



Research Paper

Understanding the Concept of Sustainability: An Overview of Ethical and Social Dimension

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Abstract: Sustainability has become a critical goal for contemporary humanity and sustainable science is widely viewed as the primary means for achieving sustainability. In the modern global world, achieving sustainability has become a central issue. Besides from the emerging challenges of how can we become sustainable, debate continues to emerge over basic issues such as what it even means to be sustainable, why is it critical to address ethical issues when thinking about sustainability, and why has our failure to understand the concept sustainability created serious problems and challenges. It remains unclear, what exactly the nature of sustainability is. The scholars in sustainability discourse, continue to debate whether sustainability is more about economics, ecology, or social science. For example, many ecologists and environmentalists think sustainability is primarily about documenting and protecting ecosystem health, while many engineers working on sustainability premise think sustainability is primarily about more efficiently meeting human needs. These debates, however, failed to appreciate the ethical dimension of

sustainability and have almost entirely neglected a fundamental dimension of sustainability that is “the ethical dimension”. Exclusive perspectives and a lack of concern for ethical issues can be ameliorated by considering sustainability as meeting human needs in a socially just manner without depriving ecosystems of their health. The main argument of this paper is that sustainability has largely been reduced to a scientific endeavour, often motivated or read primarily from a scientific perspective, but if sustainability is understood from the perspective of society and ethics there will be more efficient ways to become sustainable and hence to satisfy human needs.

Keywords: Sustainability, Science, Ecology, Ethics, Society, Human values.

Introduction:

In today’s world, ensuring sustainability has become a major concern. Apart from the difficulties of achieving sustainability, debate continues to simmer over fundamental topics such as what it means to be sustainable and what new knowledge is required to achieve sustainability. One manifestation of this contention is the

exclusive manner in which various academic quarters sometimes portray the nature of sustainability. Many environmental scientists believe that sustainability is primarily concerned with documenting and safeguarding ecosystem health, whereas many engineers believe that sustainability is concerned with meeting human needs more efficiently. Sustainability scholars continue to debate whether sustainability is more about economics, ecology, or social science. This debate, however, has almost entirely neglected a fundamental dimension of sustainability: the ethical dimension. Delineate Sustainability has become a vital objective for modern civilization, and sustainability science is largely regarded as the most effective means of accomplishing it. In today's world, ensuring sustainability has become a major concern. Aside from the new challenges of how to become sustainable, debate continues to emerge over fundamental issues such as what it means to be sustainable, why ethical issues must be addressed when thinking about sustainability, why our failure to grasp the concept of sustainability has resulted in serious problems, and what new knowledge is required to become sustainable. But it remains unclear what exactly the nature of sustainability is. Scholars in the field of sustainability continue to debate whether sustainability is primarily concerned with economics, ecology, or social science. Many ecologists and environmentalists, for example, believe that sustainability is primarily about monitoring and conserving ecological health, but too many engineers working on sustainability principles believe that sustainability is largely about meeting human demands more effectively. These arguments, on the other hand, have failed to recognise the ethical part of sustainability and have almost entirely ignored a vital aspect of sustainability: the ethical dimension. For example, if

sustainability is primarily motivated by a non-anthropocentric ethic, documenting and protecting ecosystem health may be an appropriate role for science; however, if sustainability is primarily motivated by an anthropocentric ethic, finding more efficient ways to meet human needs may be the appropriate role for science — and focusing on ecosystem health may be a waste of time. Exclusive perspectives and a lack of concern for ethical issues can be alleviated if sustainability is defined as serving human needs in a socially just manner without compromising the health of ecosystems.

Most interpretations of sustainable development work within the Brundtland formula (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) but vary in relation to the emphasis placed on each of its three components: economy, environment and society (Ross 2009). The interpretations of quality of life have changed along the time to match the different world developments, goals and aspirations; higher quality of life is today inextricably related to environmental and social sustainability, rather than just a higher economic standard of living. In simple terms, sustainable development implies a high potential for human well-being because it encapsulates the two terms 'development' and 'sustainable', the former is concerned with human evolution and activities on both the social and economic levels, while the latter is concerned with the environmental stress that such development causes (Eid, 2009). Sustainable development, according to the British Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), is a tool for achieving a better quality of life for everyone, now and for the future generations, through four main strands: the first is social progress, the second is maintaining high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, and the third is protecting, and if possible, enhancing the

environment, and finally, the fourth being the prudent use of natural resources and general consumptions (Eid, 2012; Department of Trade and Industry 2003).

Relationship between Ethics and Sustainability:

Ethics or morality has to do with the principles, standards, rules, norms of conduct that make cooperation, justice, and freedom possible. Ethics is inseparable from questions of cultural meaning and social power; it provides a philosophically based touchstone for an ideal of justice, right relationship, and the proper use of power and authority. The ethical analysis typically has the following four central components: 1.) an evaluation of the character and intentions of the agent—what virtues does the agent exemplify? 2.) an evaluation of the inherent properties of an action—what rights or duties does the action fulfill or violate? 3.) an evaluation of the consequences of an action—what benefits or harms are brought about by the action? 4.) an evaluation of the context within which actions take place and does the action support or undermine the system or context which makes the action possible and meaningful?

This fourth aspect has the most direct connection with the common sense meaning of the concept of “sustainability”. But all four aspects are relevant to sustainability, which is not only about living with constraints, parameters, and limits but also about prescribing some inherently wrong or causally harmful types of action, and about creating the proper kind of sensibility, motivation, and moral commitment in people. In sum, virtue, rightness, consequence, and context are all ethically important in navigating sustainability (Jennings, 1994). Jennings argues that “Ethical analysis is deeply affected by the initial ontological starting point or orientation one assumes. In general, there are three such orientations,

the theocentric, the anthropocentric and the biocentric.” The human centered orientation denies that non-human things have any inherent or intrinsic moral values; their value is only instrumental to human values, goals, and well-being. The biocentric perspective holds that value in the world does not reside within human beings alone. The value in the world—for the sake of which ethics and morality exist in the first place—resides in the natural and biotic context of which individuals and societies are a part. Therefore, ethical rights and duties, and the good for which ethical agency and action strive, should be understood in terms of synthesis of interdependency, relationship, sustainability, and resiliency. Human-centred ethics is the default position of our politics and public policy today, and it leads to a position that might be called unsustainable rapacity (Jennings, 1994).

Environmental quality is heavily influenced by ethical views, ecological conscience, and moral responsibility for economic performance (Kothari 1994). The global ecological-moral-social crisis is the result of man’s fight with nature, and it has become one of the world’s most pressing issues that need immediate attention. Morality and principles that can save oneself and the environment have become exceedingly scarce in today’s world. Man must overcome his own turmoil, subdue his primal instincts, and bring order to his inner life. The idea of sustainable development emphasises the importance of values that are universal. The preservation of nature is the common and most essential goal of humanity, according to this worldview of sustainability. It encourages us to stop exploiting nature and begin cooperating with the beauty that surrounds us as well as the beauty that exists within each of us. However, many critical decisions about economic development in transition economies are made without sufficient

consideration of their implications on the main dimensions of a sustainable development. Over the last decade, convergent trends have fashioned a radically different corporate climate for the coming years. This has ramifications for where and how businesses invest, as well as what constitutes shareholder value and risk. Communities frequently engage in direct negotiations with businesses in order to obtain immediate advantages in education, housing, and health – basic development rights – in exchange for obtaining a “social licence to operate.” Mutually agreed-upon objectives and targets, as well as clearly defined roles and duties, are required for successful public-private collaborations (Gasparski and Ryan 1996). The experience with private provision of what was previously a public sector activity has generally been good with respect to the economic dimension of sustainability. The evidence in the environmental and social dimensions is less obvious, but strong public-private partnerships have arisen in numerous transition countries, indicating some progress on both fronts (Ulrich and Sarasin 1995). The principles, standards, regulations, and norms of conduct that enable collaboration, justice, and freedom are referred to as ethics or morality. Ethics is inextricably linked to issues of cultural significance and social power; it serves as a philosophical touchstone for a vision of justice, good relationships, and proper power and authority use (Garcia and Garcia, 2020).

Ethics and sustainability have a complicated relationship. Initially, the ethical aspect of sustainability drew a lot of attention. The recognition that sustainability entailed care for both ecological health and economic development was an early milestone in the history of sustainability — highlighted by the term “sustainable development.” As a result of this, the terms “weak

sustainability” and “strong sustainability” were coined (Beckerman 1994). Weak sustainability is concerned with preserving human welfare and is seen to be more aligned with economic principles. Strong sustainability is generally concerned with sustaining natural capital and thought to be more aligned with traditional conservation values. More recently, the place of ethics within sustainability science has been more contested.

On the one hand, sustainability has been essentially limited to a scientific pursuit, rendering the name “sustainability science” obsolete. Indeed, some have concluded that the ethical components of sustainability have become outmoded as a result of the emergence of sustainability research (Thompson 2007; Jamieson 1998). The ethical aspects of sustainability, according to this viewpoint, are too broad and nebulous to be usefully applied to any specific problem, whereas the scientific aspects appear to be effective at precisely defining problems and developing solutions, regardless of the many details characterizing sustainability issues. One criticism of this viewpoint is that comprehending the “end goals of sustainability” (or sustainability’s ethical dimension) and the “means by which to attain sustainability” (or sustainability’s scientific dimension) is required. The ethical dimension of sustainability is unavoidable, although it is often overlooked. Furthermore, stating that the ethical dimension of sustainability should be neglected because it is too ambiguous to be applied effectively to specific examples in sustainability is akin to claiming that ethics in general should be ignored because it is too vague. (Brown, 1994).

The framework or debates based on existing notions of sustainability are strongly linked to other widely accepted definitions of sustainability, such as those offered by (e.g. WCED 1987). The

aforementioned definition and debates have resulted in a framework with five important dimensions:

a.) Engineering, physical science, biotechnology, economics, and business are all involved in the development of efficient technologies and markets to suit human requirements.

b.) What is the role of ecology and environmental science in understanding the state and nature of ecosystems?

b.) Understanding the effects of exploitation on ecosystems, which falls under the scope of applied ecology and environmental science.

d.) Sociology, political science, policy, law, anthropology, and the arts and humanities are all concerned with understanding how exploitation impacts human civilizations.

b.) Recognizing the significance of normative ideas such as human needs, social justice, deprivation, and ecosystem health, which falls under the scope of ethics and philosophy.

This paradigm emphasises the importance of every academic field in achieving sustainability. The first four characteristics of sustainability are self-evident, but the fifth and final dimension requires some explanation. Although sciences like sociology and political science provide descriptive (i.e. scientific) analyses of how values relate to sustainability, they do not assess the logic, consistency, or strength of the normative notions that underpin sustainability. Ethics is the domain of academics when it comes to such examination. We will never know what sustainability is and, as a result, how to achieve it if we do not explore the ethical dimension of sustainability. If the ethical and philosophical components and foundations of sustainability cannot be avoided, science alone will not be able to assist us in being sustainable. Consider the definition of the term “sustainability.” By defining sustainability as “fulfilling human

needs in a socially just manner without depriving ecosystems of their health,” we may refocus attention on the ethical dimension of sustainability.

These five important characteristics of sustainability are linked to the ethical dimension of sustainability. Paying close attention to this definition might also help us understand how to care for the ethical aspect of sustainability. Consider the notions of human demands and ecosystem health, for example. Sustainability can mean anything from “exploit as much as desired” to “exploit as little as necessary to maintain meaningful living” depending on how civilizations interpret these terms. These two mindsets appear to depict worlds and motivations that are vastly different — one may be described as terrible sustainability and the other as excellent — but either could be regarded “sustainable” depending on how the normative notions that define sustainability are defined. Indeed, society will never reach an everlasting agreement on the definition of normative concepts like sustainability (Amantova-Salmane, L. 2015). Even while we can never expect to arrive at a final decision of its meaning, achieving sustainability necessitates responding to its ethical dimension at all levels of society. As a result, failing to include ethics in the discussion of sustainability will only add to our uncertainty about the idea.

Despite the fact that many scientists and engineers consider these problems insurmountable, they are important roadblocks to reaching sustainability. Furthermore, these are concerns that ethicists are equipped to deal with, and to which others in the humanities may add significantly. To put it another way, we don't know how much sustainability is an anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric mentality. Do we care about ecosystem health because ecosystems are intrinsically important, or merely because it benefits

humans? Many engineers and ecologists believe that sustainability is a human-centered issue. Many of our friends in the humanities have provided robust, well-reasoned explanations for what non-anthropocentric means and why it is so important for conservation. Most scientists and engineers are nearly completely unaware of these explanations, which is embarrassing. It does not imply that the issue of sustainability should be predominantly anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric. The argument is that all academics must discuss the topic in order to achieve sustainability. These arguments are just as necessary for scientists and engineers as they are for environmental ethicists and philosophers to understand the fundamental principles underpinning climate change, habitat devastation, and species extinctions.

Consider how writing on the notion of sustainability has evolved over the last three decades (for example, Jamieson, 1998, Thompson, 2007, Kajikawa, 2008). The recognition that sustainability entailed care for both ecosystem health and economic development was an early development, characterised by the phrase “sustainable development.” As a result, the terms “weak sustainability” and “strong sustainability” were coined. The term “weak sustainability” refers to a lack of ability to maintain human welfare. Strong sustainability is regarded to be more linked with traditional conservation objectives because it is concerned with preserving natural capital. Much of the debate about the difference between strong and weak sustainability has centred on evaluating the logical rigour of each vision and predicting the effect of adopting one over the other. This distinction also allows for a clearer understanding of how ecosystem health and economic development should interact. Today, it is widely assumed that sustainability necessitates valuing not only ecological health and economic progress,

but also social justice. The core concept is that a sustainable society is concerned with social well-being. That is, a sustainable society is concerned about poverty, racism, political marginalisation, the ability to earn a living, and how fair and equitable social interaction should be. As these philosophical components of sustainability have grown in importance, they have been overshadowed by the current focus on sustainability science. Philosophers have been analysing new ideas on the deep nature of sustainability as a result of sustainability science’s dominance. One theory is that the most basic framework for understanding sustainability is the interaction between its technological and philosophical components, rather than the interrelationship between its major ideals (ecosystem health, social justice, and human needs). Thompson (2007) distinguishes between the substantive and non-substantive dimensions of sustainability. According to this assessment, the technical dimension appears valuable for its ability to properly identify problems and to be usefully applied to a wide range of specific scenarios with varying circumstances (e.g., achieving a sustainable harvest of some particular population, or achieving sustainable water use in some local community). The framework that supports sustainability science clearly demonstrates this value (Kajikawa, 2007). The ethical dimension of sustainability is unavoidable at all scales (though underappreciated). Figures 1 show a graphical picture of what sustainable development could mean at the strategic and operational levels. Committing to sustainable development objectives should be a reasoned decision based on ethical considerations. Because rational behaviour is much more than rational self-interest, where rationality demands us to consider the interests of others as well as ourselves, ethical behaviour is directly linked to the

wellbeing of society as a whole (Hooker 2011). The next part attempts to identify common ground between the four ethical theories as discussed by Eid 2012 and their

possible viewpoints on the implications of sustainable development at the societal and individual levels (Eid, 2012).

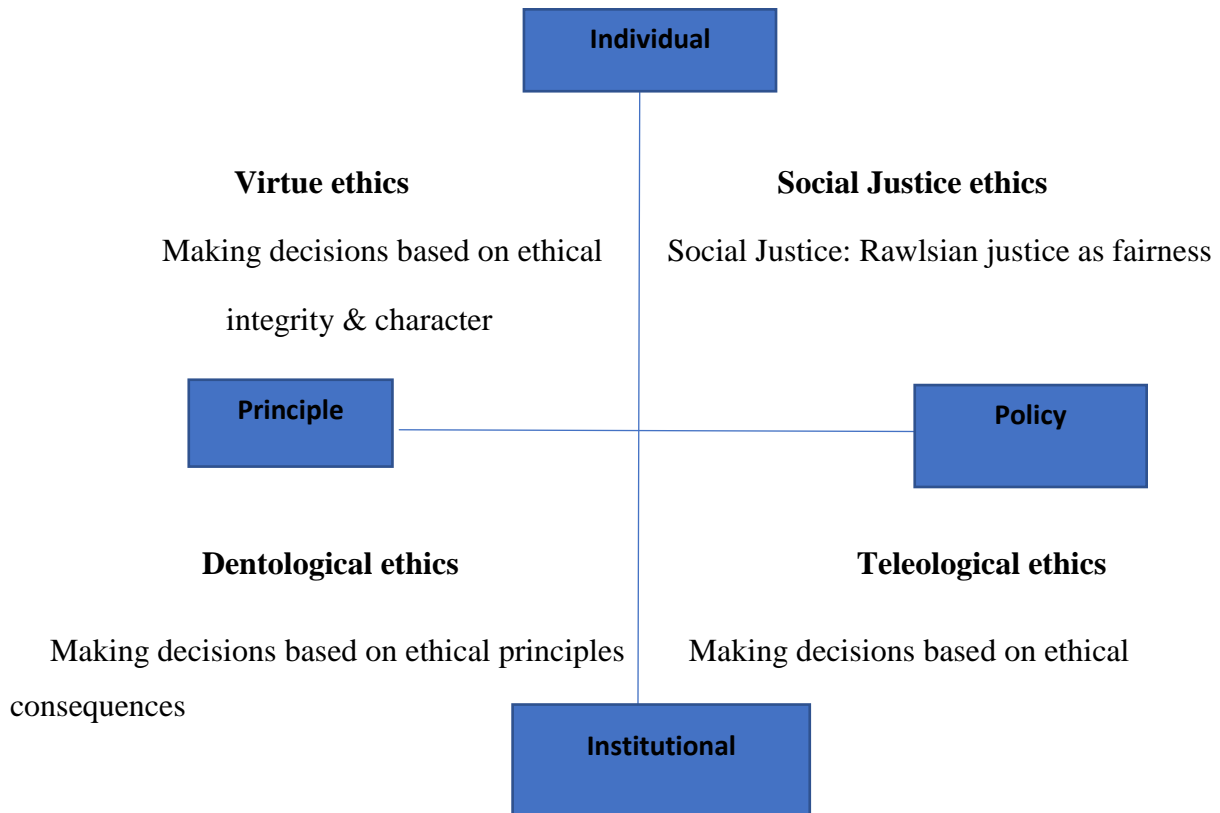


Figure 1. A SCHEMA OF ETHICAL THEORY (Source Eid, M. E. M. 2012)

The Utilitarian View on Sustainable Development

The political philosophy and political economics writings of John Stuart Mill represent a sophisticated attempt to provide a libertarian concept as the cornerstone of a just and progressive social/economic order. Mill presents a kind of prototype of the aspirations of a “sustainable development” built in a standard of justice and solidarity including all of humankind in his synthesis of his writings (O’Connor 1997). In its most basic form, utilitarianism refers to a rule that seeks to maximise the overall good

(Hartman and DesJardins 2011). It promotes the greatest happiness principle as the cornerstone of morals, where activities are directed towards their tendency to promote happiness (Fisher and Lovell 2006). The basis of this philosophy is not based on producing the money, as it may appear at first glance; yet, utilitarianism has much more to give to the society (Donaldson and Werhane 2008). The theory is divided into four main notions. The first is consequentialism, which holds that the rightness of actions is completely determined by their consequences. Hedonism is the second

thesis, and it refers to pleasure and the absence of pain. The third is maximalism, which aims for the greatest number of positive results while also taking into account negative repercussions. Finally, the fourth thesis is universalism, in which all stakeholders' outcomes are considered (Boatright, 2007).

The part of literature discussed above implies that utilitarianism began with an emphasis on the economic welfare of the majority, from the individual level to society as a whole, since Adam Smith's thesis of economic welfare and wealth of nations. The rest of the literature research indicates that the phrases overall happiness and repercussions refer to the generic terms of "quality of life," not just the economy. Individual preferences compared to those of society are created through reciprocal impact and socialisation, not in isolation (O'Connor 1997). The 2008 financial crisis, the environmental degradation that has occurred on the planet as a result of human development activities since the Industrial Revolution, and the social exclusion that the world is addressing through the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, which must be met by 2015, are just a few examples of the quality of life that humans are attempting to standardise.

Environmental, social, and economic welfare are viewed from the common ground between minorities and the dominant majority in terms of sustainable development; the (Eid, 2012) sees this as an opportunity within the often-criticized ambiguous definitions of sustainability. From an ecological standpoint, the world environment is not constrained by geographical or political boundaries; the Earth's ecosystem can no longer support human development activities that rely on depleting natural resources (Ross 2009). The ecological footprint, which measures humanity's demand on nature, is not calculated solely on the basis of political

or geographical borders, but also takes into account the planet's natural resources. The availability of life-sustaining resources is diminishing, while human demand for resources is increasing (Hartman and DesJardins 2011). Eid (2012) believes that if we want a better future for future generations, we must examine the environment and how to improve it for everyone, not just from the standpoint of developed versus developing economies. This perspective, according to Eid, 2012, also implies that ecological sustainability should be ethically supported by everyone; the world's suffering from environmental degradation, the continuous depletion of natural resources, and the ever-increasing amount of man-made waste stand as the main alarms that should be used as catalysts for involving everyone in the marathon of preserving the environment. The utilitarian theory calls for the importance of the good consequences of environmental sustainability for the benefit of the majority, bearing in mind that the not so good consequences could possibly mean a controlled consumption of natural resources, which at its core is not a bad thing after all.

The Deontological View on Sustainable Development

The utilitarian idea that an action's morality is determined by its results is refuted by deontologists, who hold that actions are morally right or bad regardless of their outcomes. (2006) (De George). Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher from the eighteenth century, believed that actions must be justified by universal principles, regardless of their effects (Fisher and Lovell 2006). This is backed up by Kant's categorical imperative, or unconditional principle, which can be generalised as a rule of thumb with no exceptions. The key dilemma raised by this ethical theory is that of rights and obligations; the universality of these issues makes deciding on ethical practises more

difficult. Bowie (1999) improves on Kantian ideas by proposing three formulations, the first of which is that universalizability gives a moral permissibility theory for market or social interactions. Respect for humanity in humans is the second definition, which entails seeing people as ends rather than means. The moral community framework, which calls for more democracy and social inclusion, is the third (Fisher and Lovell 2006). The triple bottom line presents three concepts that are universally desired from a sustainability standpoint: social welfare and inclusion of vulnerable groups in society, economic advancement, and environmental enhancement. On the social level of sustainability, the author claims that various global efforts have highlighted diversity, human rights and responsibilities, community outreach and inclusion, indigenous communities, and social and national identities as the key focus of the new millennium (UN-Habitat – For a Better Urban Future). These are the ethical social principles that should govern our lives, where the moral law now reigns supreme over the acts of the three primary actors in any society: governments, businesses, and civil society. Technology currently presents itself as a key entrepreneurial potential for economic reform and innovation on the economic level of sustainability (Hooker, 2011). The author contends that the sensible use of natural resources, which is frequently adopted in industrialised economies, provides numerous best practises that should be passed on to developing economies. Human development initiatives, which governed the struggle for world dominance in the past, are now focusing on the rationalisation of natural resource use and poverty elimination (UN Millennium Development Goals). Green economies and sustainable communities can provide economic benefits (Rees 2002). The theory of ecological or

environmental sustainability is founded on the idea that the globe is suffering from environmental degradation and that there is an obvious biological imbalance that has existed from the beginning of time. Eco-efficiency and biomimicry are two concepts advocated by sustainable agendas to promote the ethical principle of bearing responsibility for the environmental damage produced by early human development activities (Hartman and DesJardins 2011). In general, the three stages of sustainable development pass the above-mentioned test of deontological ethical principles, and ethical decision-making in this scenario encourages the adoption of sustainable agendas.

The Social Justice View on Sustainable Development

Justice is concerned with equality and a fair distribution of opportunities as well as hardships experienced by all (Weiss 2009). In his theory, John Rawls (1971) proposes two fairness standards that are commonly accepted as representatives of the notion of justice. The first is that everyone has an equal right to the most comprehensive set of basic liberties that are compatible with those enjoyed by others. The second principle is that social and economic inequalities are structured in such a way that they both are expected to balance everyone's benefit and are linked to prospective opportunities and services that are available to all (Rawls, 1971). The essence of this ethical theory is based on the notion that all people should be treated equally and that justice is served when everyone has equal access to society's benefits and burdens (Boatright, 2007). This brings up the issue of unequal wealth distribution and harm inflicted, whether inside a single society or organisation or between nations (Donaldson and Werhane, 2008). The exploitation of the South by the North and the development of developing countries by rich countries are prominent themes in development history. The

unequal distribution of natural resources between the northern and southern hemispheres has long been a source of political occupation and wealth exploitation. According to the principles of sustainability, potential synergies should be explored in order to create a better future for future generations (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). Despite popular objections of the concept of sustainability, the veil of ignorance favoured by this ethical theory works in favour of the majority. The main concern expressed by developing countries was that they would not be able to reach the same level of development as industrialised countries due to trade and commerce organisations' economic, social, and environmental restraints (Eid, 2009). However, the author contends that if best practises are shared and lessons learned are passed to emerging economies, those limits will actually benefit both parties. The Earth Charter Initiative (2000) treats the environment as the foundation of all life, shifting from a narrow human-centered approach to a broader life-centered perspective represented in its overarching principles of governance (Ross, 2009). All nations, organisations, governments, cities, towns, and individuals must respect the land and all forms of life, and care for the community of life with compassion, understanding, and love. Everyone involved in the project must contribute to the development of democratic societies that are just, participative, long-lasting, and peaceful. Finally, the effort emphasises the need of preserving the earth's wealth and beauty for current and future generations (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2000). The equitable allocation of duties and responsibilities for the preservation of the earth's ecosystem does not include everyone. The Rawlsian ethics emphasises social sustainability,

opposing prejudice, and working to build homogeneous societies based on acceptance and social inclusion in a participatory decision-making process (Boatright, 2007). From an economic standpoint, sustainable development necessitates increased growth and capital efficiency that is not based on an unequal distribution of economic riches, but rather on recognising possible synergies and paths that promote green economies (Rees, 2002).

The Ethical Virtue Theory on Sustainable Development

Because virtues emphasise the character attributes that would form a good and meaningful existence, this ethical theory moves the focus from what a person should be to who that person is (Hartman and DesJardins, 2011). Virtues provide a new platform for decision-making based on cultural tradition, religion, and/or life philosophy in this setting (Hooker, 2011). The characteristics of a virtuous life have experienced substantial modifications, similar to the changes that have occurred in cultures, ideologies, and even religions (Fisher and Lovell, 2006). Weiss, (2009) considers Plato and Aristotle to be the pioneers of virtue ethics, prioritising moral character and integrity over moral norms (deontology) or the consequences of deeds (consequentialism/utilitarianism). This viewpoint poses the question of individual benefit versus the community good: which is more important? Individuals only find their individuality inside communities, according to Solomon (2008), which emphasises the potential tension between what individuals want for themselves and what the groups they are linked with want for themselves. In the same sense, O'Connor (1997) defines the common good as the state in which each person obtains "their own good" in a harmonious society. Rightly, Boatright (2007) notes that virtue ethics is concerned with living collaboratively in communities rather than

resolving conflicts of interests between individuals or society. In terms of social sustainability, virtue ethics idealises individual morals in order to improve the social quality of life in communities and societies (Eid 2009).

Conclusion

Perhaps supplying the knowledge necessary to discern whether we will, or should, follow the good or poor road of sustainability, or any path in between, should be a research priority for sustainability. Similarly, the sustainability debate should commit to conducting extensive interdisciplinary research to analyse the implications of selecting whether sustainability is anthropocentric or non-anthropocentric. This ambition is not dangerous than attempting to attain sustainability solely through science and technology. More broadly, the sustainability framework is useful for integrating ethics with science and technology in efforts to develop sustainability; emphasising the importance of determining whether sustainability is a human or non-human attitude; assisting in the development of strategic plans related to sustainability research initiatives; and providing sustainability education courses. If we attain sustainability, it will not only require critical changes in technology, but also the most profound shift in ethical thought as well. This article made the argument for promoting sustainable agendas on ethical grounds. The ethical rationale recognises the leverage of adopting new sustainable agendas, which has previously been criticised for its lack of income distribution and unjust use of natural resources and consumption between the North and South. The ethical reasoning proved to promote social inclusion, public participation, environmental protection and enhancement, and stable economic growth with clear and fair distribution of wealth

and consumption levels for the triple bottom line of economic, environmental, and social levels of sustainability. The four ethical theories were compared to the triple bottom line's sustainability standards, whether utilitarian, deontological, Rawlsian, or Virtue ethics. The recent instances, as well as the supporting research, have proven a strong correlation between sustainability morality and the desire to change for a better quality of life. The potential of developing and emerging economies in better implementing sustainable agendas should be taken into account by global initiatives. Sustainability is a normative ethical premise for society's future growth, speaking not of how things are, but of how they should be. Fast economic development does not clash with the environmental and social components of sustainable development, but rather generates a strong precondition for the decrease of income inequality, poverty, and a negative impact on the environment.

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