THE ETHICAL REASONING BEHIND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT; A PARADOXICAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE REFORM OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Mohamed Eid
meid@bue.edu.eg
The British University in Egypt

ABSTRACT

This research intends to explore the ethical reasoning behind the necessity for adopting a sustainable development agenda on the strategic level of policy making. The author investigates the ethical obligations to sustainability through a schema of ethical theories (including Deontological Ethics, Teleological (Utilitarian) Ethics, Rawlsian Social Justice Ethics and finally Virtue Ethics) and matching those standards to the three levels of Economic, Social and Environmental levels. The research will argue that the ethical reasoning works as a more effective stimulant for countries to embrace sustainable agendas where the law has so far failed.

With the sweeping winds of change blowing in the Middle East region since the Jasmine Revolution in Tunisia followed by the widely idealized revolution in Egypt; the research explains the paradoxical opportunity which developing countries as such hold in now adopting radical change and starting a whole new wave of sustainable strategies which on the long term will present themselves as a huge leap forward towards a better future.

Developing countries stand a golden opportunity for implementing radical change to their future by marketing the concepts of sustainable policies and practices to their people through the ethical framework and justifications. Economic and Business benefits are linked to a better quality of life socially and environmentally, where the laws have failed to deliver, ethical reasoning emerges as a powerful tool forward as it did drive the revolutions asking for radical change.

INTRODUCTION

Most interpretations of sustainable development work within the Brundtland formula (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 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 also varied along the years to match the different World developments and aspirations; the better quality of life is no longer limited to a better economic standard of living but now intrinsically linked to ecological and social sustainability. In simple terms, sustainable development implies great potential for human well-being as it clearly captures the two terms "development" and "sustainable"; where the former is concerned with human evolution and activities on both the social and economic levels, while the latter is addressing the stress that such development places on the environment (Eid, 2009). The British Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) describes sustainable development as the tool to achieve a better quality of life for everyone, now and for the future generations, through four main strands; the first being the social progress, the second is the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, whilst the third is protecting, and if possible enhancing the environment, and finally, the fourth being the prudent use of natural resources and general consumptions (Department of Trade and Industry (DTI)).

Given the challenges facing the earth today, a much more meaningful instrument is required - to address the limits of the earth's resilience and our failure to curb consumption- and a new ethic based on the ecological carrying capacity of the Earth (Ross, 2009). This paper will not discuss the vague definitions of sustainable development -which is perceived by the author as an opportunity rather than a criticism to its nature- but will focus on the ethical reasoning behind the different levels of sustainability.

EXPLORING THE ETHICAL REASONING BEHIND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

To map the two sides of the research, the author puts forward a schema for the four ethical theories chosen for setting off the parameters of the sustainability agendas. The illustration below – broken into two figures- displays also a graphical representation of the generic nature of what sustainable development could stand for whether on the strategic or the operational levels.

Figure 1
A Schema of Ethical Theories
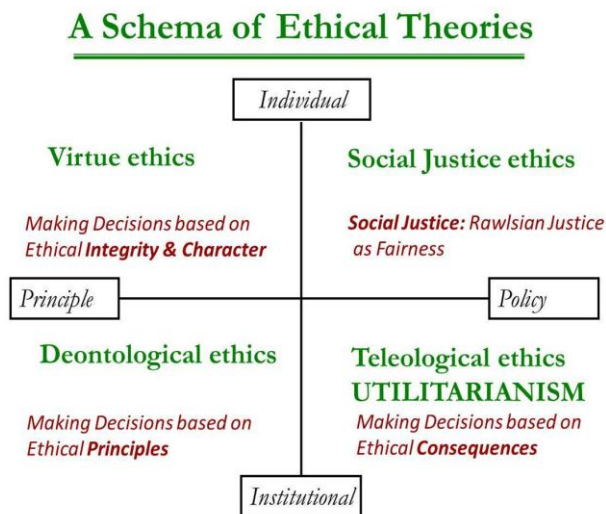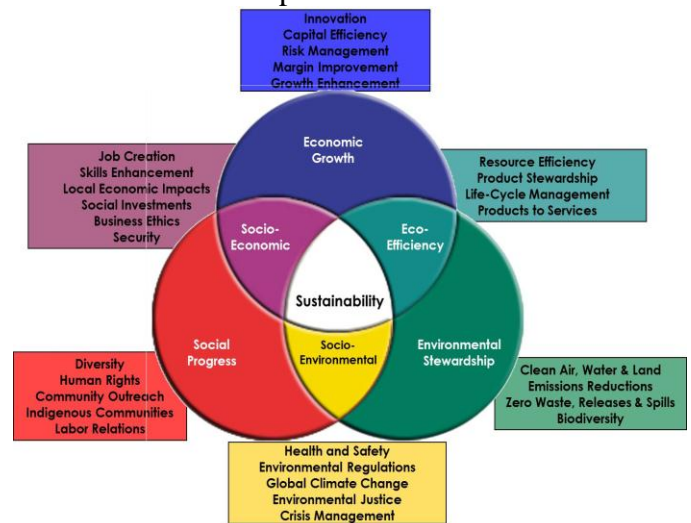Inspired by (Fisher & Lovell, 2006)

Figure 2
A representation of what Sustainable Development entails on the strategic and operational levels

The author argues that choosing to commit to sustainable development agendas should be a rational choice based on an ethical reasoning. Ethical behavior is closely connected to the welfare of society as whole, because rational behavior is much more than rational self-interest, where rationality requires us to consider the interests of others as well as ourselves (Hooker, 2011).

In this section of the research, the author identifies the common grounds between the chosen four ethical theories and their possible perspectives on the meanings of sustainable development whether on the levels of societies or individuals. The research now explores each of the four ethical quadrants in figure 1 against the three levels of sustainability detailed in figure 2.

The Utilitarian View on Sustainable Development

The writings of John Stuart Mill in political philosophy and political economy constitute a sophisticated attempt to furnish a libertarian principle as the cornerstone of a just and progressive social/economic order. Mill provides, in the synthesis of his writings, a sort of prototype of the ideals of a "sustainable development" grounded in a norm of justice and solidarity embracing all of humanity (O'Connor, 1997).

Utilitarianism addresses in its fundamental core the reference to a rule of maximizing the overall good (P. Hartman & DesJardins, 2011). It supports the greatest happiness principle, as the foundation of morals, where actions are right in proportion, as they tend to promote happiness, wrong, as they tend to promote the opposite of happiness (Fisher & Lovell, 2006). The core of this theory is not based on making the most money as it might appear at first glance, but utilitarianism has much more to offer to society than this as it demonstrates full awareness of the importance of sponsoring the higher sentiments (Donaldson & H. Werhane, 2008).

The theory involves four distinct theses; first is the consequentialism where the rightness of actions is determined solely by their consequences. Second thesis is hedonism, which refers to pleasure and the absence of pain. Third one is maximalism where the greatest amount of good consequences possible is targeted with the bad consequences are also taken into consideration. Finally, the fourth thesis is universalism where the consequences are those of all the stakeholders (R. Boatright, 2007).

Part of the literature presented suggests that the utilitarianism since its early attachment to Adam Smith's "invisible hand" started with an emphasis on the economic welfare of the majority from the individual level to the society as a whole. The rest of the literature analysis demonstrates that the terms of overall happiness and consequences is not only limited to the economy but also refers to the generic terms of "quality of life". The preferences of individuals in comparison to those of the society are not formed in isolation but rather though reciprocal influence and socialization (O'Connor, 1997). The financial crisis of 2008, the environmental degradation planet Earth is suffering from due to human development activities since the industrial revolution and the social exclusion the World is addressing through the United Nations Millennium Development Goals to be achieved by 2015 are only examples of the quality of life humans are trying to standardize.

From a sustainable development perspective; environmental, social, and economic welfare are looked at from the common ground between the minorities and the dominating majority; the author perceives this as the opportunity, which lies within the often-criticized vague definitions of sustainability. From the ecological perspective, the World environment is not bound to geographical nor political boundaries, the earth ecosystem can no longer handle the human development activities which are based on natural resources that can no longer be renewed (Ross, 2009). The ecological footprint measuring humanity's demand on nature (CSE) does not necessarily calculate it based on political or geographical borders but looking also at the natural resources of the planet. Life supporting resources are decreasing while the human demand for resources is increasing (P. Hartman & DesJardins, 2011). This suggests that if we are to look for a better future for the coming generations, we have to consider the environment and its betterment for everyone not from the superiority perspective of developed versus developing economies. The Natural Step's Funnel challenges societies and business to backcast a path towards sustainability; one that encourages innovation, creativity and embracing the unlimited potential for change so that the walls of the funnel

open up equally for everyone (P. Hartman & DesJardins, 2011).

The author believes that this perspective also suggests that ecological sustainability should be ethically supported by everyone, the world suffering from environmental degradation and continuous decrease of natural resources and ever increasing of man-made waste stand as the main alarms which should be used as catalysts for including everyone in the marathon of preserving the ecological footprint from the perspective of the happiness of the majority of human beings and living creatures. 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. As Ross (2009) explains it, the ecological sustainability imposes a duty on everyone to protest and restore the integrity of the earth's ecological systems to operate within its ecological carrying capacity.

On the economic level of sustainability, utilitarian ethics -based on consequences and the happiness of the majority- go hand in hand with the economic level of the triple bottom line; where economic innovation and entrepreneurial activities take the lead into the current economic markets, whether in the form of the rise of SMEs or the superiority of the sustainability indexes in major stock markets during the financial crisis (Mehler, 2009).

Finally, for the social triple bottom line, diversity and social inclusion as evident examples of this level of sustainability not only are supported by the concepts of utilitarianism but also demonstrate the benefits they bring to enriching cultures and setting the grounds for social acceptance and transparency (R. Boatright, 2007).

The Deontological View on Sustainable Development

The deontological apporach to ethics denies the utilitarian claim that the morality of an action depends on its consequences because deontologists maintain that actions are morally right or wrong independet of their consequences (T. De George, 2006).

The eighteenth century German philosopher Immanuel Kant's ethical philosophy was that actions must be justified by principles, which are universal irrespective of their consequences (Fisher & Lovell, 2006). This is supported by Kantian's categorical imperative or in other words unconditional principle, a principle matter that can be generalised as rule of thumb without exceptions. The core of this ethical theory raises the question of rights and duties; the universality of these issues makes it more complex in deciding on the ethical practices. Bowie (1999) builds on the Kantian principles put forward three formulations; the first being that universalizability provides a theory of moral permissibility for market or social interactions. The second formulation is respect for humanity in persons meaning to treat human beings as ends not means. The third one is the moral community formulation calling for greater democracy and social inclusion (Fisher & Lovell, 2006).

From the sustainability view, the triple bottom line presents three principles, which are put forward as universally wanted principles; social welfare and inclusion of vulnerable groups in society, economic advancement, and environmental enhancement. On the social level of sustainability, the author argues that the main issues of diversity, human rights and duties, community outreach & inclusion, indigenous communities and social & national identities have been identified by several worldwide initiatives as the main focus of the new millennia (UN-Habitat for a Better Urban Future). These represent the ethical social principle, which should govern our lives

where the moral law now dominates the actions of the three main actors in any society; governments, businesses and civil society.

On the economic level of sustainability, technology now presents itself as a major entrepreneurial opportunity for economic reform and innovation (Hooker, 2011). The author argues that the prudent use of natural resources often taken on board in developed economies provides many best practices, which should be forwarded to developing economies. The human development activities which were in the past governing the race toward world domination, are now focusing on the rationalization in the use of natural resources and the eradication of poverty (UN Millennium Development Goals). Economic welfare is possible in green economies and sustainable communities (Rees, 2002).

The ecological or environmental sustainability is based on the principle that the planet is suffering from environmental degradation and a clear biological imbalance from the early state Earth was created. Eco-efficiency and biomimicry are two concepts idealised by the sustainable agendas to support the concept of the ethical principle of taking responsibility for the damage that early human development activities have caused to our environment (P. Hartman & DesJardins, 2011).

In general, the three levels of sustainable development succeed in fulfilling the test of the deontological ethical principles as explained above, the ethical decision making in this scenario supports the choice of sustainable agendas.

The Social Justice View on Sustainable Development

The principle of justice deals with fair distribution of opportunities as well as hardships to all and equality (Weiss, 2009). John Rawls (1971) offers in his theory two principles of fairness which are widely recognised as representative of the principle of justice. The first being that each person has an equal right to the most extensive basic liberties that are compatible with similar liberties for others. The second principle explains that social and economic inequalities are arranged so that they are both reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage and attached to positions and offices open to all (Rawls, 1971). This essence of this ethical theory lies with the principle that all individuals should treated equally and that justice is served when all people have equal opportunities and advantages to society's opportunities and burdens (R. Boatright, 2007).

This raises the issue of the unfair distribution of wealth and the infliction of harm whether within a single society or organisation or whether it is between nations (Donaldson & H. Werhane, 2008). The history of development emphasises on the exploitation of the south by the north and developing countries by the developed ones. The distribution of natural resources between the northern and southern hemispheres has always been the main cause for political occupation and the unfair exploitation of wealth. The principles of sustainability argue that possible synergies should be identified as to ensure a better future for the coming generations (World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), 1987).

The veil of ignorance idealised by this ethical theory works in favour of the majority despite of the common criticisms against the concept of sustainability. The main concern was from the developing countries that they could not reach the same level of development as the developed nations due to economic, social and environmental constraints set by the trade and commerce organisations (Eid, 2009). However, the author argues that those constraints would actually work for the benefit of both parties when best practices are shared and the lessons learned are transferred to

the emerging economies.

From the environmental level of sustainability, the Earth Charter Initiative (2000) addresses the environment as the basis of all life with a shift from a narrow human centred to a broader life centred perspective expressed in its overarching principles of governance (Ross, 2009). All nations, organisations, governments, cities, towns and individuals have to respect Earth and life in all its diversity, care for the community of life with understanding, compassion and love. Everyone on board of the initiative has to help build democratic societies that are just, participatory, sustainable and peaceful. And finally, the initiative calls for securing Earth's bounty and beauty for present and future generations (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2000). The fair distribution of roles and responsibilities for preserving the Earth's environment is not limited but includes everyone.

The Rawlsian ethics emphasises on the social level of sustainability fighting discrimination and engaging in the creation of homogenous communities build on acceptance and social inclusion in a participatory process for decision making (R. Boatright, 2007).

From the economic perspective, sustainable development calls for gowth enhancement and capital efficiency not based on an unfair distribution of economic wealth but mainly centered around identifying possible syngeries and tracks supporting green economies (Rees, 2002).

The Virtue Ethics View on Sustainable Development

This ethical theory shifts the focus from what a person should be to who that person is, because virtues stress on the character traits that would consitute a good and meaningful life (P. Hartman & DesJardins, 2011). In this context, virtues put forward a new platform for decision making based on cultural tradition, religion and/or life philosophy (Hooker, 2011). Similar to the changes which occurred in cultures, philosophies and even religions, the characteristics of a virtuous life have also undergone significant changes (Fisher & Lovell, 2006).

Plato and Aristotle are considered the founders of virtue ethics (Weiss, 2009), emphasising on moral character and integrety as oppose to moral rules (deontology) or consequences of actions (consequentialism/utilitarianism) (Hursthouse & Zalta, 2003). This perspective raises the issue of individual benefit versus the common good, which one takes precedents over the other?. Solomon (2008) argues that individuals only find their individuality within communities, this clarifies the possible conflict one may find between what individuals may want for themselves and what the communities they are affiliated to may desire of itself. The common good is described in the same contect by O'Connor (1997) as the state where each person is obtaining "their own good" in a harmonious society. Rightly, Boatright (2007) explains that virtue ethics is not about resolving the conflict of interests between individuals or societies but rather that morality is the emphasis of living cooperatively in comminuties.

From the social point of view of sustainability, virtue ethics idealise the morals of individuals to enhance the social quality of life in communities and societies. Achieving sustainability may have to start with the change of individual behaviour but it can only be achieved globally (Eid, 2009). This entails a clear identification of the "common good", as much as we support the concept of social inclusion and homogeous societies, the implementation on all levels should include all relevant parties and stakeholders through partnerships, especially among governments and between governments and major groups. Such partnerships are descrived as keys to pursuing sustainability in

a globalizing world (World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), 2002).

From the environmental point of view, sustainability builds on the individual virtues and their ways of life. The personal commitment to environmental protection and enhancement is the sole guaranteed drive to achieve an environmentally sound societies, followed by the legislations which put the law as a benchamrk for best practices (Ross, 2009). Environmental virtues in this context are not limited to fighting climate change and global warming but emphasise on the importance of daily practices on the invidual level, the ecological footprint can now be measured to point out how fast we consume resources and generate wastes (Global Footprint Network, 2009).

From the economic point of view, sustainable businesses in societies rely on leaders and ordinary workers with exemplary characters (R. Boatright, 2007). Similar to business leaders, we have green economies which have prove to outperform other regular ones, seeking economic growth but also giving the lead to entrepreurs and innovation that would allow uniqueness and competitveness (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). Eco-Efficiency as a tool for implementing economic stability and innovation is a clear demonstration that both virtues of protecting the environment and seeking economic growth can be achieved hand in hand (World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), 2000).

THE PARADOXICAL OPPORTUNITY THAT DEVELOPING COUNTRIES HAVE

For developing countries, in the preliminary implementation of sustainable regulatory frameworks, there is a greater opportunity and a more efficient leverage point than in the case of developed economies. For the latter, it is a chance to reshape existing frameworks and disseminating such knowledge to the developing countries. The developing world, paradoxically, has greater prospects for effective change in the application of existing expertise through new frameworks, conceived with sustainability as a key integral component. This contrasts with the difficulties the western hemisphere has in grafting sustainable policy to entrenched methodologies (Eid, 2009).

Sustainable development emerges from a common purpose, that of re-valuating nature as an ethical principle and as general condition for global sustainability of population and production (Leff, 2000). The changes to our quality of life-whether in developing or developed countries- can only represent the positive impacts on climate change, equity, gorwth, economic stability, social inclusion, environmental pollution and biodiversity. These impacts are the opportunities for change that justify the implementation of sustainable development. The challenge is much bigger for developed economies, where exisiting systems and frameworks will require a much bigger scale of change than the one needed for building systems in developing countries. The author argues, that the paradoxical opportunity lies mainly in the systems thinking approach to put forward sustainable development as the only route forward for a better quality of life now and for generations to come.

On the global level, sustainable development has always been challenged and critcised on the ethical ground of not allowing the same development opportunities which were taken by developed countries to emerging economies and developing countries (Boersema & Bertels, 2000). However, based on the ethical analysis provided in this research of the four ethical theories, the ethical grounds for sustainability are very clear to be in line with the common good.

The analysis proves that the three levels of sustainability have ethical grounds to be promoted about the individuals as well as the governments or in general the governing systems around the world. In March 2011, the Secretariat of the UN Secretary-General's High-level Panel on Global

Sustainability (GSP) has issued the report of the second meeting of the Panel (GSP 2), which took place from 24-25 February 2011, in Cape Town, South Africa. The summary highlights the presentations of the three Working Groups (WGs) that were established to advise the Panel, the Panel's overall vision of sustainability, a framework, and guiding principles for the Panel's work.

On the WGs' three topics – poverty, paradigms, and markets – and on the overall vision of sustainability, the Panel considered impediments to fulfilling the sustainable development agenda to date, including "short-termism," failure to properly price natural resource use, and the market's inability to tackle inequity. Members emphasized the importance of intra- and inter-generational equity and social justice for sustainable development and of developing a new approach to managing the global commons. The Panel reached consensus on its overall goal: "To eradicate poverty and reduce inequality, make growth inclusive, and production and consumption more sustainable while combating climate change and respecting the range of other planetary boundaries." Key sub-goals could include: food security and agriculture; decent jobs; small and medium enterprises (SMEs); access to energy; green growth; disaster risk reduction (DRR) and resilience; health; education; payment of environmental services; and ensuring sustainability in fragile contexts (International Institute for Sustainable Development (iisd), 2011).

The shortcomings of the implementation of sustainability until today could be attributed to the lack of either personal or group commitments to its agendas. The system thinking approach identifies the need for change to come from within the exisiting system so that it can embrace people on board of the implementation needed (Senge, 1999). This is why, Meadows (1999) has identified sustainability itself as a leverage point for change towards a better quality of life. The analysis of this paper fortifies this approach but also adds to its core, the ethical grounds which also could be considered as leverage points to initiate a new perspective on sustainability.

The Winds of Change in the Middle East Region

As examples of developing and emerging economies, the Middle East region recently confronted blowing winds of change on the political level. The people of the region took to the streets their demands and aspirations for a better quality of life under the themes of fairness, freedom and social equilaty. This cry for change coming from the core of Middle Eastern societies represents in itself the paradigm out of which the political systems exist, as Meadows (1999) suggests, this is the strongest leverage point initiating a large scale of change which shook the systems to their cores.

This research presents the case of sustainability and its ethical grounds as the best alternative forward at this time of large scale change, the paradoxical opportunity is very clear. New governements and political systems taking over should address "change" in a sustainable way. Eradicating poverty, fighting climate change, implementing social inclusion and protecting human rights while working on economic growth and environmental enhancement can only be achieved if these new political systems adopt sustainable agendas.

To learn from the experiences of developed countries and how sustainability was criticised on ethical grounds, new political system in the region should stress on the ethical evidence provided in this research. When the law governing these societies fell apart during the revolutions, the only standard governing the daily lives of people was their ethical background and philosophies. The people wanted to combat corruption and eradicate non ethical behaviour of their leaders, this presents itself as an opportunity for them to listen more to the sound of ethics and how they should

live their lives in the future. Their concerns was not limited to the short term but actually, they were more focused on the future generations and how their quality of life would be. The ethical analysis of this paper presents several grounds for marketing the sustainable agendas among the region after the significant revolutions which brought down political systems that have been in power for decades. *This revolution, which emerged to change Egypt, has a responsibility to present its people with an alternate conception of political practices. It is the responsibility now to assure every citizen that this revolution has also brought about substantial change in cultural values. History will remember the revolution for the change it will bring to the people themselves, not for its success in meeting its political demands.* (Bahaa El Din, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This paper presented the case for the ethical grounds of promoting sustainable agendas. In the past, where sustainability was criticised for its lack of wealth distribution and unfair use of natural resources and consumption between north and south, the ethical reasoning explained identifies the leverage of adopting new sustainable agendas.

For the triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social levels of sustainability, the ethical reasoning proved to promote social inclusion, public participation, protection & enhancement of the environment and stable economic growth with clear and fair distribution of wealth and levels of consumptions. Whether utilitarian, deontological, Rawlsian or Virtue ethics; the four ethical theories were compared to the sustainability standards of the triple bottom line. The current examples put forward in addition to the supporting literature have demonstrated the strong link between the morality of sustainability and the willingness to change for a better quality of life. The world initiatives should take into consideration the potentials which developing and emerging economies have in the better implementation of sustainable agendas. The research has also presented the latest preparations for the coming world conference on sustainable development where it was clear that the shortcomings to date have been challenged by the levels of commitment to change.

With the fall of old political systems in the Middle East region, a chance arises for a better implementation of sustainable agendas to achieve the better quality of life that revolutions came out to demand and request for themselves as well as for the future generations.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This research was limited in its final part by the very limited academic literature on the current revolutions in the region as the pace of events is still very fast with minimum analysis to the possible future developments.

The author considers this paper as the first step towards a series of research aiming at testing the actual implementation of sustainable initiatives in developing countries. The emphasis of future papers should be narrowed down to first creating a best practice model taken from the experience of developed and green economies. This, should be followed by an implementation strategy of this model to the developing and emerging economies with their different circumstances in perspective. It is clear that each case will have a different detailed scenario which should be reflected on the three levels of sustainability. The golden opportunity which the Middle East region currently lives in seeking large scale change should also be tested on whether this change will embrace sustainable

agendas or fails to attract the approval of the people for long term change towards a better quality of life on the three levels.

REFERENCES

Bahaa El Din, Z. (2011, March 08). Revolution and the Ethics of Combating Corruption. *El Sherouk Newspaper*. Cairo, Greater Cairo, Egypt. Retrieved from http://www.shorouknews.com/Columns/Column.aspx?id=403974

Bartone, C., Bernstein, J., Leitmann, J., & Eigen, J. (1994). *Toward Environmental Strategies for Cities: Policy Consideration for Urban Environmental Management in Developing Countries.* Washington DC: World Bank.

Beck, U. (1999). *World Risk Society.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Boersema, J. J., & Bertels, J. (2000). Sustainable Development in the Developed Countries: Will Theory and Practice Meet? In K. Lee, A. Holland, & D. McNeil, *Global Sustainable Development in the 21st Century.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Bowie, N. (1999). *Business Ethics: A Kantian Perspective.* Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Commission of the European Communities. (2001). *A Sustainable Europe for a Better World: A European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development; Communication from the Commission to the Gothenburg European Council.* Brussels: European Union.

CSE. (n.d.). *My Ecological Footprint*. Retrieved July 6, 2011, from Center for Sustainable Economy: http://www.sustainable-economy.org/index.html

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). (2003, June). *What is Sustainable Development*. Retrieved February 14, 2006, from DTI: http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/strategy/2.htm

Donaldson, T., & H. Werhane, P. (2008). *Ethical Issues in Business; A Philosophical Approach.* New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, Inc. .

Eid, M. (2009). *Sustainable Development & Project Management; Rethinking Relationships in the Construction Industry, Integrating Sustainable Development into Project Management Processes.* Koln: Lambert Academic Publishing AG & Co. KG.

Elkington, J. (1999). *Cannibals with Forks; The Triple Bottom Line of 21st Century Business.* Oxford: Capstone Publishing.

Fisher, C., & Lovell, A. (2006). *Business Ethics and Values; Individual, corporate and International Perspectives.* Essex: Pearson Education Limited.

Global Footprint Network. (2009). *The Ecological Footprint and Biodiversity*. Retrieved 2010, from Footprint Network.

Hooker, J. (2011). *Business Ethics as Rational Choice.* New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc. Prentice Hall.

Hursthouse, R., & Zalta, E. (2003, July 18). *Virtue Ethics*. Retrieved from The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Fall 2003 Edition): http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2003/entries/ethics-virtue/

International Institute for Sustainable Development (iisd). (2011, March). *Sustainable Development Policy and Practice*. Retrieved April 2011, from IISD.

Leff, E. (2000). Sustainable Development in Developing Countries: Culture Diversity and Environmental Rationality. In K. Lee, A. Holland, & D. McNeil, *Global Sustainable Development in the Twenty-First Century.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Meadows, D. (1999). *Leverage Points; Places to Intervene in a System.* South Carolina: The Sustainability Institute.

Mehler, D. (2009). *Green Winners: The Performance of Sustainability-focused Companies in the Financial Crisis.* Washington DC: A.T. Kearney, Inc.

O'Connor, M. (1997). John Stuart Mill's utilitarianism and the social ethics of sustainable development. *The European Journal of the History of Economic Thought*, 478-506.

P. Hartman, L., & DesJardins, J. (2011). *Business Ethics; Decision Making for Personal Integrity & Social Responsibility.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

R. Boatright, J. (2007). *Ethics and The Conduct of Business.* New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, Inc.

Rawls, J. (1971). *A Theory of Justice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Rees, W. (2002). Globalization and Sustainability: Conflict or Convergence? *Bulletin of Science, Technology and Society*.

Ross, A. (2009). Modern Interpretations of Sustainable Development. *Journal of Law and Society*, 32-54.

Senge, P. (1999). *The Fifth Discipline; the Art & Practice of the Learning Organization.* London: Randome House Business Books.

Solomon, R. C. (2008). Corporate Roles, Personal Virtues: An Aristotelean Approach to Business Ethics. In T. Donaldson, & P. H. Werhane, *Ethical Issues in Business; A*

Philosophical Approach (pp. 66-78). New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

T. De George, R. (2006). *Business Ethics.* New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, Inc.

UN Millennium Development Goals. (n.d.). Retrieved July 05, 2011, from United Nations: http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). (2000). *The Earth Charter.* Paris: UNESCO.

Weiss, J. W. (2009). *Business Ethics: A Stakeholder & Issues Management Approach.* Mason, OH: Cengage Learning.

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). (1997). *Signals of Change*. Retrieved from WBCSD: http://www.wbcsd.ch/publications/signals.htm

World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). (2000). *Eco-efficiency; creating more value with less impact.* Switzerland: WBCSD Publications.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). (1987). *Our Common Future (The Brundtland Report).* WCED.

World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED). (1987). *Our Common Future; The Brundtland Report.* United Nations (WCED).

World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). (2002). *United Nations Earth Summit, Plan of Implementation*. Retrieved June 2003, from Johannesburg Summit.