South African might have the moral right to use it, but this does not imply that everyone has a duty (or has the means to afford) to use it. Alternatively, consider the equation 'A has a right against B to do X' (VanDeVeer& Pierce 2003:20). Applied to the Gautrain example, this means that everyone who can afford to use the Gautrain is allowed to or has a right to use it. This would then imply that those who cannot afford the luxury of using the Gautrain have no right to prevent those who can afford to use from enjoying the privileges of using it. In other words, they have the duty

(moral responsibility) to respect the right of others. Since the Gautrain seems to only exist as a right to those who can afford it, the question remains whether everyone should not have similar rights. This leads to a plurality of rights. VanDeVeer& Pierce (2003:21) highlight that '[m]any rights are often, arguably, packages of rights.' Consider the notion of property rights. Having (or owning) a property entails having a property right. This raises the question: Would those who own property have the right to use it as they please? More specifically:

> Do those with legal property rights to a wetland have a moral right to destroy it – even when to do so would be to wreak serious ecological damage to the surrounding ecosystem and eventually permanent losses to the chain of future generations? (VanDeVeer& Pierce 2003:21).

This points towards a related question raised by Stone's (1972) book titled: 'Should Trees Have Standing?' i.e. what value or rights do non-human organisms hold?

In response to this question, Kant (1963) developed deontological ethics. This is an ethical theory that focuses on act-duty relations. When it comes to determining the rights of non-human animals, Kant's ethics (based upon two corresponding versions of the deontological ethics) does not extend human duty and responsibility towards animals. These are:

- The first version reads that a moral agent, human being - as a rational being - ought to act in terms of a principle that determines his/her action to become a universal guideline that every moral agent can act upon. Deontological ethics, therefore, suggests that whatsoever is right, good and a duty to one moral agent

should likewise be to other moral agents. In this regard, it is, advisable for a rational agent to help other agents, not only when it is expedient, but because in a similar circumstance he/she might be in need of similar help.

- The second version of deontological ethics articulates that a moral agent should never be treated as a mere means for further ends (see Kant 1963:239).

With the deontological approach, a possible response to whether those moral agents with legal property rights to a wetland have a moral right to extinguish it, would be that human beings are moral agents, they are rational beings and therefore have rights and a direct duty towards each other. This would imply that their moral duties do not apply to non-human animals because animals do not possess rationality like humans. In this regard, non-human animals do not possess rights. Therefore: 'Everyone who owns property has the duty, of course, to exercise his or her property rights in ways that respect the similar rights of [other human beings]' (Sagoff 2003:378). Even when exercising such duty would cause destruction to non-human animals to the point of losing the chain of future generations, human rights are given a higher priority. Kant (1963) explicitly argues that:

> … so far as animals are concerned, we [as human beings] have no direct duty. Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man. (p. 239)

Most conversations about rights, as noted, become more individualistic and self-regarding because the notion of rights is often attributed to individual moral agents.

In addition, Kant's deontological ethics principle has been subject to critical scrutiny by Bentham (1789) and his follower Mill (1861) - the most celebrated exponents of consequential utilitarianism. VanDeVeer and Pierce (2003) write: 'It was, in fact, the view of Bentham… that we have *only* certain duties and that talk about rights (moral, not legal) is "non-sense on stilts."' To understand the ground of this critique, a consequentialist, utilitarian approach should be presented.

2.3. Consequentialist approach: utilitarianism

This can be considered as an opposite of the preceding approach. As the rights approach (such as Kant's deontological ethics principle) upholds, morality is built on human reason, duties and actions as well as rights. On the contrary, the consequentialist utilitarian approach advocates that a moral value of a particular course of action is determined by the consequence that results from such an action (Woermann 2010:32). A right or good action should be one that provides the highest good to the majority of human beings as moral agents.

Utilitarianism as a consequentialist approach is commonly expressed through the principle: 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' (Burns 2005:46). This implies that utilitarianism attempts to reduce pain and increase pleasure for most people and some sentient animals. As Bentham (1879) puts it:

> Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, *pain* and *pleasure.* It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do, as well as to determine what we shall do. (p. 42)

This presupposes the principle of utility. This principle, on the one hand, attempts to maximise certain benefits, advantages, pleasure, good, as well as happiness, as outcomes of a particular course of action. On the other hand, however, it inclines to minimise or prevent things like harm, pain, evil and misery to the greater number of moral agents (Bentham 1879:42).

Moreover, the consequentialist utilitarian approach can be related with the most controversial decision-making technique i.e. the cost-benefit analysis. (This technique shall briefly be elaborated upon later in this study).

2.4. Virtue approach

Instead of focusing on the consequences of an action (utilitarianism) and on duties or rules (deontological ethics), the virtue approach deliberates on some virtues that can allow a human being to behave and thus act in a way that complements the highest possible human character. Consider this: if a particular moral agent needs assistance about a particular issue, an ethicist, as discussed above, acting from a deontological point of view would act in accordance with a certain moral rule or duty. A consequentialist would act in terms of the consequences of action. But an ethicist acting according to the virtue approach would be assisting such a person because it would be generous and benevolent to do so. In other words, the cultivation of virtue – such as goodness, respect and integrity – can contribute to human responsibility and character (see Woermann 2010). The basic question of the virtue approach would be: 'what kind of a person should one become?' To answer this question, the goodness and wrongness of a particular action can be established only when a

certain virtue or vice is adequately conveyed. In short, morality is about the cultivation of the human character. A leading proponent of this approach is Aristotle. Like Kant, Aristotle emphasises the notion of rationality and the chain of command of nature (Pearce 2009:10). Aristotle (1988:1, 2) states that: 'Plants exit… for the sake of animals… All other animals exist for the sake of man.' As they possess the capability to reason above non-human animals, humans have special status in creation. Since this approach is located on human character, it is therefore inevitably anthropocentric. In virtue theory, similar to the rights approach and the consequentialist utilitarian approach, non-human animals can only be esteemed in terms of instrumental value.

2.5. Assessment

Philosophers and ethicists, to this end, did not manage to find a universal principle that can categorically bind all human beings, ranging from different parts of the world, backgrounds, and at different periods in time (Woermann 2010:52). This is one of the major limitations of the traditional ethical theories; none of them can provide an absolute principle that guides ethical decision-makers to deal with every ethical dilemma in everyday life and practice (Des Jardins 1993:97). Hoffman (1984:263-264) states that these theories fail to offer a 'complete answer to the question, "What ought I to do? …and …do not …solve all of one's practical moral dilemmas.' Unlike the virtue theory that focusses on what type of character a moral agent should have, the consequentialist and rights based approach ignore the character of the moral agent. The reason for this is that both approaches pay attention to a restricted principle (such as, utilitarianism and deontological ethics) that tries to

guide a moral agent on a kind of action that should be undertaken. The other problem with this line of thinking is that such a principle remains outside the scope of practise. In other words, a moral agent must beforehand acknowledge, conceptualise and internalise the principle before it can be adopted. Based on this observation, it is somewhat not surprising that some practitioners, scientists and ordinary individuals take little or no interest in ethical questions and philosophical explorations (Woermann 2010:53). Furthermore, the major fault of the ethical theories is their commitment to a human-centred line of attack which remains problematic when addressing environmental concerns. These ethical theories have also been subjected to critical scrutiny by ethicists and their moral status within environmental thinking and they have been reconsidered with the emergence of a contemporary environmental ethics.

2.6. Conclusion

Three dominant ethical theories (i.e. the rights approach, the consequentialist approach and the virtue approach) were established and explored in this chapter. The task of each of these theories was to come up with a universal theory that can absolutely and categorically bind all human beings, ranging from different parts of the world, settings, and at different periods in time. When it comes to the assessment of the value of the natural environment, the rights approach, utilitarianism and the virtue theory remain confined in a form of instrumentalism which does not take the inherent value of non-human animals into consideration.

In the next chapter, an intrinsic perspective on environmental destructions (which serves as response to an instrumental perspective generally) shall be examined.

Chapter 3 - An intrinsic perspective

3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines an intrinsic perspective on environmental destructions by focussing on a diversity of values in environmental ethics.

This position is a response and contrast to the previous position. A value can be perceived as intrinsic if it has a particular worth independent from something else. A human life and some of the sentient non-human animals can be considered to have intrinsic value because it is good to be alive - not because it would lead to something different outside being alive. Living is valuable and therefore good.

In light of this, a call was finally made for a new ethical consideration setting out the relationship between human beings and the non-human world (see Routley 1973), enquiring whether there can be a non-anthropocentric, intrinsic perspective that is not grounded merely on human interest. Environmental ethics was at last established as an autonomous field of study. The moral dominance of humans over other species was interrogated and the rational possibility of assigning intrinsic value to the entire community of life was explored (see Attfield 1991; Hargrove 1989; Callicott 1984). The environmental ethics discipline can be seen as the process of increasing the diversity of theoretical values (Hattingh 1999:71). These include animal rights and liberations values, eco-centrism and biocentrism, radical approaches (the politics of the transformation movement) as well as deep ecology.

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3.2. Animal rights and liberations values

Animal rights and liberations – as advocated by prominent philosophers and activists such as Singer (1975) and Regan (1985) – suggest that the boundaries of human's moral considerations should be extended to certain animals. Singer (1975) borrows the notion 'speciesism' from Richard D. Ryder to contend against any form of discrimination against members of other species. Speciesism is 'a prejudice or attitude of bias in favour of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species' (Singer 1990:120).

Singer claims that the interests of all organisms that are capable of suffering should be taken into consideration. This idea is based on a utilitarian notion, specifically, the equality formula by Bentham who observes that: 'Each to count for one and none for more than one' (Singer 2003:136). This means that the well-being of each entity that has interests should be deliberated and preserved in the same way as the interests of human beings. Along with his rejection of animal vivisection, Singer suggests that human beings should become vegetarian as a practical way forward to lessen this problem of suffering.

Based on this train of thought, Regan (1983) argues that certain animals have moral rights, from a Kantian deontological perspective. This position is based on the fact that being a 'subject-of-a-life' is necessary for having inherent worth, regardless of whether this worth is recognized or not (Regan 1983:243). Although they use different approaches, such as utilitarianism or deontology, Singer and Regan can be

perceived as holding similar viewpoints - both are deeply concerned about the well-being of animals.

3.3. Eco-centrism and biocentrism

In contrast to instrumentalism, which maintains that only human beings are worthy of moral concerns, two approaches focusing on the intrinsic value of the biosphere - eco-centrism and biocentrism - have been formulated.

On the one hand, eco-centrists try to extend moral consideration to encompass all non-human animals. This approach is advocated by, among others, thinkers such as Leopold (1949 [1970]), Callicott (1990) and Taylor (1981). Leopold (1949 [1970]:243) pointed out that 'conservation is a state of harmony between man and land.' The notion, of land ethic, broadens the borders of moral obligations towards the land which includes animals, plants, water and many other non-human organisms. In a nutshell, the land ethic inspires human beings to consider making a transition from being exploiters of the biotic community to becoming simple citizens of this community, together with all non-human organisms. Leopold's idea of land ethic was further developed and defended by Callicott (1984). He attempts to present both a defense and an intellectual foundation of Leopold's ideas about the land ethic in order to make his views more comprehensive (see Callicott 1989, 1999). During his search for a universal, monistic moral principle, Callicott (1985) began by pointing out that the most important challenge facing environmental ethicists is constructing a workable and suitable non-anthropocentric value theory for non-human animals and nature as a whole. The major problem with this is that there is a difference

between subject and object as in the sense of Descartes. Callicott (1985:270) adopted certain quantum theory ideas to construct his understanding of the non-anthropocentric, inherent value of nature. Like the ideas of many other prominent scholars, Callicott's views were also critiqued. With regard to his position on Leopold's land ethic, Regan (1983) charged Callicott with ecofascism. The notion of ecofascism, according to Zimmerman (2005) can be described as,

> …a totalitarian government that requires individuals to sacrifice their interests to the well-being and glory of the "land", understood as the splendid web of life, or the organic whole of nature, including peoples and their states. (p. 531-532)

This criticism was raised because Leopold suggested the following: for the preservation of the beauty and the stability of the biotic community, especially when a certain region becomes heavily populated by members of a particular species, deer for example, it could be suggested that such members should be harvested. This is not obligatory in human terms and the problem is, therefore, that the view lacks consistency when it comes to the human population.

On the other hand, bio-centrists, such as Lanza (2007:9) argue every scientific model that tries to understand the physical universe should begin with human consciousness, instead of the hypothesis that the universe produces life. Today it seems outrageous to hope that someday thinkers will succeed in proposing a universal theory that can resolve every problem. Biocentrism upholds the view that for other scientific disciplines to succeed in coming up with a universal principle that

can govern almost everything, they should start with biology. Taylor (1981:197) thus offered an introductory outline for 'a life-centered theory of environmental ethics': the structure which consists of three interrelated components. These are:

- As an ultimate moral position, biocentrism encourages respect for nature.

- It also promotes a conviction which motivates a suitable attitude towards the natural environment and the communities of life.

- Furthermore, it makes provision for a system of moral standards that can guide human behavior towards nature, and also encourages sets of principles which can provide a solid picture of respect for nature.

The major aim of Taylor's (1981:218) contribution was 'to try to establish a base point from which we can start working toward a solution to the problem.' In order to achieve this, he suggests respecting the interests of non-human organisms, controlling population growth and also being willing to share the Earth's abundance with members of other species. Taylor (1981:218) states that humans as moral beings should display moral commitment by respecting nature.

In summary, from the perspective of the instrumental value theory, the moral consideration is merely preserved for humans, and nature is only cherished for its instrumental use. However, this position is challenged and opposed by the elected ethicists who extended the moral obligation to all non-human organisms. This contrast summarizes the fundamental disputes within environmental ethics, that is, the instrumental-intrinsic value argument.

3.4. Radical approaches or the politics of the transformation movement

Radical positions are often treated as independent value theories, but they fall under the intrinsic value category. The environmental ethics of the radical movements emerged during the 1980s and their focus was on the root causes of ecological concerns. Hattingh (1999:70) says that the main argument of this movement is that environmental ethics and mainstream environmentalism offer an artificial reflection of the roots and the structure of the existing ecological crisis. In other words, this movement argues that the way in which both environmental ethics and mainstream environmentalism respond towards the ecological crisis is entirely inappropriate. This position is a distinct movement which incorporates different values such as, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology. This paper will pay special attention to only one of the values, that is, deep ecology.

3.4.1. Deep ecology

Deep ecology is a radical movement that collaborates with some of the non-anthropocentric approaches - like eco-centrism and biocentrism - against anthropocentric attitudes towards nature. It argues that the Western egocentric and individualistic perception of self-realisation poses a real danger to the natural environment. The anthropocentric attitude towards the environment is associated with social atomism, capitalist materialism and over-consumption in the modern world (Hattingh 1999:78). Anthropocentrism, in other words, is a danger which should be overcome first before we can start hoping to solve current environmental problems (Naess 1984:5). Deep ecology promotes a deep spiritual connection with

nature because entities in the universe are fundamentally connected with each other. In short, things are valuable as fragments of the whole scope of nature. The inherent value of nature can be revealed and recognized through the identification approach. As Hattingh (1999) pointed out:

> In practical terms, this entails an intuitive experience of the harmony and wholeness of nature. This intuitive and immediate identification with nature, inspired by phenomenology, Vedantic Hinduism, the science of ecology and the philosophy of Spinoza, moves us beyond class, gender and species divisions in order to be in full harmony with nature (p. 78).

This leads to the practical ideas of deep ecology which have been conveyed in terms of Naess's (1984) proposals of ecological philosophy. These are:

- 'The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.

- Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realizations of these values and are also values in themselves.

- Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital human needs.

- The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.

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- Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

- Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

- The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.

- Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation to directly or indirectly try to implement the necessary changes.' (Naess 1984:405)

Naess puts emphasis on the intrinsic values of biodiversity, reduction of the human population, and a radical change of attitude towards human consumption customs. Deep ecologists strongly argues that other means of survival, should be explored rather than continuing to live in the conventional way that is characterised by blind anthropocentrism.

In conclusion, the deep-seated objective of intrinsic perspectives was to come up with a single value theory that is universal enough to support the practical mission of resolving the ecological crisis and thus sustain life on earth. However, environmental ethics as a field of study has failed to come up with such a value theory and it is also not certain that it can be constructed at least in the near future.

In what follows, the paradigm of pragmatism which was introduced above serves as an example of ethical pluralism which is required in order for environmental ethics to move forward.

3.4.2. Ecofeminism

The term 'ecofeminism' or 'ecological feminism' was first coined by Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. It was for a time applied to any view which combined environmental advocacy and the feministic analysis of things. However, because of the varieties of and disagreements among feminist theories, the label may be too wide to be informative. Hence, it has generally fallen from use.

Ecofeminism tries to link the exploitation of nature and the domination of women. Put in other words, ecofeminism promotes the idea that there has always been a certain historical relationship between women and the environment. In essence, women and the environment have both been negatively affected by the historical oppression and supremacy of men, and the patriarchal Western civilization (see Warren 2000, 1990, 1987 and Plumwood 2002). Plumwood (1986:121) provides brief distinctions between the challenges to women and the challenges to nature, based on what ecofeminists advocate. Firstly, she admits that there are ecofeminists - like Ruether (1995) - who trace the problems of women, and the environment back to traditional, philosophical, theological, as well as Christian origins. Secondly, Plumwood recognizes those ecofeminists who accept that the challenges to women and nature were caused by the historical expansion of science and technology which emerged in both the Enlightenment and pre-Enlightenment periods. Thirdly, she

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acknowledges that there are 'those who offer an explanation of the link based on the *difference* of sexually-differentiated personality formation or consciousness' (Plumwood 1986:121).

In light of these challenges, she suggests that there is parallelism between the treatment of women and the environment which reflects the conceptual, philosophical and historical domination of men and also explains the various, paradigmatic expansions of both conservational and feminist activism.

Like Plumwood, Warren (2000, 1990 & 1987) maintains that ecofeminism is an important paradigm which makes a connection between the historical and figurative domination of nature and women. She makes an assertion that the theoretical relationship between such paradigms is positioned in the cruel male-controlled agenda which inspired the mentality of domination. Warren (1990:145) makes an effort to expand the mission of feminism to embrace ecofeminism, by defending the point that ecofeminism suggests a context for constructing a workable, conceptual and a more robust feminist ethics of the environment. Though more radical than Plumwood, Warren (1990:146) also claims that whichever feminist and ecological ethic which does not take the connection between the domination of women and the environment into account, should be considered insufficient and misguided.

Since various ideas of coercion and liberation remain questionable, ecofeminism attempts to discover and thus articulate the relationship between environmental problems and the broader social domains, specifically, those which relate to different classifications of discrimination and exploitation. In summary, ecofeminism remains

a dynamic, radical movement which challenges a number of ideas within conservation, policy formulations, and environmental ethics to date.

3.4.3. Social ecology

This is a critical social, radical, revolutionary and countercultural paradigm within environmental thinking (Bookchin 2007). Tokar (2008:51) states: 'Murray Bookchin was a leading theoretical progenitor of the many currents of left ecological thought and action which emerged from the 1960s… and his voluminous and many-faceted work has continued to influence theorists and activists to this day.' Without a doubt, Bookchin has left both depths and widths of a critical, social, ecological paradigm. Consider, for a second, what Bookchin (2007) writes when he states:

> Social ecology is based on the conviction that nearly all of our present ecological problems originate in deep-seated social problems. It follows, from this view, that these ecological problems cannot be understood, let alone solved, without a careful understanding of our existing society and the irrationalities that dominate it. To make this point more concrete: economic, ethnic, cultural, and gender conflicts, among many others, lie at the core of the most serious ecological dislocations we face today—apart, to be sure, from those that are produced by natural catastrophes. (p. 19)

Unlike ecofeminism which maintains that both the exploitation of women and nature are the result of patriarchal domination, social ecology claims that environmental problems are centered on supremacy and control in modern society. Expressed differently, according to social ecology, the driving force behind our

environmental problems is the hierarchical patterns of our societies. According to social ecologists, any perception that upholds the idea that some aspects of nature are as yet untouched should be considered mistaken. This is because human beings have already explored and replicated the entire natural environment.

Weston (1996:153) argued along the same lines and observed that the undertaking and challenge of environmental ethics, is to put environmental extensions under the control of a pluralistic, pragmatic, progressive as well as a wide-ranging social and political environmental policy. As cultural, traditional and socio-political hierarchies involve categories of submission and controls which are also seen in the domination of the natural environment, they should be overcome (Bookchin 2007:22). In order to overcome these hierarchical structures, they should be replaced by a corporate vision of the society and by democratic anarchism. Therefore practical, self-determining, social and moral values must be at the center of our dealings with the environment as the only way to live in harmony with nature.

Although social ecology elevates social concerns above environmental concerns, when social and moral values are well transformed into a workable policy-making scheme in which most people who were influenced by traditional hierarchies can partake, two observations emerge. First, the requirements and ideas of the society can be achieved. Secondly, these values can also assist in forming some frameworks for collaboration, especially where social and ecological problems can be addressed adequately (Hattingh 1999:78). As it calls for moderate, self-reliant and self-

governing societies, bioregionalism strives to maintain sustainable life over a period of time (McGinnis *at al*. 1999:22).

In summary, this means that bioregionalism encourages the following patterns which are underscored in Hattingh (1999:78).

- First, it encourages: living within certain limits and the avoidance of the overconsumption of natural resources. Both technology and the way of life with regard to land use should be adapted in such a manner that destructive patterns, such as misuse of technology, capitalism and industrial development can be rejected.
- Secondly, since it provides an assurance for social and environmental sustainable development, bioregionalism endorses both social aspects and biodiversity.
- Lastly, within the bioregional framework, the expressions of the legendary and poetic genre which are closely linked with inspirational experiences are strongly encouraged. This is because they possess some religious, spiritual and visionary characteristics (see McGinnis *at al*. 1999).

3.5. Evaluation

Many of these value theories from a theoretical perspective overlap, even though there are some differences amongst them, because of some disagreements and disputes amongst environmental philosophers. For example, an attempt to extend human moral consideration to animals through animal rights and the liberation movement was dismissed by anthropocentric thinkers as unreasonable, since human

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beings are the ones who do the valuing. In other words, values are not independent to human minds. Leopold maintains that for the land community's sake, certain animals can be forfeited. However, animal rights advocate, Regan accuses Leopold of conservational totalitarianism (Hattingh 1999:78). Furthermore, radical theorists accuse those who advocate for intrinsic values of not addressing the roots of the environmental problems. For instance, they dismiss bio-centrist egalitarianism as worthless since it does not encourage the radical transformation of attitudes towards nature. Social ecologists discard deep ecologists' perception that the wilderness is the only, solitary and genuine domain while the rest of nature is nothing special but only a childish fairytale (see Bookchin 2007). Within environmentalism, the understanding of deep ecologists that self-realization in nature which can transcend our social divisions, such as race and gender was criticized by eco-feminists, because self-realization at best tries to identify humans with the whole natural environment. As feminist thinkers maintain that women and nature have always being dominated as well as oppressed by men, such criticism against deep ecology is based on the fact that gender plays an important role in ecofeminism ethics. Fox (1989) rejected ecofeminism as self-interested, naïve and an isolating movement. He continued saying that it would be a blunder to consider feminism as a workable basis for the ethics of nature.

From a practical perspective, these values do not provide an adequate basis to introduce policies that can administer and respond to the current environmental crisis. They also lack a coherent rational base, as they cannot distinguish between what is ecologically sound and unsound, especially with regard to systems of

production and consumption (Hattingh 1999: 68). In light of this, different decision-makers have different value systems, worldviews or strategies of coming to a decision of which worldview could hold as an effective approach. In other words, there is an interaction and divergence between value systems and thoughts. When it comes to deciding on a meaningful principle towards concrete environmental problems, differences and arguments would then always be experienced. If these systems functioned separately, this would have not been a dilemma, but this is not the main point of consideration.

In addition, the other problem dominating these environmental values is the restriction of moral monism which is the example of the reductionist approach (see Seeliger 2009:1). From an environmental ethics point of view, this can be described as an adoption of a single, universal value theory or principle towards determining environmental conservation (Norton 1996:105). In other words, those theorists who are committed towards finding an intrinsic value of nature with the intention of coming up with one universal theory, by implication are committed to a monistic strategy. One prominent example of this is Callicott (1984, 1990). He argued that 'the principal architects of environmental ethics remain committed to moral monism' (Callicott 1990:99). The application of a monistic approach would certainly have its advantages. It would entail some rational and internal consistency, when dealing with theoretical problems. But the problem with moral monism is that it results in an excessive emphasis of theoretical debates and less of environmental practice. In terms of practical, concrete policy proposals, for example, it does not ensure certainty and practical competencies when making decisions about existing

environmental problems. Given that it suggests a single universal theory or simplistic solution to environmental problems, monistic environmental ethics can be seen as reductionist thinking. Norton (1996:106) put it more explicitly when he states that: 'The adoption of the monistic viewpoint and the associated goals of developing a universal moral theory application in all cases is inevitably "reductionistic."' As a reductionist strategy, monistic environmental ethics therefore remains entirely inadequate in assisting decision-makers in dealing with the complexities that describe environmental concerns. For this reason, it is entirely not surprising why as an academic discipline, environmental ethics until now has failed to construct such a universal principle and also continued being inadequate in supporting the practical task of sustaining life in the world. To be sure, it is unlikely that such a value theory can be constructed at least in the near future (Hattingh 1999:68).

3.6. Conclusion

In conclusion, an intrinsic perspective on environmental destructions was examined in light of a diversity of perspectives in environmental ethics (i.e., animal rights and liberations values, eco-centrism and biocentrism, radical approaches or the politics of the transformation movement). The deep-seated objective of these perspectives was to come up with a single value theory that is universal enough to support the practical mission of environmental ethics in decision-making in order to sustain life on earth. However, environmental ethics as a field of study has failed to come up with such a value theory and it is also not certain that it can be constructed at least in the near future. It is due to some disagreements between environmental ethicists and

of uncritical rejection of certain instrumental perspectives (that can be handy at a particular context) that environmental ethics as field of study has failed to come up with such a value theory.

Environmental ethicists should therefore take due cognisance of some developments made outside conventional environmental ethics, mainly of some perspectives that try to find solutions to existing environmental destructions in the absence of universal truths. This implies changing direction from reductionist thinking to a more pluralist perspective, since environmental ethics is already pluralistic.

Chapter 4 - Pluralist perspective

4.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the pluralist perspective with special reference to environmental pragmatism.

Firstly, it provides some implications for the contrast between instrumental and intrinsic thinking. Secondly, it briefly examines the notion of relativism which is commonly confused with the concept pluralism. Thirdly, three forms of moral pluralism (i.e. minimal moral pluralism, moderate moral pluralism and extreme moral pluralism) will be explored. Finally, this chapter presents and evaluates some insights from environmental pragmatism as a form of moral pluralism.

4.2. Implications for the instrumental-intrinsic contrast

Instrumental and intrinsic perspectives are representatives of two contrasting lines of attack (i.e. the contrast between traditional ethical theories and a diversity of environmental values) which have been at the heart of most debates in environmental philosophy (see Light and Katz 1996). Traditional ethical theories maintain instrumental perspective towards environmental concerns, whereas a diversity of environmental values upholds the intrinsic perspective. These perspectives can therefore be seen to have approached environmental destructions one-sidedly; both are different sides of the same coin. Intrinsic perspectives (animal liberation activists like Singer and Reagan) blame instrumental perspectives (such as Kant and Aristotle`s philosophical position) for not extending human moral

obligation towards non-human organisms. Extending moral obligation towards non-human organisms, from an instrumental perspective, would be improbable, for example, killing ants would hold the same moral status as killing a human being (Hattingh 1999:75).

Both these perspectives, however, provide a systematic approach which takes for granted that universal foundations and final solutions towards resolving all environmental destructions can be reached. The traditional ethical theories and a diversity of environmental values are built on the philosophical hypothesis known as universal rationality (see Müller 2011; Van Huyssteen 2006). 'This rationality is based on the idea of a universe of knowledge that functions as an overarching frame of reference. Accordingly, there is only one theoretical truth and that must be pursued' states Müller (2011:2). For example, utilitarianism with its emphasis on the consequences of action, deontological ethics on the respect for persons and the virtue theory on the idea of the cultivation of human character serve as examples of one theoretical truth that ought to be pursued to resolve existing environmental destructions from the traditional ethical perspective. From an environmental ethical point of view, animal right theories uphold the notion of the universal extension of human moral consideration towards animals; eco-centric theories argue for the universal moral consideration of the entire community of life; the radical approaches, for instance eco-feminist theories maintain that the oppression of women should be observed in terms of the oppression of nature. Each of these perspectives tries to pursue their own universal knowledge as the only theoretical truth. These can be seen as genuine moral efforts which try to seek for resolutions to

existing environmental concerns, although these perspectives remain problematic. In order to move beyond this problem, it is crucial to take a system of pluralism into consideration.

Before tackling each of these, the notion of relativism which is often confused with pluralism should be examined briefly.

4.3. The notion "relativism"

Relativism can be described as 'a philosophy that amounts to the thesis that all things are intellectually more or less equally defensible' (Popper 1987:20; also see Miscevic 2015). This implies that anything can be articulated – in other terms, relativism upholds the notion that everything goes. As such, some difficulties concerning relativism stand out. If everything goes for example:

- The notion of searching for the concept of truth, therefore, becomes worthless;
- There would be a lack of appropriate direction (i.e., hindering consensus about a particular prevailing concern), and;
- This could eventually result in a form of disorder, unlawfulness, governance of violence and corruption within a particular social order.

Three forms of moral pluralism (versus relativism) can be determined by bringing Stone, Callicott and Wenz into conversation with each other. These are (see Wenz 1993): minimal moral pluralism; moderate moral pluralism and; extreme moral pluralism.

4.4. Three forms of moral pluralism

4.4.1. Minimal moral pluralism

One representative of minimal moral pluralism is Stone (1981:145). He states that moral pluralism opposes moral monism: 'a single coherent set of principles capable of governing all moral quandaries.' The reason for this is that the aim of moral pluralism is not to propose a single universal answer to every ethical question. Wenz (1993:186) calls this position '…minimal moral pluralism because the requirements for being pluralistic are minimal.' Callicott (1990) rejected Stone's minimal pluralistic position based on two points. These are:

- Initially, Callicott states that a pluralistic principle does not offer a practical guideline to ordinary individuals in all circumstances. In this regard, Callicott (1990:112) accuses pluralistic values of being unsuccessful in arranging for a single, monistic response to complex moral demands. In other words, moral monism does not leave ordinary individuals uncertain about how to go about the complexities of ethical quandaries (Callicott 1990:99).

- Next, Callicott maintains that pluralistic values '…might provide a sophisticated scoundrel with a bag of tricks to rationalize his or her convenience or self-interest' (1990:111) since moral pluralism remains unclear especially when it comes to solving complex problems. Callicott's moral monism provides such guidelines. In his comment on Callicott and Stone's dispute, Wenz (1993) specifies that, '[h]owever, they [as monistic theorists] can be in this favored position only if,

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unlike pluralistic theories, they supply such unambiguous answers and so leave scoundrels no room to rationalize immoral behavior.'

This means that Callicott's arguments against Stone's minimal moral pluralism are also inappropriate and incorrect because Callicott's stance remains unsuccessful on a practical level, even though it provides unity and guidance on a hypothetical level. Wenz (1993) continues by saying that:

> If the failure to provide unambiguous prescriptions risks self-serving rationalizations, as Callicott maintains, a theory can overcome this defect only by supplying to ordinary people unambiguous, practical prescriptions in all situations where moral choices must be made. (p.187)

This implies that no moral principle or value is monistic enough, because it gives the impression that most ethical values are pluralistic from a minimal point of view. Every principle thus seems to remain unproductive in this regard, especially when it comes to informing ordinary individuals about the application of a practically available analytical process of a workable moral conduct. Even though monistic values have some advantages over pluralistic ones, Wenz (1993:187) states that 'no monistic theories exist that can be preferred to those that are minimally pluralistic.' This is because such monistic theories to some extent do not have a practical application.

4.4.2. Extreme moral pluralism

Stone (1981) adopted what Wenz (1993:187) designated as extreme moral pluralism: 'a more robust notion of pluralism that does not render all theories pluralistic.' Extreme moral pluralism is characterized by adjustments between different moral theories. Wenz (1993:187) points out that, '[a]lthough each such theory is accepted in its entirety, the range of application of each is limited.' This means that this position embraces a diversity of values for a variety of contexts and practices. Stone (1981:118) proposes, for example, that a senator may perhaps choose:

- Utilitarian ethics (the great happiness principle) when it comes to choosing between legislative counsels;
- Kantian ethics (respect of persons) concerning personal issues, and;
- Leopold's land ethic (the expansion of human morality to encompass most non-human members of the biotic community) when it comes to environmental destructions like preserving a particular wilderness.

For Callicott, however, the problem with Stone's standpoint is that a sensible person cannot reasonably take all three viewpoints. This is because there is no consistency between Kantian ethics, utilitarian ethics and Leopold's land ethic. The problem with Kantian ethics is that, as the notion reason or rationality constitutes the intrinsic nature or the substance of human beings; every nonhuman entity can only be observed as an instrument (Callicott 1990:114). Regardless of this anthropocentric commitment that elevates human reason, '…Kantian [ethics] rejects the utilitarian concern for pleasures, pains, and preference satisfactions among

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human beings and other animals, and the land ethic's concern for biotic communities, wilderness areas, and endangered species' (Wenz 1993:188). Again, utilitarianists approve radical individualism, on the one hand, but in contrast Leopold's land ethic embraces the notion of community as a system in which underlying components are inevitably and exclusively interconnected. Choosing between Kantian ethics, utilitarian ethics and Leopold's land ethic therefore becomes problematic, because human beings require a certain sense of consistency, coherence and closure – especially when it comes to an individual and communal or holistic view of humanity, the natural environment and also in connection with the entire world (Callicott 1990:115). In this regard, extreme moral pluralism therefore remains an inconsistent form of pluralism.

4.4.3. Moderate moral pluralism

Moderate moral pluralism can be viewed as a single moral theory which '…does not involve alternation among different ethical theories' (Wenz 1993:189). If it is a single moral theory, how can it then be pluralistic? Wenz (1993:189) states that '[i]t is pluralistic only in the sense that it … contains a variety of independent principles, principles that cannot all be reduced to or derived from a single master principle…' In light of this, moderate moral pluralism, when observed carefully shares certain of its characteristics with some of the environmental pragmatist's insights. Weston`s notion of the ecology of values: 'plurality of concrete values' (Wenz 2000:286) and Hattingh's (1999:80) idea of the diversity of environmental ethics as a large toolkit serve as examples. In this sense, moderate pluralism does not divide moral life into

separate categories, as this principle tries to address concrete environmental destructions with the same principle, ecology of values or the large toolkit in the sense in which Hattingh uses it.

To summarize the conversation, Wenz chooses the last-mentioned moral pluralism, since it suggests the greatest potential for a workable environmental ethics. Unlike the first two forms of the moral pluralism elaborated above, moderate moral pluralism 'is reasonable and free of the defects that justify rejecting extreme pluralism' (Wenz 1993:185). Wenz (1993:185) evaluated Stone's minimal moral pluralism and dismissed it 'as unhelpful because, contrary to its author's probable intentions, it makes all moral theories pluralistic.' In spite of the fact that Callicott does not accurately identify the weakness of Stone's extreme moral pluralism, he criticizes this position for its lack of unity and integrity which are necessary for a coherent moral concern. Wenz (1993:189) also discards Stone's extreme moral pluralism – as it is constructed based on an unsound analogy which is inconsistent and incoherent especially where consistency and rationality are imperative in practice. In closing, Wenz 1993:194) recommended a moderate moral pluralism that allows for the coexistence of a diversity of values and opinions with unity at the metaphysical and foundational scale over both minimal and extreme moral pluralism.

Despite of some of the problems and disagreements discussed above, these forms of moral pluralism show no sign of relativism. For example, minimal moral pluralism as the notion implies suggests that the plurality of theories is always kept at a

minimal level. Extreme moral pluralism and moderate pluralism also do not indicate any sign of relativism in the sense that not all theories are given as pluralistic, since the diversity of theories is situated within a particular context and practice. In short, these forms of moral pluralism do not embrace a diversity of theories and opinions that could allow anyone to do as they please.

Moreover, another system of moral pluralism which somewhat overlaps with these three forms (and in particular to minimal moral pluralism) offers a better account for environmental destructions (unlike moral monism and relativism). This is environmental pragmatism.

4.5. Environmental pragmatism

Environmental pragmatism is a pluralist paradigm. It attempts to conserve the environment by incorporating some ideas developed by classical pragmatists (e.g. Charles Sanders Peirce; William James and John Dewey) within environmental ethics.

These pragmatists find inspiration from the philosophical tradition which originated in America around 1870. Although there are some differences in their individual interpretation of the concept, the underlying idea within pragmatism can be summed up in the pragmatist maxim that a hypothesis can be clarified by tracing its practical outcomes. In other words, this axiom takes the following principles into consideration: the usefulness of a theory should be based on its practical implication; the practicality of an idea should be guided by an action; and the perception of truth should be verified by practical conviction. The classical pragmatists, therefore,

offered a comprehensive paradigm but did not anticipate the environmental problems experienced today. Parker (1996) observes the same principle when he says:

> When it comes to applying these insights [classical pragmatist ideas] to contemporary issues of "the environment," and to developing the details of legitimate environmental philosophy, we enter new territory. (p. 28)

The promise of environmental pragmatism is that it can assist decision-makers and practitioners to integrate different values in order to enable them to reform institutions and practices. When standing values evolve into practice i.e. policy discussion platforms, new perspectives and stronger values can emerge. In this regard, environmental pragmatism does not commence with theory but with practice. This is because, by merely focusing on theoretical arguments and debates, progress in environmental policy discussion can be obstructed (see Light & Katz 1996).

With the pragmatic turn, the split between ethical theories and environmental values, as well as between theories and practices can no longer be emphasised, because these previous antagonists are now perceived to be in need of each other. As a huge number of different values are now coming together, the framework of ethical decision-making can, therefore, be viewed as a large toolbox which is available when making ethical decisions (Hattingh 1999:80). This toolbox, according to Weston (1984, 1992), serves as an ecology of values: a multiplicity of ideas. These ideas are available whenever needed and '[t]hrough engagement with practical

problems, we can also shape new tools [as values] for this kit, adding to it or refining it as we go along' (Hattingh 1999:80). This is because the ecology of values as a network of ideas allows interaction between diversity of values. As Weston (1985:322) pointed out, '[v]alues so conceived are resilient under stress, because, when put to question, a value can draw upon those other values, beliefs, etc. which hold it in place in the larger system.' This approach is consistent with a participative approach to decision-making (Cloete 2016b).

This means that, even though values influence each other reciprocally in decision-making conversations, most values are exposed to criticisms and transformation because they are different (Weston 1996:286). In spite of this, pragmatism provides a practical, supportive framework where the diversity of values can co-exist and where new, robust and concrete values can emerge and flourish.

Furthermore, pragmatism offers Norton's adaptive management principle which entails a multi-scalar analysis on the basis of time and location, as well as tolerance. Tolerance is essential when it comes to avoiding incompatible disagreements between overlapping theorists in policy decision-making. A multi-scalar evaluation, according to Norton (2005:93), puts emphasis on the importance of conceptualising environmental destructions and values within the multiple frameworks of time and space.

To illustrate this, Norton (2003:324) makes a distinction between time scales.

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- The first scale is from 0-5 years. This is a time scale where various profitable decision-making processes take place. For example, this is where human values, as tools, are given the highest priority to estimate the natural environment.

- The second time scale starts from 5 to 200 years. This represents the assessment of the transition from the individual towards the community. It is through a considerable time scale where interaction between values has effect.

- The third time scale represents an open-ended process. This presupposes the survival of the community of life on earth. As human actions keep on polluting the environment without restrictions, such as when humans burn fossil fuels which trigger an escalation of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the ecological system will be influenced negatively. As noted, the community of life will remain threatened until there is a change of direction. This multi-scalar analysis focuses on the concept of time.

Now, it is vital to reflect on the multi-scalar analysis in terms of locality. In order for different species to adapt to certain conditions, they require certain locations. In other words, the survival of particular species is entirely determined by particular locations. This also applies to a diversity of values. Values are contextual. They can transform practices once they are situated within a particular locality within a framework of time. Values are therefore temporal, provisional and conditional (Norton 2005:93).

In this light it is, therefore, suggested that ethical decision-making should incorporate the diversity of values, e.g. the utilitarian approach, the rights approach

or the eco-centric approach when considering a possible course of action. It should, over a long scale of time, take environmental as well as social concerns into consideration. The notion of truth is an open-ended development which surfaces within a certain frame of time and place. It can always be revised and modified. To this end, the diversity of values is not a problem to be resolved but rather should be seen as a resource by which the claim for truth can be operational in transforming short-term practice into long-term scales.

4.6. Evaluation

Even though environmental pragmatism has been proposed as a new approach in environmental thinking, and it contends that theoretical debates are delaying consensus between decision-makers concerning environmental destructions in policy formulation, some current debates and disagreements about this approach can also be established.

Some examples noted in Rosenthal and Buchhholz (1996) are as follows:

> Bob Pepperman Taylor has argued that Dewey's position is socio-political at the expense of the environment. And David E. Shaner and R. Shannon Duval have claimed that James's usefulness for environmental ethics is hindered because of this notion of the self. (p. 38)

Callicott (1990:99) rejects the idea of moral pluralism in environmental pragmatism as misguided. He states that pragmatism as a form of moral pluralism would eventually collapse – especially when it comes to deciding what to do when two or

more of its values display opposing practical directions. Furthermore, Katz (1987, 2013) also argues that pragmatism will fail to provide practical environmental ethics. Like moral monism within conventional environmental ethics, pragmatism will eventually lose influence. This argument was directly pointed towards Weston's (1984) pragmatic method. Katz (1987) states:

> A pragmatic value theory and ethic – even if justifiable in itself – would produce an environmental ethic that is irredeemably anthropocentric and subjective. A workable environmental ethic will share many fundamental concepts with pragmatism – e.g., the emphasis on the concrete situation - but it cannot ultimately rest on the values of pragmatism, for these values are inextricably bound up with human desires and interests. (p. 308)

These disagreements are crucial in the sense that they have prompted the most valuable debates concerning pragmatism in environmental thinking.

4.7. Summary

In this chapter, the instrumental-intrinsic contrast, the forms of moral pluralism and environmental pragmatism (as a form of moral pluralism) were unpacked without being confined to relativism (the philosophical view point that sustains that everything can be supposed).

In what follows an overview of property development shall be deliberated.

Chapter 5 - Overview of property development

5.1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the discipline of property development.

Initially, it provides an overview of property development (i.e. description, motives, participants, processes and requirements for property development). These considerations are widely explored in Cloete (2015, 2016a) though it is worthwhile to reconsider them concisely. Subsequently, it looks at the feasibility study for property development, and the cost-benefit analysis serves as an example. Finally, this chapter, from an ethical perspective, renders some limitations of the cost-benefit analysis – especially when it comes to the estimation of the subjective value of the environment.

5.2. Property development

5.2.1. Description

Property development can be defined to be '…the process directed at the increase in value of an existing property (undervalued or developed) by the application of resources (material human and capital)' (Cloete 2016a:3). It can therefore be understood as a dynamic system which is concerned, for example, with the production of physical and social space in the form of commercial and domestic buildings.

5.2.2. Motives

Possible motives of investing in property development in general may differ. It is thus crucial to distinguish between social (public) and financial (private) reasons for development.

For social motives, the South African government can build houses for its citizens based on the justification that the value of the houses is higher than the development cost itself (Cloete 1999:115). In a nutshell, '[t]he objective of government institutions is usually the improvement or optimisation of services' (Cloete 2015:357).

When financial motives are dominant, in contrast, property development is mainly concerned with profit making. Cloete (1999:115) puts it as thus '…profit is the primary motivator of private sector developers.' In order to maximise profit on capital invested on a project, optimal usage of resources (both human and material) is required. Even though investment on a project involves certain risks (e.g. loss of capital in terms of inflation), profit making remains the prime motive for property development. Although:

> …the developer often does not have a certain return as objective but rather an idea of a probable flow of income, set against the risk, as a criterion for the evaluation of the development. The effect of risk is often incorporated in the rentability as a risk premium added to the required return. (Cloete 2015:357)

5.2.3. Participants

The property development (e.g. shopping centre project) of a particular site involves dynamic interaction between different participants. These include (Cloete 2015:392-394):

- The owner (e.g. investor or developer);

- Land owners (e.g. sellers of the land);

- Project managers;

- Building contractors;

- Financial institutions (e.g. financers);

- Community (e.g. shoppers and normally those who live in the surrounding areas);

- Tenants (e.g. small businesses who are willing to rent office spaces and shops);

- Local officials (e.g. those who are responsible for rezoning and other requirements), and;

- Market research companies and marketing companies.

Once the property development is completed, the following role players are indispensable in the operation of the property – especially in the form of shopping centre space: tenants; the owner; shopping centre management (e.g. those who manage business on behalf of the owner); maintenance team (e.g. cleaning and security); marketing and advertising corporations; shoppers (customers) and local authorities.

Therefore, the tasks of the developer can be summarised as follows.

The developer:

- 'Complete[s] a need and desirability study to establish the demand for a shopping centre in the area.

- [Identifies] the site, have it zoned, consolidated, servitudes registered, etc.

- Complete[s] traffic studies and geotechnical tests on the site;

- Negotiate[s] road changes, bulk services contributions and road improvement contributions with the local government.

- Appoint[s] a professional team (mostly at its own risk until a financier/purchaser has been found) for the design of the shopping centre.

- Line[s] up anchor tenants and national tenants and obtain letters of undertaking or leases subject to the development proceeding.

- Find[s] a financier/purchaser for the development. At this point transfer of the site (normally held under option up to now) occurs and the professional team is officially appointed.

- …becomes the project manager coordinating the development, appointing the main contractor and subcontractor. He[/she] acts as letting agent signing up the tenants on behalf of the owner. He[/she] also exercises quality, financial and time control over the development.

- Sometimes becomes a partner in the development sharing in the long term benefits instead of taking a short term developer's profit and disappearing on competition of the development.

- …will also market the centre in the local press ensuring a stream of articles to keep the public's interest and awareness. He will organise the opening function and make sure that the opening day occur with a big bang.

- Often holds options over adjoining sites having e.g. office rights selling it off at a profit to himself after completion of the shopping centre.' (Cloete 2015:394)

Given an overview of the tasks of the developer as well as participants that are involved in the development project, what are the processes of this development?

5.2.4. Processes

Property development commonly takes the following processes:

- *Idea phase*: At this phase most developers try to envision what type of shopping centre building is required, where and how it should be positioned.

- *Preliminary feasibility phase*: At this stage a brief assessment of whether the development is viable or not is deliberated, especially in financial terms.

- *Phase of gaining control of the site*: Some developers are already in control of a particular site, but '…if a developer does not yet control the site, it must be obtained at this stage' (Cloete 1999:119-121).

- *Comprehensive feasibility study phase*: – at this stage a number of factors of the development are analysed (such as, legal requirements, environmental and social impact assessments) to determine whether the project is acceptable or not, especially when a particular site is obtained.

- *Financing phase*: At this stage negotiations are finalised in order to secure stable financing for the property development. Once stable funding has been prepared, construction financing is projected.

- *Construction phase*: This is the most critical phase of the development. General contractors and subcontractors who should implement the architectural plan at any given circumstance ought to be selected carefully in order to regulate a number of risks. As Cloete (1999) pointed out:

> If the actual costs exceed the estimates used in the feasibility study, the project may turn from a winner to a loser. If the project is not completed on schedule, extra costs and lost rental income could hurt profitability. If any of the parties involved in construction run into financial difficulties, the project could be held up by legal proceedings. (p.120)

- *Marketing phase*: When construction is completed, the marketability of the shopping centre is vital since the success of the development depends on it. 'Two types of marketing may accompany a development project. First, the space in the development must be leased. Second, if the project is to be sold, a buyer must be found' (Cloete 1999:121).

5.2.5. Requirements

It is also important to keep in mind that the success of a particular property development depends, on the one hand, on a number of factors which are under the control of the investor or developer. These are:

- The nature and value or quality of the development;

- Gaining access to the site or location;

- The period of time allocated for access, and;

- The marketability or property advertisement.

On the other hand, the potential success of a certain investment is determined by some factors that are not under the influence of the investor or developer. These include:

- Political influences;

- Legal aspects;

- Social impacts, and;

- Environmental concerns.

Moreover, the notion of risk for property development should be examined. Some risks are under the control of the developer.

> Risk is potential variance realisation and expectation. Development always carries with it the risk of loss. The developer is particularly concerned with the down-side risk, i.e. the risk of not realising the expectation of profit (Cloete (1999:124; 2001:2).

Risk, in a nutshell, can be understood as a condition that involves the danger of losing something of value. Factors *inter alia* such as cost overruns generated by high interest rates, bad weather conditions and lack of ethical or professional conduct by

the participants in the process (in conjunction with some factors that are not under the control of the developer) can put the profitability of the development at risk.

Based on these considerations for property development, a feasibility study is required in order to determine the possible outcome of a project.

5.3. The feasibility study

5.3.1. Description

Depending on the nature of the property development project, the viability of a property development is commonly measured in terms of an economic feasibility study. This is often used interchangeably with other notions (e.g. desirability study or viability study). The economic feasibility study is a valuable tool to determine the possible successes and returns of a particular property development or investment (Cloete 2006). This is also commonly considered in order to survey some of the crucial aspects that are related to a specific project. These aspects, from a property development vantage point, are the physical-legal, economic, marketing, financial and socio-environmental aspects.

More specifically, when deliberating upon the prospective outcome of a certain property development project, a feasibility study can be used as a valuable methodology. Cloete (2016a:126) articulates likewise when he states that: 'The feasibility study is an analytical instrument which evaluates the possible success of a development already in the planning stage of the property development.' A feasibility study, in other words, can be seen as a decision-making tool which tries to assess the probable success of an obtainable project.

5.3.2. Characteristics

Based on this description, the characteristics of the feasibility study for property development can be summarized in the following way (Cloete 2015:356):

- Firstly, feasibility studies depend on the objectives of a developer. Objectives of a developer have to be determined first before the potential success of a property development can be appraised.

- Secondly, feasibility studies are future-orientated.

- Thirdly, feasibility studies are based on the appraisal of prospective uncertainties. This means that there are no final solutions to some of the problems a project may encounter, but there is a diversity of ways (which come with particular outcomes, challenges and indecisions) of how the developer can achieve the desired outcome.

- Fourthly, a feasibility study of a project is commonly restricted to obtainable (or available) resources (e.g. finances). This therefore means that the best possible solution is not always feasible within the restrictions of these resources.

- Lastly, in feasibility studies, a particular property development project and the viability of a specific site are often taken as points of departure for the feasibility study.

5.3.3. Cost-benefit analysis

As noted, feasibility study is a valuable tool to determine the possible successes and returns of a particular property development or investment (see Cloete 2006). The

cost-benefit analysis is one example. It is the most effective and extensively used economic metric for investment assessments. Even though the cost-benefit analysis can be useful to determine the success of a certain property development in monetary terms, the predicament is that it is subject to a number of constraints, like determining the intrinsic value of non-human organisms (Cloete 2006). Here the non-human organisms among other factors are characterised '…as an "externality" … that can be included as a factor in the price of producing goods and services' (Seeliger 2009:ii). In other words, the inherent value of non-human organisms can merely be measured in terms of an exchange value. For this reason, the intrinsic value of some of the non-human organisms has been ignored.

5.4. Some constraints of the cost-benefit analysis

Since a feasibility study (and cost-benefit analysis specifically) has been carried out in order to determine the possible outcomes of a particular property development project, some constraints can be determined. These constraints are formulated quite clearly in Cloete (2008):

> It is a special case of cost-benefit analysis in particular and of decision-making in general and is subject to the same limitations. Consideration of the so-called externalities of a project (sustainability, safety, societal impact, environmental consequences, etc.) is becoming more important and is increasingly becoming compulsory. (p. 1)

He concluded *inter alia* with a consideration that: 'It is apparent that this problem is but one of the philosophical issues implicit in feasibility studies' (Cloete 2008:6).

The cost-benefit analysis, from an ethical vantage point, has been associated with the consequentialist utilitarian approach. It has commonly been used around the world to estimate the advantages and disadvantages of a particular course of action. This is because it focusses on the consequential assessment of outcomes and as a consequence 'an alternative is not evaluated by itself but in comparison to other alternatives' (Hansson 2007:164).

One example would be considering a number of values (like economic costs and environmental destruction) that are in conflict with each other in policy-making. In case of those with legal property rights to a wetland, if the decision to destroy the wetland for a particular economic value is made and it thus causes a severe destruction to the value of the wetland:

- Initially, the cost–benefit analysis puts such values parallel to each other by simply weighing on the probable outcomes.
- Next, it allocates a monetary value on their corresponding end results, and;
- At the end, the outcomes that yield the maximum value of benefits – subtracting the costs – are therefore taken into account (Hansson 2007:163).

Some methodological limits regarding the cost-benefit analysis, however, can be drawn to attention.

From an economic perspective, the limitation of the cost–benefit analysis is that '…the basic problem of comparing different classes of values (e.g. profit vs.

environmental degradation) is mostly dealt with by converting values into a monetary metric, but remains unresolved on a fundamental level' (Cloete 2008:9).

Philosophically, one of the methodological limits of the cost-benefit analysis is based on a number of agreeing observations, but two of them stand out.

- To begin with, it is philosophically and morally problematic to assign a fiscal value to some considerations, such as human beings and some non-human animals.

- The other is '…contingent valuation, in which the price of non-market goods such as environmental assets … [is] determined by asking people what they are willing to pay for them' states Hansson (2007:164).

Furthermore, the practical effectiveness of the cost–benefit analysis, according to Hansson (2007), can be summarised in terms of various kinds of philosophical concerns. These are:

- *Topic selection*: Since it is improbable somewhat to perform cost-benefit analysis in every decision, selection of themes should therefore be taken into consideration. Hansson (2007) writes:

> This selection is in practice not done in a coordinated fashion but depends entirely on the willingness of particular decision-makers to pay for a … [cost–benefit analysis]. It may nevertheless be the most important factor that determines the social effects of cost–benefit analysis. (p. 165)

- *Dependence on the decision context*: A cost-benefit analysis that is suitable for a particular developer for a specific property development project may perhaps not be suitable for another developer who is trying to make a different decision regarding the similar project. Hansson (2007:166) puts it as follows: 'A decision-guiding evaluation of an object (a project, say) can be performed with respect to different decisions about this object.' This implies that the context upon which a decision should be made is inevitably significant.

- *The indeterminateness of human control over future decisions*: In Hansson's (2007) words:

  > The characterization of future developments that is needed in a … [cost-benefit analysis] is complicated not only by prediction problems but also by the indeterminateness of our control over future decisions. Decision analysis usually has its focus on one-shot decisions, i.e. situations in which a decision-maker has exactly one decision to make in a matter. (p. 172)

- *The need to exclude certain consequences for moral reasons*: A cost–benefit analyses (as a form of consequentialism) take positive consequences of unethical actions into account. Hansson (2007) states:

  > It is a common criticism against consequentialism that it counts positive consequences of immoral acts in the same way as positive consequences of morally acceptable acts. In hedonistic utilitarianism, the pleasure a murderer derives from his deed is included on the positive side of the hedonic calculation. Similarly, preference utilitarianism will include the satisfaction

of his preferences as a positive factor. This is commonly taken to be a problematic feature in utilitarian theory.' (p. 173)

- *Bias in the delimitation of consequences, incommensurability of consequences*: Given that it should take all consequences of courses of action into consideration (especially when the consequences can be identified and quantified), a cost–benefit analysis can therefore be accused of being bias for excluding some of the most important factors in the appraisal. In Hansson (2007) it is stated similarly:

> Most of the philosophical discussion about cost–benefit analysis has been concerned with the difficulties involved in assigning an economic value to that which we conceive as invaluable, such as a human life or an animal species. It is more or less in the nature of cost–benefit analysis to be open to criticism for valuing the invaluable. When we are only concerned with commodities that have an uncontroversial monetary value (and we do not wish to take externalities into account), we can usually rely on actual market values. Recourse is usually taken to cost–benefit analysis only when goods are involved that do not have a market value. (p. 176-177)

Moreover, Chichilnisky (1997) provides a better account of this by comparing the limitations of cost-benefit analysis with the methodological constraints in relation to the assessment of weather services and conditions. She states that:

> …cost-benefit analysis can be useful but it can also go wrong. Erroneous cost-benefit analysis can be as damaging as erroneous weather predictions. Both fail when concerned with larger issues. Weather predictions for large areas

and for large timescales are unreliable and could be dangerous if not taken too seriously (Chichilnisky 1997:202).

This implies that the human knowledge, understanding and methodologies are not absolute and conclusive and thus they cannot guarantee certainty about what should be decided upon.

For this reason, Seeliger (2009) interrogated why economic approaches remain incapable to address environmental destructions in policymaking. Her findings were that, many of the existing economic metrics, such as the cost-benefit analysis of neo-classical economics and ecological economics '…remain trapped in a form of moral monism and are thus unable to express the full range of environmental values that exist. As noted above, this results in a form of reductionism in economic thinking where all environmental value is expressed in the form of exchange value' (Seeliger 2009: 1). Indeed, monism or reductionism is a naïve and simplistic approach that underestimates the complexity of the present-day concerns and practices. When interpreted sensibly, as de Villiers (2002) pointed out:

> People are faced with a strange paradox when it comes to moral responsibility today. On the one hand there is, more than ever before, an acute awareness of the enormous moral responsibility humankind has to bear. Never has the clarion call to moral responsibility been so often repeated than in our time. On the other hand, however, a growing lack of moral responsibility in contemporary societies is being experienced. (p. 16)

Since the prevailing, reductionist approaches like cost-benefit analysis alone cannot succeed in providing entry into the complexities of current environmental destructions which should be taken into account when deliberating on the ethical dimensions of property development, there seems to be a pervasive reluctance and also a failure to accept ethical responsibility. 'The failure to acknowledge the complexity of a certain situation is not merely a technical error… it is also an ethical one. A modest position should not be a weak position, but a responsible one' writes Cilliers (2010: 256). Accepting and applying a hypothesis uncritically can be misleading if not dangerous. Strictly speaking, an uncritically examined hypothesis or a reductionist theory is not worth accepting or implementing until it has received sufficient critical scrutiny.

In light of major business scandals, such as Enron - which filed for insolvency as the world experienced the great economic catastrophe since the Great Depression - Ghoshal (2005) articulates that it could be harmful to accept dominant theories or values uncritically. He therefore upholds that: '… as [a] business school faculty– [we] need to own up to our own role in creating Enrons. Our theories and ideas have done much to strengthen the management practices that we are all now so loudly condemning' (Ghoshal 2005:75). This is because within the management theories framework, the notion of human intentions, choices and critical logical thinking have often been excluded. This results in a disreputable, unethical pretence of knowledge (Ghoshal 2005:77), which is dissolute in the sense that ethics to a large extent cannot be entirely separated from human intentions and management theories are thus too causal or simplistic in their line of attack. Therefore, Woermann (2010:16) concluded

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that '[a] precondition for transforming business studies into a science has, therefore, been the denial of ethical and moral considerations in business theories, and prescriptions for management practices.' One leading example of this (in management theories) is the reductionist attitude of the famous economist Milton Friedman. Friedman (1962) for example upheld that the aim of business is to make profit. This therefore means that business does not have any social obligations. As this view undermines the complexity of the business environment, it can:

> …be bad even when [it is] not altogether wrong. In essence, social scientists carry an even greater social and moral responsibility than those who work with physical sciences because, if they hide ideology in the pretence of science, they can cause much more harm. (p. 79)

5.5. Summary

This chapter commenced by summarising some of the more important characteristics of property development. In particular, the description, motives, participants, processes and requirements for property development were unpacked, with a special focus on Cloete (1999, 2015). The feasibility study for property development of which the cost-benefit analysis functions as one example was considered. The chapter concluded by rendering a few thoughts on the limitations of the cost-benefit analysis when it comes to the assessment of the ethical aspect of the natural environment.

This chapter should therefore be seen as the useful background to the implications for ethical property development (chapter 6) that are guided by the ethical

perspectives concerning environmental destructions which will be explored in chapter 7.

Chapter 6 - Implications for (ethical) property development

6.1. Introduction

In light of this overview, what is missing within the discipline of property development is the inability of developers to take due cognisance of the ethical perspectives that moral philosophy provides.

These ethical perspectives can be summarised as follows.

6.2. Instrumental perspective

The traditional ethical theories, namely utilitarianism, rights approach and virtue theory are limited to instrumentalism since they cannot extend the intrinsic value towards non-human organisms. However, the implication of the consequentialist utilitarian approach for ethical property development is that it utilises the principle of utility. This principle can be associated with the cost-benefit analysis that traditionally has been used in property development. The purpose of the principle of utility is to minimise costs (loss) by maximising benefit (income) to the greatest number of human beings. As Cloete (2016b:1) states, '…when the feasibility of a proposed property development is being considered, benefits are compared with costs, where benefits are defined as increases in human well-being (utility) and costs are defined as reductions in human well-being.' The implication of the rights

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approach for property development is that it proposes the principle of rationality. The principle of rationality is important because it pays attention to who has rights, freedom and liberty and also determines that such rights, freedom and liberty are respected. When, for example, the Kariba Dan was built in Zimbabwe, it changed the ecology of the Kariba Valley, caused extensive displacement of animals (rescued by 'Operation Noah') and also the flooding of human settlements that had been present in the Valley. The rights and freedom of certain groups of humans were sacrificed for the potential benefits to other citizens. Similar examples abound. The implication of the virtue approach (unlike in both utilitarianism and the rights approach) is that the moral character of a moral agent, a human being, is taken into consideration since morality is determined by way of the cultivating of the human character. However, a problematic implication of the traditional ethical theories is that these theories may offer only a one-sided approach to ethical property development, because the notion of intrinsic value is not extended to non-human organisms, but it is confined to humans. Whether ethical values should be extended to non-human organisms, or should be confined to, for example, sentient organisms only, is of course a moot point.

6.3. Intrinsic perspective

Given the one-sidedness as well as some limitations to the traditional ethical perspectives, it is inevitable that the field of environmental ethics embodies a diversity of environmental values. These include animal rights and liberations values, eco-centrism and biocentrism, radical approaches and the politics of the

transformation movement as well as deep ecology. The implications that these ethical perspectives hold for ethical property development are that many of them strongly argue for the intrinsic value of the entire community of life, both human beings and non-human organisms, in contrast to the traditional ethical theories. For example, the proponents of animal rights and liberations, unlike proponents of the rights approach and utilitarianism, maintain that the boundaries of human moral destructions should be stretched towards some non-human animals. Bio-centrists like Taylor (1981:218) uphold that as moral agents, human beings should respect the natural environment as it also has intrinsic value. Eco-centrists maintain that environmental preservation is the basis of a harmonious relationship between the land and human beings (Leopold (1949 [1970]:243). Deep ecology thus integrates most of the non-anthropocentric environmental values. However, there are also problematic implications concerning a diversity of values in environmental ethics. Unlike traditional ethical perspectives, these values do not offer clear guidelines determining a particular course of action. Many of these values from a theoretical perspective overlap, even though there are some differences amongst them, because of disagreements and disputes prevalent amongst environmental philosophers.

6.4. Pluralist perceptive

The implication of the pragmatic approach is that it takes a concrete practical context as a point of departure for ethical property development. In other words, it tries to avoid monistic and reductionist strategies. The most important aspect of this approach is that both traditional theories and a diversity of environmental values

can be incorporated under a single umbrella (or a large toolkit) without reducing them to a single theory like moral monism. Different vantage points and robust values can develop, especially, when existing values evolve and mingle with each other within practice i.e. policy discussion context. In this regard, traditional ethical theories and a diversity of environmental values and the distinction between intrinsic and instrumental dichotomy can be reconciled. In addition, the other implication is that the pragmatic approach proposes Norton's strategies of experimentalism, multi-scalar exploration and localism for the implementation of the property development decision-making process. These are flexible, experimental, and pluralistic, as well as interactive strategies which can support the decision-makers to make useful decisions about environmental values in property policymaking. The pragmatic approach as experimentalism is committed to a continuous engagement with human experience in order to reduce some uncertainty about property development and environmental values. These experiments encompass a number of indecisions because the outcomes remain open-ended. Thus, a cautious experimentation based on experience should be used in order to decide on workable decisions, or a participative approach to decision-making may be implemented (Cloete 2016b). This can also assist the property development decision-makers to modify their objectives and prospects about the nature of development in order to accommodate environmental values when deciding about a particular investment. When it comes to incompatible disputes between overlapping values in ethical decision-making procedures, the pragmatic approach provides a principle of tolerance to avoid such disputes. For example, the proximity of a mining

development to an ecologically sensitive area like the Mapungubwe World Heritage

Site may be restricted.

Concluding remarks

Given the aim of this study, which was to explore the ethical perspectives that can be established in philosophical literature for ethical decision-making in relation to environmental problems, three perspectives (i.e., the instrumental, intrinsic and pluralist perspectives) were distinguished and their implications for ethical property development explored.

The problem with both the instrumental position of the traditional ethical values and the diversity of intrinsic values in environmental ethics is that they are one-dimensional. It was shown that the traditional ethical values merely articulate the value of non-human organisms with regard to instrumental value.

In contrast to these views, the overall implication of pragmatism, as a system of moral pluralism, is that it can be utilized as a flexible toolbox which unites both traditional ethical values and the diversity of environmental ethics, as well as allowing new values to emerge without adhering to relativism. As it challenges the parameters of conventional feasibility studies of property development, pragmatism also functions as a suitable basis towards ethical policies in property development. Pragmatism allows a participative approach to decision-making, which may provide a basis on which common ground may emerge.

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